

understanding of the security implications of unmanned aerial systems, UAS, in domestic airspace.

For example, off-the-shelf systems widely available today, in the wrong hands, can jam transmitted signals, take surveillance imagery, and carry dangerous weapons. Given these systems' capabilities, it is important that there be a comprehensive study of the security risks and plans to address them.

To that end, H.R. 1646 directs the Department of Homeland Security to research how a commercially available small- and medium-sized drone could be used to perpetrate an attack, and to develop policies, guidance, and protocols to prevent such an attack or mitigate the risk of such an attack.

As amended in committee, my legislation directs DHS to work with the U.S. Departments of Transportation and Energy and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to carry out this research, and allows for DHS to share advice and information based on that research with these key Federal partners.

Mr. Speaker, drone technology holds great promise, with significant social and economic benefits not yet fully realized. However, given the rapid growth in the domestic drone market, it is important that we identify and have strategies to mitigate the associated security risk.

If enacted, H.R. 1646 will enhance our Nation's security while, at the same time, clarifying the framework for Americans' legitimate interest in producing and using drones lawfully and safely.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, H.R. 1646, to further the Department of Homeland Security's efforts to work with other agencies on the security risks of small- and medium-sized drones in domestic airspace.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Speaker, once again, I urge my colleagues to support this strong, bipartisan piece of legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1646, the "Homeland Security Drone Assessment and Analysis Act."

I support this bipartisan legislation because it addresses the potential terrorist threat posed by small and medium-sized drones throughout our country.

I thank my colleague, Congresswoman WATSON COLEMAN of New Jersey, for introducing this thoughtful and necessary legislation that will assist the Department of Homeland Security.

The Homeland Security Drone Assessment and Analysis Act would require the Department of Homeland Security to research how commercially available small and medium-sized drones could be used to perpetrate an attack.

Agencies will be tasked with the responsibility of taking the lead for developing effective

policies and guidance along with the proper protocols which will assist in preventing an attack perpetrated with a drone.

Information regarding how to properly respond to the potential threats from these drones will be distributed to state and local law enforcement agencies to allow them to develop approaches to mitigate identified threats.

The protocols that will be developed as a result of this legislation will assist every level of law enforcement in coordinated responses to a drone related emergency.

Recent news reports of small drones crashing in areas such as on the White House lawn and incidents including near misses with commercial aircraft demonstrate the need for this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most important things that can and must continue to be done is to protect our homeland from evolving threats.

Mr. Speaker, this is why I join my colleagues in working to strengthen the laws that allow the Department of Homeland Security to create policies that will address emergency protocol threats such as the proliferation of commercial use of drones.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting passage of H.R. 1646.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LOUDERMILK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H. R. 1646, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: A bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to research how certain commercially available small and medium sized unmanned aircraft systems could be used in an attack, how to prevent or mitigate the risk of such an attack, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DHS FOIA EFFICIENCY ACT OF 2015

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1615) to direct the Chief FOIA Officer of the Department of Homeland Security to make certain improvements in the implementation of section 552 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the Freedom of Information Act), and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1615

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "DHS FOIA Efficiency Act of 2015".

SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT IMPLEMENTATION.

(a) DEADLINE FOR UPDATING REGULATIONS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Chief FOIA Officer of the Department of Homeland Security,

as appointed pursuant to section 552(j) of title 5, United States Code, shall finalize and issue an updated regulation implementing section 552 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the Freedom of Information Act), which shall include—

(1) public guidance on procedures to be followed when making requests under paragraph (1), (2), or (3) of section 552(a) of title 5, United States Code;

(2) updated guidance to the components of the Department responsible for processing such requests, which may include information on how to adopt automated processing of requests made under paragraphs (1), (2), or (3) of section 552(a) of title 5, United States Code;

(3) detailed information on fees and costs associated with such requests; and

(4) detailed information on the appeals process for such requests.

(b) IDENTIFICATION OF COSTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Chief FOIA Officer, in coordination with the Chief Financial Officer of the Department and the heads of each of the relevant components of the Department, shall identify the total annual cost to the Department of implementing section 552 of title 5, United States Code.

(2) GUIDANCE.—The Chief FOIA Officer shall develop guidance on reporting standards related to the direct and indirect costs to the Department associated with the processing of requests made under paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of section 552(a) of title 5, United States Code.

(c) COST SAVINGS.—The Chief FOIA Officer, in collaboration with the heads of each of the relevant components of the Department, shall—

(1) identify unnecessary and duplicative actions taken by the Department in the course of processing requests made under paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of section 552(a) of title 5, United States Code, by not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(2) eliminate unnecessary and duplicative actions taken by the Department in the course of processing requests made under paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of section 552(a) of title 5, United States Code, by not later than 12 months after the identification of such action under paragraph (1).

(d) FOIA TRACKING SYSTEMS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Chief FOIA Officer shall develop a plan to automate the processing of requests made under paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of section 552(a) of title 5, United States Code to the Department. Such plan shall take into account the specific needs of each of the components of the Department responsible for processing such requests and address required and recommended technology capabilities and elements. Such plan shall include an assessment of the costs and benefits associated with establishing and using electronic processing systems to process requests made under paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of section 552(a) of title 5, United States Code.

(e) FOIA BACKLOG.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Chief Privacy Officer of the Department, in consultation with the Chief FOIA Officer, shall update and issue guidance to the heads of each of the relevant components of the Department regarding the goal of reducing the backlog in processing requests made under paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of section 552(a) of title 5, United States Code, by 50 percent between fiscal year 2015 and fiscal year 2018.

(f) REPORT.—

(1) SEMIANNUAL PRIVACY REPORT.—The Chief FOIA Officer shall include in each

semiannual privacy report submitted under section 1062(f) of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (42 U.S.C. 2000ee-1(f)) each of the following:

(A) The total costs to the Department of meeting the requirements of section 552 of title 5, United States Code, for the period covered by the report.

(B) An assessment of progress made toward meeting the backlog goals pursuant to subsection (e) during the period covered by the report and the periods covered by the two preceding reports.

(C) An assessment of whether the Department has adequate staffing and other resources to address the backlog goals pursuant to subsection (e) for processing requests made under paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of section 552(a) of title 5, United States Code.

(D) An assessment of the progress made toward automating the processing of requests made under paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of section 552(a) of title 5, United States Code, during the period covered by the report.

(2) FISCAL YEAR 2016 REQUIREMENTS.—The Chief FOIA Officer shall include in the second semiannual privacy report for fiscal year 2016 each of the following:

(A) A description of any cost savings identified under subsection (d).

(B) The plan developed under subsection (d).

(g) DUPLICATIVE ACTION DEFINED.—In this section, the term “duplicative actions” means actions carried out by two or more components or programs that are engaged in the same activities or provide the same services related to the processing of FOIA requests to the same beneficiaries.

SEC. 3. PROGRESS ON AUTOMATION.

Upon completion of the plan to automate the processing of requests made under paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of section 552(a) of title 5, United States Code, the Chief FOIA Officer shall provide the plan to the heads of the components of the Department and seek written feedback from each head of a component agency regarding the extent to which that component will adopt the plan, the associated costs, and the projected timelines.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER) and the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1615.

In November of 2014, it was reported that DHS had received and processed the most FOIA requests out of any Federal department. It holds the largest backlog of unprocessed FOIA requests of any Federal agency. In fact, since 2010, DHS FOIA requests have increased by over 65 percent, and DHS currently holds almost half of all Federal FOIA requests of any government agency—about 50,000 of 95,000 requests.

In addition, 3 weeks ago, I was informed that the increase in DHS FOIA requests was partly due to requests for immigration records for people requesting information for their future deferred action cases. My bill, H.R. 1615, the DHS FOIA Efficiency Act of 2015, streamlines the process to address the tremendous workload and backlog and bring transparency to the cost of FOIA requests to the Department.

In the recent past, DHS has received poor evaluations regarding its efficiency in handling FOIA requests. For these reasons, my bill directs the chief FOIA officer of DHS to work with other officers within the Department to update their capabilities in handling the large amount of FOIA requests and identify the total annual costs associated with processing these requests.

By updating their capabilities and reporting to Congress on how the Department is addressing their poor performance, my bill will direct the Department to address its backlog and inefficiencies in an appropriate and quick manner.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 1615, the DHS FOIA Efficiency Act.

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Mr. Speaker, this legislation, which was unanimously approved by the committee on May 20, seeks to improve the Department's processing of Freedom of Information Act requests.

In November 2014, the Comptroller General reported that DHS faces the largest backlog of unprocessed FOIA requests of any Federal agency. While resource challenges and inefficiencies in DHS' internal processes help explain in part the backlog, we must not be complacent and accept these challenges as excuses for the backlog.

A cornerstone of our democracy is that the government is accountable to its citizens. The FOIA process is a key mechanism to ensure accountability. I am pleased that the approach taken under this bill is consistent with the Department's unity of effort initiative.

Specifically, H.R. 1615 requires that the Department's chief FOIA officer collaborate with FOIA officials in component agencies to track the total annual costs associated with processing FOIA requests, identify and adopt cost-savings measures, and strategize on addressing the backlog.

Mr. Speaker, I would also note that in committee, measures authored by Democratic members to promote automation and address staffing resources were adopted with bipartisan support.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 1615, a bipartisan bill that seeks to improve the responsiveness of the Department of Homeland Security to the American public, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I have no more speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, timely compliance with FOIA requests is imperative to an open government. The DHS FOIA backlog has existed for too long and needs to be addressed.

I thank Representative CARTER and Chairman MCCAUL for their bipartisan efforts on the DHS FOIA Efficiency Act, which marks an important first step in addressing this FOIA backlog and promoting greater automation in the processing of requests.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, once again, I urge my colleagues to support this strong, bipartisan piece of legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Judiciary and Homeland Security Committees, and I rise in strong support of H.R. 1615, the “DHS FOIA Efficiency Act of 2015.”

I support this bipartisan legislation, which addresses DHS' FOIA backlog by requiring the department's chief FOIA officer to issue updated regulations on obtaining records under the Act.

I am pleased that H.R. 1615 incorporates two key Jackson Lee amendments offered during the committee markup of the bill.

In 2014, DHS had 67,097 FOIA requests that carried over from 2013; added 291,242 requests; and processed 238,031 FOIA requests.

The agency still had 120,308 FOIA requests that were carried over into 2015.

Because FOIA is a critical component of creating our nation's open and transparent government, the process of citizens getting access to information regarding government matters of personal or public interest is important.

DHS's ability to meet public demands for information through FOIA should not be hampered by a lack of technology.

One of the Jackson Lee Amendments included in the bill directs that the agency include information on how to adopt automated processing to meet FOIA obligations triggered by agency: Public Notices published in the Federal Register; Final rules; decisions, outcome of adjudicated matters or other agency actions; and obligations to reply to citizen FOIA request.

Another Jackson Lee Amendment included in H.R. 1615 directs that a report be drafted that provides an assessment of DHS progress made toward automating the FOIA process.

That Jackson Lee amendment also provides that upon completion of the FOIA automation plan that the Chief FOIA officer provides the plan to the heads of the components of the Department.

Mr. Speaker, it is true as Justice Brandeis famously observed that “sunshine is the best disinfectant.”

He was speaking of the power of knowledge to illuminate and to enhance the ability of people to understand and evaluate government actions when presented with information.

I agree with Justice Brandeis that “the most important political office is that of the private citizen.”

I support H.R. 1615 and urge my colleagues to join me in voting for its passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1615, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

DHS IT DUPLICATION REDUCTION ACT OF 2015

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1626) to reduce duplication of information technology at the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1626

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “DHS IT Duplication Reduction Act of 2015”.

SEC. 2. DHS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DUPLICATION REDUCTION.

(a) INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DUPLICATION REDUCTION.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Chief Information Officer of the Department of Homeland Security shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report that includes the following:

(1) The number of information technology systems at the Department of Homeland Security.

(2) An assessment of the number of such systems exhibiting duplication or fragmentation.

(3) A strategy for reducing such duplicative systems, including an assessment of potential cost savings or cost avoidance as a result of such reduction.

(4) A methodology for determining which system should be eliminated when there is duplication or fragmentation.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

(1) The term “duplication or fragmentation” of information technology systems means two or more systems or programs that deliver similar functionality to similar user populations.

(2) The term “information technology” has the meaning given such term in section 11101 of title 40, United States Code.

(c) NO NEW AUTHORIZATION OF FUNDING.—This section shall be carried out using amounts otherwise appropriated or made available to the Department of Homeland Security. No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD) and the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1626.

Call me crazy, but it just doesn't make sense to me to have Federal agencies using multiple IT systems that do the same thing. As chairman of the Oversight and Government Reform Information Technology Subcommittee and a member of the Homeland Security Committee, I see these cost overruns and hear stories of duplicative systems on a daily basis. It is a ridiculous and outrageous waste of taxpayer dollars.

This year, the GAO's annual High Risk report designated information technology as a new area of high risk within the government. Federal agencies spend nearly \$80 billion a year on IT projects, and nearly 80 percent of them are on outdated and legacy systems. In the Department of Homeland Security, there are more than 600 IT systems in FEMA alone.

The DHS IT Duplication Reduction Act is designed to change that. My bill requires the DHS Chief Information Officer to identify all IT systems in the Department, figure out which ones are redundant, and then come up with a strategy to reduce their number.

Mr. Speaker, when I was building a cybersecurity firm in the private sector, things like this didn't happen because there is no way that a small business trying to grow would ever waste their money like this.

Washington should have the same mentality, especially since this money being wasted isn't Washington's in the first place. I believe Washington can and should be much better stewards of the dollars taxpayers have entrusted to them. It is past time to change the “it is not my money, so let's spend it” culture here in Washington that leads to this kind of waste.

Taxpayers should be able to trust that every dollar is being used carefully and thoughtfully on effective and efficient government that works for them. I believe this legislation is a good start in reining in Federal IT spending and getting our government back on track.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise in strong support of H.R. 1626, the DHS IT Duplication Reduction Act of 2015.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1626 seeks to address duplication or fragmentation within the Department of Homeland Security's information technology systems. Specifically, H.R. 1626 requires the Department's Chief Information Officer to report on the number of IT systems throughout the Department and identify and address those areas where duplication or fragmentation may exist.

This undertaking at the headquarters level should help inform the Department's IT budget planning which, in light of sequestration and the downward trend of the Department's budget, becomes all the more important when considered in the critical missions entrusted to DHS.

This legislation is in the spirit of the Department's Unity of Effort initiative and has the potential of fostering more coordinated IT planning and management among the Department's components. In committee, a number of technical refinements authored by Democrats were accepted to ensure that reducing redundancy frees up resources for DHS' operations.

Mr. Speaker, I do urge support for this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I, once again, want to point out the bipartisan efforts in regards to this measure. This measure has the potential of fostering more coordinated IT planning and management among the Department's components.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage and support of this measure.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Chairman MCCAUL, Ranking Member THOMPSON, Congresswoman WATSON COLEMAN, and my colleagues on the Homeland Security Committee for their support on this bill.

I, once again, urge all my colleagues to support this strong, bipartisan piece of legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1626, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SUNSHINE ACT OF 2015

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1637) to require annual reports on the activities and accomplishments of federally funded research and