

necessary health benefits? Women's access to health care has always been important to me, and that is why I am a consistent advocate for the work that Planned Parenthood does.

More importantly, I refuse to put jobs and our country's safety at risk over partisan grandstanding. Only 7 days left—it is time to do what we were sent here to do and end this senseless shutdown talk.

GOP DYSFUNCTION

(Mr. VEASEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my Republican colleagues to please don't shut down the government. Let's work together. Let's put politics aside and do what is best for the American people.

By the end of this month, we are expected to negotiate a responsible budget agreement, but threats from the rightwing extremists are taking us off course once again.

I recently wrote an op-ed challenging Republican threats to women's healthcare coverage, as I refuse to stand on the sidelines when our country's daughters, sisters, and mothers are under attack.

Instead of, once again, holding women's health care hostage in order to pass a biased agenda, we need to come together to pass a responsible, bipartisan budget to address our Nation's most pressing problems.

Now, residents in the Dallas/Fort Worth area are concerned about getting some congestion off of our freeways and doing things like making sure that the American public has good, well-paying jobs and protecting our businesses.

They want us to pass a balanced and responsible budget that averts another government shutdown. We cannot expect to repeat the same mistakes and think that it is going to yield different results.

The American people are counting on us to focus on what matters: jobs, education, and fixing our country's crumbling infrastructure.

STOP GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

(Mrs. LAWRENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today outraged and disappointed. Once again, petty partisan politics is threatening to derail government funding and shut down critical services to hard-working, deserving Americans.

Later today, I will be hosting a forum with the media, talking about how women are treated and misrepresented in the media; and here, we have an issue that has a direct impact on women being used as a pawn to shut down our government. The only group that is portrayed more negatively—and we all hear it—is our own Congress.

We must act now to change how we are portrayed and how America views us. We must work together and stop another wasteful and harmful government shutdown. We are better than this.

Congress, my colleagues, let's work together and keep our government working.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, September 16, 2015.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on September 16, 2015 at 9:23 a.m.:

That the Senate passed S. 2036.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 3 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1500

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON) at 3 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

NATIONAL WINDSTORM IMPACT REDUCTION ACT REAUTHORIZATION OF 2015

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 23) to reauthorize the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the Senate amendment is as follows:

Senate amendment:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "National Windstorm Impact Reduction Act Reauthorization of 2015".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

(a) **DIRECTOR.**—Section 203(1) of the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Act of 2004 (42 U.S.C. 15702(1)) is amended by striking "Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy" and inserting "Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology".

(b) **LIFELINES.**—Section 203 of the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Act of 2004 (42 U.S.C. 15702) is further amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (2) through (4) as paragraphs (3) through (5), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following new paragraph:

"(2) **LIFELINES.**—The term 'lifelines' means public works and utilities, including transportation facilities and infrastructure, oil and gas pipelines, electrical power and communication facilities and infrastructure, and water supply and sewage treatment facilities."

(c) **WINDSTORM.**—Paragraph (5) of such section, as redesignated by subsection (b), is amended by inserting "northeaster," after "tropical storm,".

SEC. 3. NATIONAL WINDSTORM IMPACT REDUCTION PROGRAM.

Section 204 of the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Act of 2004 (42 U.S.C. 15703) is amended—

(1) by striking subsections (a), (b), and (c) and inserting the following:

"(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program, the purpose of which is to achieve major measurable reductions in the losses of life and property from windstorms through a coordinated Federal effort, in cooperation with other levels of government, academia, and the private sector, aimed at improving the understanding of windstorms and their impacts and developing and encouraging the implementation of cost-effective mitigation measures to reduce those impacts.

"(b) **RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROGRAM AGENCIES.**—

"(1) **LEAD AGENCY.**—The National Institute of Standards and Technology shall have the primary responsibility for planning and coordinating the Program. In carrying out this paragraph, the Director shall—

"(A) ensure that the Program includes the necessary components to promote the implementation of windstorm risk reduction measures by Federal, State, and local governments, national standards and model building code organizations, architects and engineers, and others with a role in planning and constructing buildings and lifelines;

"(B) support the development of performance-based engineering tools, and work with appropriate groups to promote the commercial application of such tools, including through wind-related model building codes, voluntary standards, and construction best practices;

"(C) request the assistance of Federal agencies other than the Program agencies, as necessary to assist in carrying out this Act;

"(D) coordinate all Federal post-windstorm investigations to the extent practicable; and

"(E) when warranted by research or investigative findings, issue recommendations to assist in informing the development of model codes, and provide information to Congress on the use of such recommendations.

"(2) **NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY.**—In addition to the lead agency responsibilities described under paragraph (1),

the National Institute of Standards and Technology shall be responsible for carrying out research and development to improve model building codes, voluntary standards, and best practices for the design, construction, and retrofit of buildings, structures, and lifelines.

“(3) NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION.—The National Science Foundation shall support research in—

“(A) engineering and the atmospheric sciences to improve the understanding of the behavior of windstorms and their impact on buildings, structures, and lifelines; and

“(B) economic and social factors influencing windstorm risk reduction measures.

“(4) NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION.—The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall support atmospheric sciences research to improve the understanding of the behavior of windstorms and their impact on buildings, structures, and lifelines.

“(5) FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY.—The Federal Emergency Management Agency shall—

“(A) support—

“(i) the development of risk assessment tools and effective mitigation techniques;

“(ii) windstorm-related data collection and analysis;

“(iii) public outreach and information dissemination; and

“(iv) promotion of the adoption of windstorm preparedness and mitigation measures, including for households, businesses, and communities, consistent with the Agency’s all-hazards approach; and

“(B) work closely with national standards and model building code organizations, in conjunction with the National Institute of Standards and Technology, to promote the implementation of research results and promote better building practices within the building design and construction industry, including architects, engineers, contractors, builders, and inspectors.”.

(2) by redesignating subsection (d) as subsection (c), and by striking subsections (e) and (f); and

(3) by inserting after subsection (c), as so redesignated, the following new subsections:

“(d) BUDGET ACTIVITIES.—The Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the Director of the National Science Foundation, the Director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall each include in their agency’s annual budget request to Congress a description of their agency’s projected activities under the Program for the fiscal year covered by the budget request, along with an assessment of what they plan to spend on those activities for that fiscal year.

“(e) INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON WINDSTORM IMPACT REDUCTION.—

“(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established an Interagency Coordinating Committee on Windstorm Impact Reduction, chaired by the Director or the Director’s designee.

“(2) MEMBERSHIP.—In addition to the chair, the Committee shall be composed of—

“(A) the heads or such designees of—

“(i) the Federal Emergency Management Agency;

“(ii) the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration;

“(iii) the National Science Foundation;

“(iv) the Office of Science and Technology Policy; and

“(v) the Office of Management and Budget; and

“(B) the head of any other Federal agency, or such designee, the chair considers appropriate.

“(3) MEETINGS.—The Committee shall meet not less than once a year at the call of the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

“(4) GENERAL PURPOSE AND DUTIES.—The Committee shall oversee the planning and coordination of the Program.

“(5) STRATEGIC PLAN.—The Committee shall develop and submit to Congress, not later than one year after the date of enactment of the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Act Reauthorization of 2015, a Strategic Plan for the Program that includes—

“(A) prioritized goals for the Program that will mitigate against the loss of life and property from future windstorms;

“(B) short-term, mid-term, and long-term research objectives to achieve those goals;

“(C) a description of the role of each Program agency in achieving the prioritized goals;

“(D) the methods by which progress towards the goals will be assessed; and

“(E) an explanation of how the Program will foster the transfer of research results into outcomes, such as improved model building codes.

“(6) PROGRESS REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Act Reauthorization of 2015, the Committee shall submit to the Congress a report on the progress of the Program that includes—

“(A) a description of the activities funded under the Program, a description of how these activities align with the prioritized goals and research objectives established in the Strategic Plan, and the budgets, per agency, for these activities;

“(B) the outcomes achieved by the Program for each of the goals identified in the Strategic Plan;

“(C) a description of any recommendations made to change existing building codes that were the result of Program activities; and

“(D) a description of the extent to which the Program has incorporated recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Windstorm Impact Reduction.

“(7) COORDINATED BUDGET.—The Committee shall develop a coordinated budget for the Program, which shall be submitted to the Congress not later than 60 days after the date of the President’s budget submission for each fiscal year.”.

SEC. 4. NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WINDSTORM IMPACT REDUCTION.

Section 205 of the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Act of 2004 (42 U.S.C. 15704) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 205. NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WINDSTORM IMPACT REDUCTION.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology shall establish an Advisory Committee on Windstorm Impact Reduction, which shall be composed of at least 7 and not more than 15 members who are qualified to provide advice on windstorm impact reduction and represent related scientific, architectural, and engineering disciplines, none of whom may be employees of the Federal Government, including—

“(1) representatives of research and academic institutions;

“(2) industry standards development organizations;

“(3) emergency management agencies;

“(4) State and local government; and

“(5) business communities, including the insurance industry.

“(b) ASSESSMENTS.—The Advisory Committee on Windstorm Impact Reduction shall offer assessments and recommendations on—

“(1) trends and developments in the natural, engineering, and social sciences and practices of windstorm impact mitigation;

“(2) the priorities of the Program’s Strategic Plan;

“(3) the coordination of the Program;

“(4) the effectiveness of the Program in meeting its purposes; and

“(5) any revisions to the Program which may be necessary.

“(c) COMPENSATION.—The members of the Advisory Committee established under this section shall serve without compensation.

“(d) REPORTS.—At least every 2 years, the Advisory Committee shall report to the Director on the assessments carried out under subsection (b) and its recommendations for ways to improve the Program.

“(e) CHARTER.—Notwithstanding section 14(b)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.), the Advisory Committee shall not be required to file a charter subsequent to its initial charter, filed under section 9(c) of such Act, before the termination date specified in subsection (f) of this section.

“(f) TERMINATION.—The Advisory Committee shall terminate on September 30, 2017.

“(g) CONFLICT OF INTEREST.—An Advisory Committee member shall recuse himself from any Advisory Committee activity in which he has an actual pecuniary interest.”.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 207 of the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Act of 2004 (42 U.S.C. 15706) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 207. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

“(a) FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for carrying out this title—

“(1) \$5,332,000 for fiscal year 2015;

“(2) \$5,332,000 for fiscal year 2016; and

“(3) \$5,332,000 for fiscal year 2017.

“(b) NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the National Science Foundation for carrying out this title—

“(1) \$9,682,000 for fiscal year 2015;

“(2) \$9,682,000 for fiscal year 2016; and

“(3) \$9,682,000 for fiscal year 2017.

“(c) NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the National Institute of Standards and Technology for carrying out this title—

“(1) \$4,120,000 for fiscal year 2015;

“(2) \$4,120,000 for fiscal year 2016; and

“(3) \$4,120,000 for fiscal year 2017.

“(d) NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for carrying out this title—

“(1) \$2,266,000 for fiscal year 2015;

“(2) \$2,266,000 for fiscal year 2016; and

“(3) \$2,266,000 for fiscal year 2017.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include 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. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 23, the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Act Reauthorization of 2015, reauthorizes the activities of the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program through fiscal year 2017.

Representative RANDY NEUGEBAUER, my Texas colleague, has championed this program for over a decade. In the 113th Congress, he and Representative FREDERICA WILSON's bipartisan efforts helped move this legislation through the Science Committee and to successfully pass the House.

It is because of their past work that we were able to bring this bill to the House floor on January 7, the second day of business in the 114th Congress, this Congress. The bill overwhelmingly passed the House 381-39.

Today, we consider the Senate amendment to H.R. 23. Thanks to leadership of my colleague on the other side of the Capitol, Senator JOHN THUNE, an amended version of H.R. 23 passed the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee in June. It then passed the Senate by unanimous consent in July.

The National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program supports Federal research and development efforts to help mitigate the loss of life and property due to wind-related hazards.

Millions of Americans live in areas vulnerable to hurricanes, tornados, and other windstorms. The National Weather Service reported just over 100 deaths and over 900 injuries last year due to tornados and other windstorms.

In Texas, we are all too familiar with the harm that strong wind can cause. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's storm prediction center, 128 tornados and 1,366 windstorms were reported just in Texas in the last 2 years. The effects of these disasters can be felt for a long time.

Initially established in 2004, the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program supports activities to improve our understanding of windstorms and their impacts and helps to develop and encourage the implementation of cost-effective mitigation measures. H.R. 23 establishes the National Institute of Standards and Technology as the lead agency for the program.

The bill also improves coordination of interagency activities in a fiscally responsible manner. It expands transparency for how much money is being spent on windstorm research at the four participating agencies, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the National Science Foundation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and FEMA. It authorizes \$21.4 million for this inter-agency research.

The Senate amendment provides some flexibility to the advisory committee on windstorm impact reduction when it provides recommendations in its report. It also ensures that northeasters are included in the definition of windstorm and makes a few other minor conforming and technical changes.

Again, I want to thank Representative NEUGEBAUER for his continued efforts in support of this program. I encourage my colleagues to support the

bill and to send it to the President's desk for his autograph.

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

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 23, legislation that reauthorizes the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program, or NWIRP.

America faces significant exposure to windstorms. We saw that, indeed, in 2012 when Superstorm Sandy devastated parts of the Northeast. Superstorm Sandy was responsible for over 200 deaths and caused over \$70 billion in damage.

According to the National Weather Service, from 2005 to 2014, thousands of Americans lost their lives from the impacts of windstorms. Along with the loss of life, windstorms caused many billions of dollars in property and crop damage during that time.

When windstorms occur, we must work to save lives and reduce the amount of property and crop damage that the windstorm or other natural disaster causes. We already are investing significant resources after a windstorm, but we should be investing more in preparedness.

FEMA's predisaster mitigation program has demonstrated that every dollar invested in mitigation activities saves \$3 to \$4 in recovery costs.

The National Windstorm Impact Reduction Act Reauthorization of 2015 is largely a mitigation program. The bill reauthorizes the NWIRP program that directs NIST, NSF, NOAA, and FEMA to support coordinated activities to improve our understanding of windstorms and their impacts and to develop cost-effective mitigation measures.

This program has the potential to lessen the loss of life and economic damage of windstorms by supporting research and helping to translate that research into more effective building codes and mitigation programs, but this program needs robust investment to achieve that result.

Unfortunately, this bill includes a lower total authorization level than was authorized for this program in fiscal year 2008.

We have the responsibility, I believe, to assist our constituents after a natural disaster occurs, but we also have the responsibility to properly support mitigation programs that could reduce the loss of life and property damage caused by the next natural disaster.

Nevertheless, this is an important program that needs reauthorization, and I, today, support its passage.

I want to thank the members of the Science, Space and Technology Committee, including Chair SMITH, Ranking Member JOHNSON, and Representative NEUGEBAUER, for their hard work on this bill.

I want to thank the members of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee for their hard work as well. It is nice to see my colleagues here in the House of Represent-

atives and over in the Senate working in a bipartisan, bicameral manner to bring this bill to the floor today.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO), a member of the Science Committee, for his comments and for supporting this piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Lubbock, Texas (Mr. NEUGEBAUER), a Texas colleague. I want to thank him for sponsoring this piece of legislation and look forward to its passage today and to its being enacted into law as well.

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support today for my bill, the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Act, or NWIRP.

As I said, I want to thank Chairman SMITH. I also want to thank Senator JOHN THUNE of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, who helped shepherd this bill through the Senate.

The United States averages almost 1,300 recorded tornados every year, causing over 70 deaths and 1,500 injuries. These storms cost about \$400 million in damage each year, but particularly in a bad year, like 2011, wind damage from tornados and thunderstorms cost more than \$28 billion. This is a natural and a national disaster.

When a family loses their home in a windstorm, they don't just have to rebuild their house; they have to rebuild their lives as well, and we can help these families, and we can help save their lives and, in many cases, help save their property through the important research that is going on at many universities around the country, including my alma mater, Texas Tech University.

With those families in mind, I introduced NWIRP. NWIRP promotes research that helps save lives, reduce injuries, and lessens damage from windstorms.

As was mentioned by my colleague from New York, we have found that \$1 in investments in the resilience against windstorms can result in \$4 in savings in a disaster response. Not only are we investing dollars to make America safer, but we are also saving the taxpayers in the long run.

Upon passage, this bill will move to the President's desk to be signed into law, and I think it is important that we get this bill passed as quickly as we can because, again, windstorms can cause a lot of damage and can cause the loss of life.

The more we understand about the dynamics of these windstorms and understanding how they interface with different types of building materials, the safer and better structures that we are able to build and ultimately, in many cases, save lives.

A lot of important research has been going on. One of the things I like about

this particular piece of legislation is that it brings some accountability in making sure that we are investing the dollars in the places where we are getting the most bang for the buck for the American taxpayers.

Not only are we looking out for the taxpayers in this bill, but we are also looking out for the people, the men and women, that are affected by these windstorms. I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, we must help our constituents prepare for and mitigate the impacts of windstorms that threaten lives and property. This bill reauthorizes a program that would do just that, and I urge its adoption.

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no other requests from Members to speak on this piece of legislation, so I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 23, legislation that would reauthorize the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program—or NWIRP.

The last few years have been devastating years for natural disasters across the country. For example, in May, the Great Plains had a six-day outbreak of tornado activity that affected areas ranging from Colorado to Texas and resulted in over 60 injuries and 5 fatalities.

H.R. 23 directs NIST, NSF, NOAA, and FEMA to support activities to improve the understanding of windstorms and their impacts. We can use that knowledge to reduce the vulnerability of our communities to natural disasters. The NWIRP program helps our federal agencies and communities across the nation to develop and implement many measures that help minimize the loss of life and property during windstorms and to rebuild effectively and safely after such storms.

I was pleased that when this bill was considered by the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, we worked in a bipartisan manner and made several improvements to the bill. We worked together to increase the authorization for FEMA, the agency tasked with implementing the research conducted by the other NWIRP agencies. Also, we added several social science-related provisions to the bill. We cannot design effective disaster preparation strategies without understanding how people make decisions and respond to disaster warnings.

The House of Representatives passed H.R. 23 at the end of January with a vote of 381–39 and sent it to the Senate. During their consideration, the Senate made minor changes to the bill, but I am happy to report that all of the bipartisan improvements we made to the bill remain in H.R. 23.

I want to thank my fellow Texans—Chairman SMITH and Mr. NEUGEBAUER—for working across the aisle on this bill. I also want to thank the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee in the Senate for their work on this bill.

This is an important program that needs to be reauthorized. It is good to see Members of the House and Senate coming together, work-

ing out their differences, compromising, and ending up with a bill with bipartisan, bicameral support.

I support the bill and urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 23.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendment was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GERARDO HERNANDEZ AIRPORT SECURITY ACT OF 2015

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 720) to improve intergovernmental planning for and communication during security incidents at domestic airports, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the Senate amendment is as follows:

Senate amendment:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Gerardo Hernandez Airport Security Act of 2015”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The term “Assistant Secretary” means the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security (Transportation Security) of the Department of Homeland Security.

(2) ADMINISTRATION.—The term “Administration” means the Transportation Security Administration.

SEC. 3. SECURITY INCIDENT RESPONSE AT AIRPORTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Assistant Secretary shall, in consultation with other Federal agencies as appropriate, conduct outreach to all airports in the United States at which the Administration performs, or oversees the implementation and performance of, security measures, and provide technical assistance as necessary, to verify such airports have in place individualized working plans for responding to security incidents inside the perimeter of the airport, including active shooters, acts of terrorism, and incidents that target passenger-screening checkpoints.

(b) TYPES OF PLANS.—Such plans may include, but may not be limited to, the following:

(1) A strategy for evacuating and providing care to persons inside the perimeter of the airport, with consideration given to the needs of persons with disabilities.

(2) A plan for establishing a unified command, including identification of staging areas for non-airport-specific law enforcement and fire response.

(3) A schedule for regular testing of communications equipment used to receive emergency calls.

(4) An evaluation of how emergency calls placed by persons inside the perimeter of the airport will reach airport police in an expeditious manner.

(5) A practiced method and plan to communicate with travelers and all other persons inside the perimeter of the airport.

(6) To the extent practicable, a projected maximum timeframe for law enforcement response to active shooters, acts of terrorism, and incidents

that target passenger security-screening checkpoints.

(7) A schedule of joint exercises and training to be conducted by the airport, the Administration, other stakeholders such as airport and airline tenants, and any relevant law enforcement, airport police, fire, and medical personnel.

(8) A schedule for producing after-action joint exercise reports to identify and determine how to improve security incident response capabilities.

(9) A strategy, where feasible, for providing airport law enforcement with access to airport security video surveillance systems at category X airports where those systems were purchased and installed using Administration funds.

(c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary shall report to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate on the findings from its outreach to airports under subsection (a), including an analysis of the level of preparedness such airports have to respond to security incidents, including active shooters, acts of terrorism, and incidents that target passenger-screening checkpoints.

SEC. 4. DISSEMINATING INFORMATION ON BEST PRACTICES.

The Assistant Secretary shall—

(1) identify best practices that exist across airports for security incident planning, management, and training; and

(2) establish a mechanism through which to share such best practices with other airport operators nationwide.

SEC. 5. CERTIFICATION.

Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Assistant Secretary shall certify in writing to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate that all screening personnel have participated in practical training exercises for active shooter scenarios.

SEC. 6. REIMBURSABLE AGREEMENTS.

Not later than 90 days after the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary shall provide to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate an analysis of how the Administration can use cost savings achieved through efficiencies to increase over the next 5 fiscal years the funding available for checkpoint screening law enforcement support reimbursable agreements.

SEC. 7. SECURITY INCIDENT RESPONSE FOR SURFACE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Assistant Secretary shall, in consultation with the Secretary of Transportation, and other relevant agencies, conduct outreach to all passenger transportation agencies and providers with high-risk facilities, as identified by the Assistant Secretary, to verify such agencies and providers have in place plans to respond to active shooters, acts of terrorism, or other security-related incidents that target passengers.

(b) TYPES OF PLANS.—As applicable, such plans may include, but may not be limited to, the following:

(1) A strategy for evacuating and providing care to individuals, with consideration given to the needs of persons with disabilities.

(2) A plan for establishing a unified command.

(3) A plan for frontline employees to receive active shooter training.

(4) A schedule for regular testing of communications equipment used to receive emergency calls.

(5) An evaluation of how emergency calls placed by individuals using the transportation system will reach police in an expeditious manner.