

In September, the inspector general issued a report highlighting the need for such strategy. The report, entitled "DHS Can Strengthen Its Cyber Mission Coordination Efforts," found that intradepartmental coordination was lacking and recommended that the Department develop a comprehensive cross-departmental strategic implementation plan that defines each component's cyber missions and responsibilities.

The Department operates frontline programs that protect this Nation from manmade and natural disasters. With cyber threats increasingly at the forefront today, it is essential that all of the Department's day-to-day programs, policies, and activities are effective and meeting its multi-layered cybersecurity responsibilities.

As the lead Federal agency responsible for securing Federal civilian networks and as the vital cyber information-sharing partner to national critical infrastructures, it is crucial that the Department have a comprehensive and achievable strategic plan in place.

Mr. Speaker, in recent years, Congress has provided significant resources to the Department to expand its cyber operations and workforce.

A lot of money has been spent to respond to cyber events and persistent information security threats. We must make sure our investments in operational plans and research and development are technically achievable and transparent where they can be.

Fundamentally, my bill seeks to ensure that the Department takes a measurable, strategic posture that can be a model for others and to help protect our Nation's vulnerable information security networks.

I ask for my colleagues' support.

I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1730

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

Mr. Speaker, I once again urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3510.

I thank Congressman RICHMOND for his bipartisan approach in bringing this bill to the floor today.

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 support of H.R. 3510, the "Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity Strategy Act of 2015," which amends the Homeland Security Act of 2002, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop a cybersecurity strategy for the Department of Homeland Security.

The strategy must include information on the programs, policies, and activities that are required to successfully execute the full range of the cybersecurity programs, policies, and activities in furtherance of the Department of Homeland Security's mission regarding the National Cybersecurity and Communication Integration Center.

The National Cybersecurity and Communication Integration Center addresses cybersecurity risks faced by federal and non-federal entities.

In July of this year it was reported that the Office of Personnel Management lost personal information on 21.5 million current and former federal employees and their families.

In 2014, the following agencies reported breaches: The State Department revealed that its unclassified email network had been breached in a cyberattack; the U.S. Postal Service reported that 800,000 personnel files were potentially affected by a cyber breach; the Department of Health and Human Services reported cyber intruders had accessed a server used to test code for the healthcare.gov website and installed malicious software; and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the agency that oversees the U.S. nuclear power industry, revealed a number of attempted intrusions and three successful intrusions into its computer systems.

In cyber time, which is near the speed of light—federal computer networks will not get a warning from a determined enemy that an attack is occurring.

Our nation's critical infrastructure and civilian government agencies depend on the cybersecurity talent and resources that the Department of Homeland Security can provide on the frontline to defend against attacks.

As with other threats that this nation has faced and overcome, we must create the resources and the institutional responses to protect our nation against cyber threats while preserving our liberties and freedoms.

We cannot accomplish this task without the full cooperation and support of the private sector, computing research community and academia.

This level of engagement requires the trust and confidence of the American people that this new cyber threat center will be used for the purpose it was created and that the collaboration of others in this effort to better protect computing networks will be used only for protection and defense.

There are people with skills and those with the potential to develop skills that would be of benefit to our nation's efforts to develop an effective cybersecurity defense and deterrence posture.

It is my hope that as we move forward the Committee on Homeland Security will continue in a bipartisan manner to seek out the best ways to bring the brightest and most qualified people into the government as cybersecurity professionals.

Toward that end, I am hosting a Town Hall on Wednesday, October 7, 2015, Town Hall on Minority Representation in the Cybersecurity Workforce.

I am pleased to have the Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus join me in support of this important Town Hall.

The message from the federal government to the public regarding the employment opportunities available in STEM careers that include cybersecurity.

It is my commitment that Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Native American Colleges and Women's Colleges and Universities should be actively engaged when agencies conduct outreach and program development on cybersecurity.

The Brookings' Metropolitan Policy Program's report "The Hidden STEM Economy," reported that in 2011, 26 million jobs or 20 percent of all occupations required knowledge in 1 or more STEM areas.

Half of all STEM jobs are available to workers without a 4 year degree and these jobs pay on average \$53,000 a year, which is 10 percent higher than jobs with similar education requirements.

There will be STEM winners and losers, but not because the skills needed are too difficult to obtain, but because people are not aware of the jobs that are going unfilled today, nor do they know what education or training will create job security for the next 2 to 3 decades.

I am very aware of the importance of STEM job training and education.

A third of Houston jobs are in STEM-based fields.

Houston has the second largest concentrations of engineers (22.4 for every 1,000 workers according to the Greater Houston Partnership.)

Houston has 59,070 engineers, the second largest populations in the nation.

STEM jobs are at the core of Houston's economic success, but what we have done with STEM innovation and job creation in the city of Houston is not enough to satisfy the regions demand for STEM trained workers.

We anticipate that in the next 5 years the gap in the number of people with STEM skills and training will not keep up with the number of positions requiring those skills.

I ask my colleagues to join me in support of H.R. 3510, the "Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity Strategy Act of 2015."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RATCLIFFE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3510, 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.

ADOPTIVE FAMILY RELIEF ACT

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1300) to amend section 221 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide relief for adoptive families from immigrant visa fees in certain situations.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1300

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 "Adoptive Family Relief Act".

SEC. 2. WAIVER OF FEES FOR RENEWAL OF IMMIGRANT VISA FOR ADOPTED CHILD IN CERTAIN SITUATIONS.

Section 221(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1201(c)) is amended to read as follows:

"(c) PERIOD OF VALIDITY; RENEWAL OR REPLACEMENT.—

"(1) IMMIGRANT VISAS.—An immigrant visa shall be valid for such period, not exceeding six months, as shall be by regulations prescribed, except that any visa issued to a child lawfully adopted by a United States citizen and spouse while such citizen is serving abroad in the United States Armed Forces, or is employed abroad by the United

States Government, or is temporarily abroad on business, shall be valid until such time, for a period not to exceed three years, as the adoptive citizen parent returns to the United States in due course of his service, employment, or business.

“(2) NONIMMIGRANT VISAS.—A non-immigrant visa shall be valid for such periods as shall be by regulations prescribed. In prescribing the period of validity of a non-immigrant visa in the case of nationals of any foreign country who are eligible for such visas, the Secretary of State shall, insofar as practicable, accord to such nationals the same treatment upon a reciprocal basis as such foreign country accords to nationals of the United States who are within a similar class; except that in the case of aliens who are nationals of a foreign country and who either are granted refugee status and firmly resettled in another foreign country or are granted permanent residence and residing in another foreign country, the Secretary of State may prescribe the period of validity of such a visa based upon the treatment granted by that other foreign country to alien refugees and permanent residents, respectively, in the United States.

“(3) VISA REPLACEMENT.—An immigrant visa may be replaced under the original number during the fiscal year in which the original visa was issued for an immigrant who establishes to the satisfaction of the consular officer that the immigrant—

“(A) was unable to use the original immigrant visa during the period of its validity because of reasons beyond his control and for which he was not responsible;

“(B) is found by a consular officer to be eligible for an immigrant visa; and

“(C) pays again the statutory fees for an application and an immigrant visa.

“(4) FEE WAIVER.—If an immigrant visa was issued, on or after March 27, 2013, for a child who has been lawfully adopted, or who is coming to the United States to be adopted, by a United States citizen, any statutory immigrant visa fees relating to a renewal or replacement of such visa may be waived or, if already paid, may be refunded upon request, subject to such criteria as the Secretary of State may prescribe, if—

“(A) the immigrant child was unable to use the original immigrant visa during the period of its validity as a direct result of extraordinary circumstances, including the denial of an exit permit; and

“(B) if such inability was attributable to factors beyond the control of the adopting parent or parents and of the immigrant.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) and the gentleman from California (Ms. LOFGREN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on S. 1300 currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

When I hold and kiss my little children good-bye to come to this place

every week, the pain that I feel in leaving them for several days is mitigated by the conviction that I will be seeing them again very soon.

But I stand here tonight, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of hundreds of American families who are separated from their children with no sense of certainty or knowing when they will be allowed to see their children again or to know when their children will be home for good. That is because, in September of 2013, now more than 2 years ago, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or the DRC, ceased issuing exit visas, including visas for the more than 350 children who had been fully legally adopted by American families. These families had fully complied with international adoption laws in both the United States and the DRC, had already spent months or years going through the tedious intercountry adoption process, and some of them had already arrived in the DRC with the belief that they would be bringing their adoptive children home at last to their forever families in America.

Despite significant, ongoing efforts by both Congress and the State Department to alleviate any of the DRC Government's concerns and resolve the exit permit process, Mr. Speaker, it is unknown when that suspension will be lifted. Meanwhile, American adoptive families are being faced with the added burden of having to repeatedly renew their adoptive child's adoption paperwork and visas in order to keep it up to date.

Thus, the Adoptive Family Relief Act grants flexibility to the State Department to waive the immigration visa renewal fees of \$325 per child for adoptive families in America in extraordinary circumstances like this where the cause of delay is out of the family's control. Mr. Speaker, waiving the visa renewal fee would alleviate one portion of the overwhelming burden that these American families are enduring until their adoptive child or children can travel to the U.S.

While the U.S. Government continues to work toward the Democratic Republic of the Congo lifting the exit permit suspension, this legislation is critically important and will offer some practical relief to the American families held powerless in a very difficult situation.

It is my hope, Mr. Speaker, that the many families waiting to bring their adopted children home will receive encouragement from the strong bipartisan effort here in Congress to support them during this time, as we work collectively to engage the DRC Government and work toward the suspension being fully lifted. This bill is a reminder to them that the Congress has not and will not forget their plight, and we will not cease working on their behalf until their families are finally permanently united and whole.

Mr. Speaker, I especially want to thank Chairman GOODLATTE and Chairman ROYCE for their noble and principled leadership in helping to elevate

this issue and bring this legislation to the floor.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 1300, the Adoptive Family Relief Act.

As has been mentioned, 2 years ago, the Democratic Republic of the Congo suspended issuing exit permits to children who had been adopted and trying to leave the country to be with their parents. To this day, that country continues to suspend issuing these permits; and without permits, the children can't join their mom and dad, the people who have adopted them, even though the children are in possession of immigrant visas.

Now, we know to be separated from a child and not to be able to provide love and care for that child is a stressful and tormenting episode for any parent. For the families that adopted children in the DRC, this is exacerbated by the fact that their children are stuck in a country that has one of the worst healthcare systems in the world.

There are hundreds of families throughout the United States—and about 350 of them are waiting simply for an exit permit—missing their children and worried about the health of their children stuck in the DRC. The only thing that is preventing them from bringing their child or children home is this exit visa.

Now, our visas are valid only for 6 months, unfortunately, and I think, as was mentioned, it costs \$325 to renew a visa even though, really, there is no work involved. We have checked with the State Department, and there is minimal expense. So this is not going to be a hit on the State Department's budget, but it is a hit on the budget of families. Some families have spent \$1,000 over the past 2 years, and since we don't know when the DRC is going to start issuing these visas, we don't know how much money these families are looking at in the future.

This bipartisan bill doesn't solve the exit problem, but at least it solves the financial burden that we have put, not intentionally, on these families. It is the right thing to do. It will show support for these families during this distressing time.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MESSER).

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 1300, the Adoptive Family Relief Act.

For many, family is everything, and as any parent knows, not seeing your child for even one day can be hard. Now, imagine you are separated from your child by over 6,000 miles for more than 2 years. This is the reality for too many Americans. Hundreds of adopted children are stuck in the Democratic Republic of the Congo because their government has refused to provide the paperwork required for these children to leave.

For over 2 years, the Meyers, a family in my district, have been waiting to bring home their son and daughter, Papy and Octavie. We can do better for Papy and Octavie and all the other children waiting to come home to their families.

As the Department of State continues to work to bring home these children, S. 1300 would provide much-needed relief to American families going through this harrowing experience. I urge my colleagues to vote for this legislation. It is the right thing to do and worthy of your support.

Ms. LOFGREN. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of S. 1300, the Adoptive Family Relief Act. This bill seeks to remove obstacles for immigrant visas to be issued to adopted children from other countries. It eliminates fees for such visas.

Clearly, the challenge of caring for orphans due to crises worldwide is increasing. Rather than frustrate, however, or undermine the compassion and the love of American families who seek to adopt, this legislation modestly seeks to remove some of those barriers and some of those obstacles.

I would point out to my colleagues that I have held of number of hearings on adoption in my subcommittee, the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations. At one of those hearings several months ago, one of our witnesses made a very keen observation that there are more than 50 million children orphaned on the continent of Africa; and if you put that number in perspective, that would make that number of children, if they were in a single country, the fourth largest country in all of Africa after Nigeria, Ethiopia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

One remedy, of course, for this crisis is intercountry adoption, which sometimes brings children from Africa to our shores to provide them with loving homes. Of course, this is only a partial remedy. Many do find a place to live, a home with family members, but many others are left to fend for themselves.

This legislation recognizes that countries' policies do matter. Look at the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Currently, there are more than 400 American families who have successfully adopted children from the DRC. However, due to the DRC Government's suspension of exit permits, which was implemented beginning in September of 2013, many of these families have been unable to bring their adopted children home to the United States. About a dozen of those children have paid with their lives, dying in the country before they could receive medical attention. Others are in dire need of medical aid which, again, this legislation would help, at least, in terms of the

families to give them a bridge for the financial burdens they face.

I would point out that at one of my hearings, one of the witnesses really, in a very powerful way, said—and her name was Jovana Jones, an adoptive parent—“As adoptive parents, we spend years preparing, and it is imperative that our children come home immediately. We have done our part. Our families have done all we can, and we are at our limit.”

And then she said: “Our arms are open now, and our homes are ready to receive them today. We pray that our government mirrors our dedication and acts now so that our children come home soon.”

This is a very important piece of legislation that hopefully will facilitate the adoption and, at least, help those parents who are putting their money on the line; and it allows them to facilitate that adoption, to just hang in there until they can get their children.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, before coming to the floor, I wanted to reassure myself that the State Department did not have the authority to waive these fees just administratively. It is pretty clear that they need this legislation in order to waive these fees. In fact, they want to waive the fees; they want to support the families. So there is no argument here between the House and Senate, between Republicans and Democrats, between the administration and the legislative branch. This is something that we can all agree on.

You know, to raise kids is one of the most wonderful experiences you can ever have, and we have wonderful American families that want to provide a home for orphans, not only in the DRC, but to orphans all around the world. So it is really important for those of us in the government, administration, and Congress to do what we can to support American families who want to raise these adoptive children.

It is worth noting that the DRC is the problem today, but we have had other problems in the past in other countries, in Latin America and Asia. So this change in the law is going to provide the necessary basis for relieving parents from excessive fees should this occur, God forbid, with other countries.

We would ask our State Department to redouble its efforts with the DRC to get these exit permits underway. It is really unfair to the children and their parents to keep these kids stranded.

□ 1745

Finally, I would just note that we have not done very much by way of anything touching on immigration where we could have bipartisan support. I still wish that we had before us comprehensive immigration reform. That is not this, but it doesn't mean that we shouldn't support this. I think that it is important that we pass this and show these American parents that we are on their side and we hope that they can use the funds that they save

to provide for their new sons and daughters.

Mr. Speaker, unless the gentleman has additional speakers, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, there are very few things that we do in this body more important than trying to make sure that parentless little children have hope in life. Through our State Department, all across the world we do very laudable things to try to make sure they have this chance in life. Sometimes it is orphanages; sometimes it is just other types of help through NGOs.

In this particular case, we are doing everything that we can to facilitate children being put into a loving family on a permanent basis. To bring sometimes childless parents together with often parentless children is, I think, a very beautiful and noble effort on our part. I hope that this bill allows that in a greater way with the DRC and, as Ms. LOFGREN mentioned, with other states across the world if it becomes necessary.

I am grateful for all the bipartisan support. I know this is something that we have come together on. Again, I express appreciation to Chairman ROYCE, Chairman GOODLATTE, and to the gentlewoman who has expressed her support for this.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 1300.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 48 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order: