

As has been said by many, Frank Wolf is the William Wilberforce of our day. He is, and has always been, a voice for the voiceless. He once said: "Most would agree that conscience rights figure prominently in the narrative of America's founding. Historically, Americans and our corresponding institutions have recognized that conscience is not ultimately allegiant to the state, but to something, and for many people, Someone, higher."

I appreciate the opportunity today to continue that legacy with the passing of this important legislation which will continue his important and vital mission and legacy; and that is needed now, more than ever, for so many of the reasons that my colleagues here have highlighted.

I thank the gentleman so much for the privilege of addressing and cosponsoring this legislation.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues for their contributions to this bill and to today's debate, especially Mr. SMITH, Congresswoman BARBARA COMSTOCK and Mr. ENGEL.

The right to believe and practice one's religion according to the dictates of conscience is often called the first freedom. It is one of the founding ideas of our Nation, but we do not believe that it is only an American value. Rather, this is what we believe here. We believe it flows from the inherent dignity of every human person, and it deserves protection everywhere.

In today's world, those who are most violently opposed to religious freedom also pose the biggest threat to our Nation. They also pose the biggest threat to civilization worldwide.

Thus, the promotion of religious liberty is not some isolated human rights concern. No. It is a key component of our national security. And this bill, now authored by Mr. SMITH, H.R. 1150, contains important updates to the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 that will enhance the effectiveness of the United States' efforts to promote that liberty around the world, so it deserves our unanimous support.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1150, amending the Frank Wolf International Religious Freedom Act.

I support this measure because the right to freedom of religion has been a cornerstone of the American conscience.

Many of our country's first leaders fled religious persecution abroad and went on to establish laws protecting religious freedom.

This core belief of our great nation does not stop at our national borders; we offer refuge to those suffering from religious persecution throughout the world.

A testament to this commitment was the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 which was a landmark piece of legislation seeking to make religious freedom a higher priority in U.S. Foreign policy.

The Act was approved by Congress unanimously in 1998 and signed into law by President Clinton.

The Act condemns violations of religious freedom and promotes and assists other governments in the promotion of the fundamental right to freedom of religion.

While strides have been made in establishing worldwide practice of freedom of religion, it is currently under attack.

Let me also note that people are being prosecuted under blasphemy laws for freedom of expression, which is why I introduced the bipartisan measure H. Res. 290, calling for the global repeal of blasphemy laws.

I support H.R. 1150 because we must continue to work to preserve religious freedoms as well as making sure that religion is not a pretext for prosecution or persecution in the world.

Indeed, one of the key amendments to IRFA would be to relocate the Office of International Religious Freedom within the Office of the Secretary of State.

This action would allow for greater coordination of strategic focus and the minimization of duplicated efforts, streamline mandates, and centralize efforts to engage religious communities and promote human rights more generally in regards to religious freedom.

Currently, the office is headed by the Ambassador at-Large for International Religious Freedom which monitors religious persecution and discrimination worldwide to develop policy recommendations, programs, and awareness.

Besides being placed in the Secretary of State's office, the Ambassador at large would be able to make every effort to collaborate and coordinate across all U.S. agencies and departments to formulate strategic religious freedom policies, programs, and activities.

These two changes will provide a greater ability for us to advance religious freedom throughout the world.

H.R. 1150 will also allow us to assist emerging democracies to implement freedom of religion while also helping older partners maintain their freedom of religion practices and conscience.

H.R. 1150 calls to ensure that our diplomats and foreign policy experts are well versed in the importance of religious freedom and how to address atrocities related to religion.

H.R. 1150 also addresses how to improve our ability to promote freedom of religion by enhancing the capabilities and knowledge of our diplomats.

Our Foreign Service Officers (FSO) are on the front lines everyday carrying out American foreign policy while also shaping it, which makes sure that they are adequately trained on religious freedom.

H.R. 1150 directs the Secretary to develop mandatory religious freedom training for all Foreign Service Officers.

This major change will enhance FSO capabilities to identify severe persecutors to help assemble the Ambassador's Annual Report on International Religious Freedom.

In addition to the Annual Report, H.R. 1150 calls for an updated lists of persons that are currently being persecuted and forced to renounce their faith.

This is essential in bringing awareness to countries that need to be monitored or that have non-state actors that have high levels of detainment, disappearance, torture, or murder based on someone's religion.

Another key aspect of H.R. 1150 is to enhance engagement and coordination with the executive branch on issues pertaining to inter-

national religious freedom policies and global religion engagement strategies.

This would be achieved through amendment of The National Security Act of 1947, calling for the appointment of a Special Adviser for Global Religious Engagement and establishing the Interagency Policy Committee on Religious Freedom and Engagement.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support adequate funding in order to enable rapid and decisive efforts of supporting democracy and preservation of human rights.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SMITH of Nebraska). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1150, 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.

□ 1715

#### REQUIRING COMPTROLLER GENERAL TO ASSESS OPTIONS FOR DISPOSITION OF PLUM ISLAND ANIMAL DISEASE CENTER IN PLUM ISLAND, NEW YORK

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1887) to amend certain appropriation Acts to repeal the requirement directing the Administrator of General Services to sell Federal property and assets that support the operations of the Plum Island Animal Disease Center in Plum Island, New York, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1887

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

#### SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The Federal Government has owned Plum Island, New York, since 1899.

(2) Since 1954, the Plum Island Animal Disease Center has conducted unrivaled scientific research on a variety of infectious animal-borne diseases, including foot-and-mouth disease, resulting, most recently, in the development of a new cell line that rapidly and reliably detects this highly debilitating disease of livestock.

(3) Over 62 years, the Center has had a strong, proven record of safety.

(4) \$23,200,000 in Federal dollars have been spent on upgrades to, and the maintenance of, the Center since January 2012.

(5) In addition to the Center, Plum Island contains cultural, historical, ecological, and natural resources of regional and national significance.

(6) Plum Island is situated where the Long Island Sound and Peconic Bay meet, both of which are estuaries that are part of the National Estuary Program and are environmentally and economically significant to the region.

(7) The Federal Government has invested hundreds of millions of Federal dollars over the last two decades to make long-term improvements with respect to the conservation and management needs of Long Island Sound and Peconic Bay.

(8) The Department of Homeland Security has undertaken a study to consider alternatives for the final disposition of Plum Island, including an analysis of—

- (A) conservation of the island's resources;
- (B) any remediation responsibilities;
- (C) the need for any legislative changes;
- (D) cost; and
- (E) any revenues from the alternatives.

**SEC. 2. REPORT REQUIRED ON STUDY BY DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY ON CLEAN UP AND ALTERNATIVE USES OF PLUM ISLAND.**

(a) **ASSESSMENT BY COMPTROLLER GENERAL.**—

(1) **ASSESSMENT REQUIRED.**—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct an assessment of the study by the Department of Homeland Security on the options for the disposition of Plum Island referred to in section 1(8). Such assessment shall include a determination of whether the methodologies used by the Department in conducting such study adequately support the Department's findings with respect to the following:

(A) The possible alternative uses for Plum Island, including the transfer of ownership to another Federal agency, a State or local government, a nonprofit organization, or a combination thereof for the purpose of education, research, or conservation.

(B) The possible issues and implications, if any, of pursuing such alternative uses for Plum Island.

(C) The potential cost to be incurred for expenses related to the transition, cleanup, and hazard mitigation of Plum Island by a recipient of such property.

(2) **REPORT REQUIRED.**—Not later than 180 days after the date on which the Department of Homeland Security completes the study referred to in section 1(8), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report containing the following:

(A) The results of the assessment described under paragraph (1).

(B) A description of the Secretary of Homeland Security's coordination with the Administrator of General Services, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency in conducting the Department of Homeland Security study referred to in section 1(8).

(b) **STUDY BY COMPTROLLER GENERAL.**—

(1) **STUDY REQUIRED.**—If the Comptroller General of the United States determines that the methodologies referred to in subsection (a)(1) do not adequately support the Department of Homeland Security's findings related to an issue described in subparagraphs (A) through (C) of such subsection, the Comptroller General shall conduct a study on any such issue.

(2) **REPORT REQUIRED.**—If the Comptroller General of the United States conducts a study under paragraph (1), not later than one year after the date on which the Department of Homeland Security completes the study referred to in section 1(8), the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a report containing the results of the study conducted under paragraph (1).

**SEC. 3. SUSPENSION OF ACTION.**

No action may be taken to carry out section 538 of title V of division D of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012 (Public Law 112-74; 125 Stat. 976) until at least 180 days after the reports required by subsection (a)(2) of section 2 and, if applicable, subsection (b)(2) of such section have been submitted to Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RATCLIFFE) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

**GENERAL LEAVE**

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

Mr. Speaker, after my remarks, I will include an exchange of letters between the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on Homeland Security regarding H.R. 1887.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 1887, which suspends an appropriations provision in order to ensure that all necessary information is accessible before deciding how to move forward with Plum Island Animal Disease Center.

Since 1954, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate's Plum Island Animal Disease Center has served the Nation in defending against accidental or intentional introduction of foreign animal diseases. In 2005, DHS announced that Plum Island would be moved to a new Federal facility in Kansas. While DHS will eventually move the research conducted, Plum Island will continue to operate until the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility is fully operational and a complete transition has been made in 2022 or 2023.

The gentleman from New York, Representative ZELDIN, my friend, introduced H.R. 1887 with strong bipartisan support from the entire Long Island and Connecticut delegations in both the House and the Senate to stop the sale of Plum Island.

DHS recently undertook a study on alternatives for the disposition of Plum Island. As amended, H.R. 1887 suspends the sale of Plum Island until a thorough review of the analysis of alternatives is conducted by DHS and GAO. The bill before us today requires GAO to review the DHS study and report to Congress on whether the methodologies DHS uses adequately support the Department's findings. If those methodologies are found lacking, GAO must study possible alternative uses for Plum Island and possible costs associated for the transition and cleanup of the island.

H.R. 1887 delays the sale of Plum Island until GAO reports its findings to Congress, allowing for a complete understanding of possible options for Plum Island once the Animal Disease Center functions are transitioned. This bill ensures consideration of all options for the disposition of the island.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to join me in supporting this bill.

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

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC, May 12, 2016.

Hon. MICHAEL MCCAUL,  
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MCCAUL: I write concerning H.R. 1887, a bill to amend certain appropriation Acts to repeal the requirement directing the Administrator of General Services to sell federal property and assets that support the operations of the Plum Island Animal Disease Center in Plum Island, New York." This legislation includes matters that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

In order to expedite Floor consideration of H.R. 1887, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will forgo action on this bill. However, this is conditional on our mutual understanding that forgoing consideration of the bill does not prejudice the Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation that fall within the Committee's Rule X jurisdiction. I request you urge the Speaker to name members of the Committee to any conference committee named to consider such provisions.

Please place a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging our jurisdictional interest in the Congressional Record during House Floor consideration of the bill. I look forward to working with the Committee on Homeland Security as the bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

BILL SHUSTER,  
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,  
Washington, DC, May 16, 2016.

Hon. BILL SHUSTER,  
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SHUSTER: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 1887. I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will not seek a sequential referral on the bill.

The Committee on Homeland Security concurs with the mutual understanding that by foregoing a sequential referral of this bill at this time, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this bill or similar legislation in the future. In addition, should a conference on this bill be necessary, I would support your request to have the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure represented on the conference committee.

I will insert copies of this exchange in the Congressional Record during consideration of this bill on the House floor. I thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,  
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1887 and yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, since 1954, the Plum Island Animal Disease Center in New York's Long Island Sound has served as the primary laboratory in the United States responsible for research on foreign animal diseases of livestock, such

as foot-and-mouth disease and other animal diseases that could be accidentally or deliberately introduced into the United States.

At Plum Island, the Department of Homeland Security works with the Agricultural Research Service and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service within the U.S. Department of Agriculture to research and develop new vaccines and diagnostic tests to respond to animal disease outbreaks.

On September 11, 2005, DHS announced plans to develop the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility, or NBAF, as a state-of-the-art biocontainment laboratory to replace the Plum Island facility, an aging facility nearing the end of its lifecycle. After undertaking a multiyear site selection process, DHS selected a site in Manhattan, Kansas, for the NBAF. It is slated to begin operations in 2022.

This brings us to H.R. 1887. The focus of this bill is to deal with the question of what to do with Plum Island once DHS no longer needs it. DHS is currently studying the range of options for disposition of the property, including transferring it to another Federal agency, a State or local government, or a nonprofit organization for the purposes of education, research, or conservation. In doing so, DHS is expected to assess the full implications of each option, including cost, cleanup, and hazard mitigation.

H.R. 1887 requires the Government Accountability Office, or GAO, to assess whether DHS' forthcoming study is adequate to support its findings. In the event that the study is lacking in a key area, GAO would be required to conduct its own study on that issue or issues. Importantly, H.R. 1887 prohibits the sale of Plum Island operations until at least 180 days after the required reports in the bill have been submitted to Congress.

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

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ZELDIN), my distinguished colleague.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RATCLIFFE) and Mr. THOMPSON as well for both speaking in favor of this legislation, H.R. 1887.

Plum Island is not for sale. The whole purpose of this legislation is to prevent the sale of Plum Island by the Federal Government to the highest bidder.

Situated at the gateway of the Long Island Sound, Plum Island is treasured by my local community. As a critical resource for research, approximately 90 percent of the land on Plum Island has been sheltered from development, offering Long Island a diverse wildlife and ecosystem and a critical habitat for migratory birds, marine mammals, and rare plants.

With recorded history dating back to the 1700s, Plum Island is also an essential cultural and historical resource as

well. Since World War II, Plum Island has been utilized as a research laboratory. The facility, which has been under Federal jurisdiction since 1899, has since grown to become what is known today as the Plum Island Animal Disease Center.

In 2005, the Department of Homeland Security, which currently has jurisdiction over the island, announced that the Animal Disease Center research would be moved to a new Federal facility: the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility in Kansas.

To offset the cost of the relocation, a law was enacted that called for the private sale of Plum Island to the highest bidder. However, due to costs associated with the cleanup and closure of Plum Island and because of local zoning restrictions, the Federal Government would receive little compensation for the sale of Plum Island. Allowing for continued research, public access, and permanent preservation of the island, H.R. 1887 will reverse a 2008 law that mandated the sale of Plum Island.

The bill, as amended, will commission the Government Accountability Office, in consultation with the Department of Homeland Security, which currently owns the island, to formulate a comprehensive plan for the future of the island. This plan will include possible alternative uses, which can include transfer of ownership to another Federal agency, the State or local government, nonprofit, or combination thereof, for the purpose of education, research, and conservation.

Just less than 3 weeks ago, on April 28, 2016, H.R. 1887 was marked up with an amendment and passed out of the House Homeland Security Committee with unanimous bipartisan support. Currently, 24 Republicans and Democrats in this Chamber have signed on as cosponsors of this bill.

I see the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) is here. He has long been championing this issue since before I got here.

I would especially like to thank House Majority Leader KEVIN MCCARTHY and House Homeland Security Committee Chairman MICHAEL MCCAUL for both taking such a direct, personal interest in helping with this effort in the House. Their leadership is very much appreciated.

I would also like to thank all the locally elected officials, groups, and concerned residents on Long Island and elsewhere who have moved heaven and Earth to raise awareness of this cause and help recruit cosponsors.

I encourage all my colleagues to vote in support of this critical bill. Hopefully, the Senate also passes this long-awaited legislation in earnest so that the President can sign this proposal into law this year.

I have had the opportunity to visit Plum Island. It is a place where you feel as if you are thousands of miles away from Long Island. You have the history of Fort Terry, the coastline,

the dunes, the waterways, the water hitting the rocks, and the seals. You literally feel as if you are nowhere near the Northeastern United States. It is a treasure, and it is one that should be protected.

Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful for this Chamber's considering this legislation and hopefully passing it unanimously.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY).

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to, first of all, thank Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi for his interest and support in this measure, even though he hails from a part of the country which is far away from the Long Island Sound. But, again, going back to his days on the Agriculture Committee, he clearly knows the forensics of this legislation, and, again, his interest and support is much appreciated.

I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RATCLIFFE) for bringing this bill up today.

Again, Long Island Sound, maybe, is not right on your radar screen, but as Congressman ZELDIN said, it is an incredibly special place, a tidal estuary which separates Connecticut from New York, and it is within the New York territory. Frankly, it is a very small, densely populated area, and the interest level on both sides of the Long Island Sound in terms of passage of this legislation is off the charts.

I again want to thank Mr. ZELDIN for his efforts.

Again, this measure started in 2013 in response to the GAO report that basically signaled that the sale of this island was on the fast track, and it really took persistence up until today's vote on the floor to make sure that we stop that process, as Mr. ZELDIN indicated, and send the message that Plum Island is not for sale.

Again, because of its unique history, the activity that took place there with the Animal Disease Center made it unsuitable for residential development and commercial development, but sort of the outcome of that is that this incredibly rich diversity of biology has sprung up there.

Like the gentleman from Long Island, I have had the opportunity to visit there, and it is as if you were in a different world. That is something that we can never take for granted, particularly in a part of the country where, again, there are tremendous amounts of sea traffic, maritime activity, and economic activity. To try and, again, basically preserve this 840-acre parcel with its incredible richness is something that really will live on for generations and, really, I think, will make the 114th Congress memorable, certainly in terms of that region, for many years to come.

Again, like the gentleman from New York, I want to say that the external pressure which was brought to bear by municipal officials and by folks from

Save the Sound—that is an umbrella group on both sides of the Long Island Sound—and the Connecticut Fund for the Environment, again, is what really kept the interest level and the pressure on both delegations to make sure that this didn't get lost in the process and allow that mandated sale to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge passage of this bill, and, again, with the gentleman from New York, am determined to make sure that this moves as quickly as possible through the Upper Chamber and is signed into law by President Obama, sending a message to all the individuals and groups that are so interested in preserving Plum Island that, in fact, we, again, have taken it off this sort of conveyor belt and we are going to make sure that it gets the careful treatment that it deserves. At the end of the day, it is going to basically preserve this for generations to come.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1887 has broad bipartisan support. It will ensure that, before DHS disposes of Plum Island, there is a thorough vetting of all the options.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1730

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Mr. Speaker, I once again urge my colleagues to support Mr. ZELDIN's bill, H.R. 1887.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1887, repeals the requirement directing the Administrator of General Services to sell Federal property and assets that support the operations of the Plum Island Animal Disease Center in Plum Island, New York, and for other purposes.

Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Homeland Security I support this bill because the safety record of the Plum Island Animal Disease Center is unparalleled.

The Plum Island Animal Disease Center is a United States federal research facility dedicated to the study of animal diseases. It is part of the DHS Directorate for Science and Technology.

Since 1954, the center has had the goal of protecting America's livestock from animal diseases.

Throughout the history of the Plum Island Animal Disease Center, there have been no accidental releases of infected animals to the mainland.

The Animal Disease Center on Plum Island has conducted first rate scientific research on a variety of infectious animal-borne diseases, including foot-and-mouth disease, resulting most recently, in the development of a new cell line that rapidly and reliably detects this highly debilitating disease of livestock.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the Animal Disease Center Plum Island contains cultural, historical, ecological, and natural resources of regional and national significance.

Importantly, the Federal Government has invested hundreds of millions of tax payer dollars over the last two decades to make long-

term improvements with respect to the conservation and management needs of Long Island Sound and Peconic Bay.

Mr. Speaker, preserving historical and geographical entities play a pivotal role in maintaining homeland security and the sustainability of our ecosystem and health of our community.

I urge all members to join me in voting to pass H.R. 1887.

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. 1887, 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 authorize the Comptroller General of the United States to assess a study on the alternatives for the disposition of Plum Island Animal Disease Center, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY PREPAREDNESS CONSORTIUM ACT OF 2016

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4743) to authorize the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish a National Cybersecurity Preparedness Consortium, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4743

*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 "National Cybersecurity Preparedness Consortium Act of 2016".

#### SEC. 2. NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY PREPAREDNESS CONSORTIUM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Homeland Security may work with a consortium, including the National Cybersecurity Preparedness Consortium, to support efforts to address cybersecurity risks and incidents (as such terms are defined in section 227 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 148)), including threats of terrorism and acts of terrorism.

(b) ASSISTANCE TO THE NCCIC.—The Secretary of Homeland Security may work with a consortium to assist the national cybersecurity and communications integration center of the Department of Homeland Security (established pursuant to section 227 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002) to—

(1) provide training to State and local first responders and officials specifically for preparing for and responding to cybersecurity risks and incidents, including threats of terrorism and acts of terrorism, in accordance with current law;

(2) develop and update a curriculum utilizing existing programs and models in accordance with such section 227, for State and local first responders and officials, related to cybersecurity risks and incidents, including threats of terrorism and acts of terrorism;

(3) provide technical assistance services to build and sustain capabilities in support of preparedness for and response to cybersecurity risks and incidents, including threats of terrorism and acts of terrorism, in accordance with such section 227;

(4) conduct cross-sector cybersecurity training and simulation exercises for entities, including State and local governments, critical infrastructure owners and operators, and private industry, to encourage community-wide coordination in defending against and responding to cybersecurity risks and incidents, including threats of terrorism and acts of terrorism, in accordance with subsection (c) of section 228 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 149);

(5) help States and communities develop cybersecurity information sharing programs, in accordance with section 227 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, for the dissemination of homeland security information related to cybersecurity risks and incidents, including threats of terrorism and acts of terrorism; and

(6) help incorporate cybersecurity risk and incident prevention and response (including related to threats of terrorism and acts of terrorism) into existing State and local emergency plans, including continuity of operations plans.

(c) PROHIBITION ON DUPLICATION.—In carrying out the functions under subsection (b), the Secretary of Homeland Security shall, to the greatest extent practicable, seek to prevent unnecessary duplication of existing programs or efforts of the Department of Homeland Security.

(d) CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING SELECTION OF A CONSORTIUM.—In selecting a consortium with which to work under this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall take into consideration the following:

(1) Any prior experience conducting cybersecurity training and exercises for State and local entities.

(2) Geographic diversity of the members of any such consortium so as to cover different regions across the United States.

(e) METRICS.—If the Secretary of Homeland Security works with a consortium pursuant to subsection (a), the Secretary shall measure the effectiveness of the activities undertaken by such consortium under this Act.

(f) OUTREACH.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall conduct outreach to universities and colleges, including historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and other minority-serving institutions, regarding opportunities to support efforts to address cybersecurity risks and incidents, including threats of terrorism and acts of terrorism, by working with the Secretary pursuant to subsection (a).

(g) TERMINATION.—The authority to carry out this Act shall terminate on the date that is five years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(h) CONSORTIUM DEFINED.—In this Act, the term "consortium" means a group primarily composed of non-profit entities, including academic institutions, that develop, update, and deliver cybersecurity training in support of homeland security.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RATCLIFFE) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to