

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 496, a straightforward bill to repeal changes made to the transportation planning process in the waning days of the Obama administration.

On June 27, 2016, the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration jointly published a proposed rule to make significant changes to surface transportation planning regulations in an attempt to promote more effective regional planning by States and Metropolitan Planning Organizations, MPOs. The proposed rule was well-intentioned, aiming to strengthen coordination among planning partners and neighboring communities.

However, the rule was haphazardly put together on an expedited timeline, with very little input from States and local planning organizations. It is not surprising, therefore, that the result was overwhelming opposition to the specific requirements of the rule.

This rule was not mandated by Congress. In fact, Congress made very few changes to the planning process in the most recent surface transportation reauthorization, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, also known as the FAST Act.

Among other changes, the administration sought to require that, in any urbanized area represented by more than one MPO, the MPOs would be required to either merge or realign their boundaries or develop unified planning documents. This requirement for joint planning documents would apply in urbanized areas that cross State lines. This provision, in particular, caused substantial concern in the planning community.

The FHWA and the FTA received 299 comments in opposition to the proposed rule, of which 249 requested that the rulemaking be withdrawn. Only 16 commenters expressed support for the proposed rule. The agencies received 156 comments in support of the intent of the rule, but not the specific requirements and procedures proposed.

The final rule, published in December of 2016, made a few modifications, including the addition of a waiver process, subject to approval by the Secretary, from some of the joint planning requirements if an area can demonstrate suitable coordination. Despite the changes made by the agencies in the final rule, strong opposition to the rule continues.

Earlier this month, Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed testified before the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit on implementation of the FAST Act. His written testimony, submitted on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, states: "The outgoing administration proposed a new rule on MPO designations that created unreasonable burdens for a number of regions, and we

thank you, Mr. Chairman, and this committee for acting on legislation to remedy this."

Repeal of this rule is supported also by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and the National Association of Regional Councils.

Last month, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee passed H.R. 1346, an identical bill to S. 496, by voice vote. H.R. 1346, introduced by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI), is a bipartisan bill with 29 cosponsors.

S. 496 stops the controversial changes I have described from going into effect. The bill does not preclude the administration from pursuing changes in the future, through a new notice and comment rulemaking, to improve the planning process by strengthening the coordination of MPOs and States.

Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 496, which is the first and likely only legislation striking an Obama Administration era rule or regulation outright that I will be supporting this Congress.

From when I first learned of the rule last year, I have had strong concerns about the United States Department of Transportation's (DOT) proposal on Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordination and Planning Area Reform.

Planning was a top priority of one of my predecessors in the United States House of Representatives, former Public Works Committee Chairman Bob Roe. In the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, the Congress overhauled the planning process and gave tremendous authority to local Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO). The process works well in Northern New Jersey, where the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) plays an important role advancing regional projects that provides an important opportunity for local communities to offer meaningful input.

I joined my colleague, Mr. SIREN, in a letter last summer expressing concerns with the draft rule and requesting that the comment period be extended.

I appreciate the DOT's end goal: to make planning more efficient, more comprehensible to stakeholders and the public, and more focused on projects that address critical regional needs. However, in a rush to judgment and ignoring the concerns of many comments from across the country, the DOT finalized a well-intended, but misguided rule. Specifically, I object to the severity of its reconstruction of the planning processes, practices, and understandings that have been in effect for MPOs for decades, and the ability for the public to comment.

Most concerning to me is that the rule could require the redrawing of Metropolitan Planning Areas (MPAs) and require Urbanized Areas (UZAs) to have a common MPO or common

Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). For densely populated regions like Northern New Jersey, the proposed rule would reduce local decision-making by either forcing MPO consolidation or requiring a burdensome multi-region single long-term TIP that could weaken local input. The NJTPA region covering my district already includes 6.7 million people and its TIP is over \$2 Billion—adding any more to their plate would be unwieldy. We just need to witness the dysfunction at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to know that mandating New Jersey to undertake transportation planning with New York City and New York State in this way would be a recipe for disaster.

I thank my colleagues for advancing this bill, look forward to this rule being put back on the shelf, and hope DOT can come up with something less burdensome in their quest to reform transportation planning processes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. LEWIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 496.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

AVIATION EMPLOYEE SCREENING AND SECURITY ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2017

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 876) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to reform programs of the Transportation Security Administration, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 876

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 "Aviation Employee Screening and Security Enhancement Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ADMINISTRATION.—The term "Administration" means the Transportation Security Administration.

(2) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term "Administrator" means the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration.

(3) AIR CARRIER.—The term "air carrier" has the meaning given such term in section 40102 of title 49, United States Code.

(4) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term "appropriate congressional committees" means the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

(5) FOREIGN AIR CARRIER.—The term "foreign air carrier" has the meaning given such

term in section 40102 of title 49, United States Code.

(6) INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY.—The term “intelligence community” has the meaning given such term in section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4)).

(7) SECURED AREA.—The term “secured area” has the meaning given such term in section 1540.5 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations.

(8) SECURITY IDENTIFICATION DISPLAY AREA.—The term “Security Identification Display Area” has the meaning given such term in section 1540.5 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations.

(9) STERILE AREA.—The term “sterile area” has the meaning given such term in section 1540.5 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations.

SEC. 3. COST AND FEASIBILITY STUDY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator, in consultation with the Aviation Security Advisory Committee (established under section 44946 of title 49, United States Code), shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees and the Comptroller General of the United States a cost and feasibility study of a statistically significant number of Category I, II, III, IV, and X airports assessing the impact if all employee access points from non-secured areas to secured areas of such airports are comprised of the following:

(1) A secure door utilizing card and pin entry or biometric technology.

(2) Surveillance video recording, capable of storing video data for at least 30 days.

(3) Advanced screening technologies, including at least one of the following:

(A) Magnetometer (walk-through or handheld).

(B) Explosives detection canines.

(C) Explosives trace detection swabbing.

(D) Advanced imaging technology.

(E) X-ray bag screening technology.

(b) CONTENTS.—The study required under subsection (a) shall include information related to the employee screening costs of those category I, II, III, IV, and X airports which have already implemented practices of screening 100 percent of employees accessing secured areas of airports, including the following:

(1) Costs associated with establishing an operational minimum number of employee entry and exit points.

(2) A comparison of estimated costs and effectiveness associated with implementing the security features specified in subsection (a) to—

(A) the Federal Government; and

(B) airports and the aviation community.

(c) COMPTROLLER GENERAL ASSESSMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Upon completion of the study required under subsection (a), the Comptroller General of the United States shall review such study to assess the quality and reliability of such study.

(2) ASSESSMENT.—Not later than 60 days after the receipt of the study required under subsection (a), the Comptroller General of the United States shall report to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate on the results of the review required under paragraph (1).

SEC. 4. AIRPORT WORKER EDUCATION AND SECURITY AWARENESS.

(a) COOPERATIVE EFFORTS TO ENHANCE AIRPORT SECURITY AWARENESS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall work with air carriers, foreign air carriers, airport op-

erators, labor unions representing credentialed employees, and the Aviation Security Advisory Committee to enhance security awareness of credentialed airport populations regarding insider threats to aviation security and best practices related to airport access controls.

(b) CREDENTIALING STANDARDS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall, in consultation with air carriers, foreign air carriers, airport operators, labor unions representing credentialed employees, and the Aviation Security Advisory Committee, assess credentialing standards, policies, and practices to ensure that insider threats to aviation security are adequately addressed.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 30 days after completion of the assessment required under paragraph (1), the Administrator shall report to the appropriate congressional committees on the results of such assessment.

(c) SIDA APPLICATIONS.—

(1) SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS REQUIRED.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall require airport operators to submit the social security number of an individual applying for a credential granting access to the Security Identification Display Area to strengthen security vetting effectiveness. An applicant who does not provide such applicant's social security number may be denied such a credential.

(2) SCREENING NOTICE.—The Administrator shall issue requirements for airport operators to include in applications for access to a Security Identification Display Area a notice informing applicants that an employee holding a credential granting access to a Security Identification Display Area may be screened at any time while gaining access to, working in, or leaving a Security Identification Display Area.

SEC. 5. SECURING AIRPORT WORKER ACCESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall work with airport operators and the Aviation Security Advisory Committee to identify advanced technologies, including biometric identification technologies, for securing employee access to the secured areas and sterile areas of airports.

(b) RAP BACK VETTING.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall ensure that all credentialed aviation worker populations currently requiring a fingerprint-based criminal record history check are continuously vetted through the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Rap Back Service, in order to more rapidly detect and mitigate insider threats to aviation security.

(c) INSIDER THREAT EDUCATION AND MITIGATION.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall identify means of enhancing the Administration's ability to leverage the resources of the Department of Homeland Security and the intelligence community to educate Administration personnel on insider threats to aviation security and how the Administration can better mitigate such insider threats.

(d) PLAYBOOK OPERATIONS.—The Administrator shall ensure that Administration-led employee physical inspection efforts of aviation workers, known as Playbook operations, are targeted, strategic, and focused on providing the greatest level of security effectiveness.

(e) COVERT TESTING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall conduct covert testing of Administration-led employee inspection operations at airports and measure existing levels of security effectiveness. The Administrator shall provide—

(A) the results of such testing to the airport operator for the airport that is the subject of any such testing, and, as appropriate, to air carriers and foreign air carriers that operate at the airport that is the subject of such testing; and

(B) recommendations and technical assistance for air carriers, foreign air carriers, and airport operators to conduct their own employee inspections, as needed.

(2) ANNUAL REPORTING.—The Administrator shall annually, for each of fiscal years 2018 through 2022, submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the frequency, methodology, strategy, and effectiveness of employee inspection operations at airports.

(f) CENTRALIZED DATABASE.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator, in consultation with the Aviation Security Advisory Committee, shall—

(1) establish a national database of individuals who have had either their airport or airport operator-issued badge revoked for failure to comply with aviation security requirements;

(2) determine the appropriate reporting mechanisms for air carriers, foreign air carriers, and airport operators to—

(A) submit to the Administration data regarding individuals described in paragraph (1); and

(B) access the database established pursuant to such paragraph; and

(3) establish a process to allow individuals whose names were mistakenly entered into such database to correct the record and have their names removed from such database.

SEC. 6. INSIDER THREAT COORDINATION EFFORTS.

The Department of Homeland Security is the lead interagency coordinator pertaining to insider threat investigations and mitigation efforts at airports. The Department shall make every practicable effort to coordinate with other relevant Government entities, as well as the security representatives of air carriers, foreign air carriers, and airport operators, as appropriate, when undertaking such investigations and efforts.

SEC. 7. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECURITY.

Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a plan to conduct recurring reviews of the operational, technical, and management security controls for Administration information technology systems at airports.

SEC. 8. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.

No additional funds are authorized to carry out the requirements of this Act. Such requirements shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KATKO. 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 New York?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 876, the Aviation Employee Screening and Security Enhancement Act of 2017, which seeks to implement findings from a multiyear investigation into the insider threat facing our Nation's airports. This bipartisan legislation will help mitigate an increasingly disturbing threat to safety of the traveling public.

Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security's Subcommittee on Transportation and Protective Security, it is my duty to understand and respond to the ever-changing threat landscape facing our Nation's aviation sector, which is a critical component to both America's economic and national security. In February of this year, we released a telling report on airport insider threats, which painted a disturbing picture of security vulnerabilities and gaps in screening and access controls at airports across the country. Just 3 days after the release of our report, news broke of a massive drug smuggling ring between Puerto Rico and the continental United States involving both TSA and airport employees. This network of criminals exploited their access to secure areas of airports to smuggle an astounding 20 tons—or \$100 million worth—of cocaine into the United States and into our own communities.

Another concerning example uncovered in our investigation throughout last Congress was when an airport employee offered to smuggle explosives on a passenger aircraft. Luckily, this individual was caught in a drug trafficking ring by the FBI and was arrested. However, we have seen multiple examples of aviation workers with access to secure areas of airports being involved in serious criminal activities, including terror plotting, after being radicalized.

We cannot allow these lapses in security to continue placing the traveling public at risk, and we must continue to work together like my brother across the aisle, Mr. PAYNE, with our partners in security in the aviation sector and at the Transportation Security Administration. After a number of insider threat-related attacks at airports overseas, along with plots here in the United States, it is essential that we act on this legislation.

This bill, if enacted, will enhance employee vetting requirements, improve procedures governing the way airports issue security credentials, and reform TSA's employee screening operations to be more targeted and effective. It will also provide policymakers with critical, previously unavailable data relating to the cost and feasibility of providing full employee screening at all domestic airports.

The insider threat is real, and it is our duty to ensure the Federal Government is taking every step possible to keep the traveling public safe.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the ranking member of the subcommittee, my friend and col-

league, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, for her shared leadership on this issue. I would also like to thank the chairman of the full committee, Mr. MCCAUL, for shepherding this legislation through the committee.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC, April 25, 2017.

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

DEAR CHAIRMAN MCCAUL: I am writing with respect to H.R. 876, the "Aviation Employee Screening and Security Enhancement Act of 2017." This bill contains provisions within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means.

The Committee on Ways and Means will not seek a sequential referral on H.R. 876 so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor for consideration. This is done with the understanding that the jurisdictional interests of the Committee on Ways and Means over this and similar legislation are in no way diminished or altered. In addition, the Committee reserves the right to seek conferees on H.R. 876 and requests your support when such a request is made.

I would appreciate your response confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 876 and ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during consideration of the bill on the House floor.

Sincerely,

KEVIN BRADY,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC, April 25, 2017.

Hon. KEVIN BRADY,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BRADY: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 876, the "Aviation Employee Screening and Security Enhancement Act of 2017." I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the Committee on Ways and Means will not seek a sequential referral of the bill.

The Committee on Homeland Security concurs with the mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration on this bill at this time, the Committee on Ways and Means 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 a request by the Committee on Ways and Means for conferees on those provisions within your jurisdiction.

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.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 876, the Aviation Employee Screening and Security Enhancement Act for 2017.

Mr. Speaker, last month, the Transportation Security Administration issued a directive prohibiting travelers flying out of 10 airports in eight coun-

tries from carrying laptops and other large electronic devices aboard airplanes. That decision was informed by intelligence that ISIS and other terrorist organizations may have developed innovative ways to plant explosives in electronic devices that TSA may not be able to detect. This swift action highlights the importance of TSA's being able to adapt quickly in response to the ever-evolving terrorist threat landscape.

Here, in the United States, we have been fortunate that there has never been a case where an airport worker has exploited their position to carry out a deadly attack on an airport, but we have seen such incidents abroad.

Accordingly, Congress has given particular attention to the airport insider threat risk, and, in the 114th Congress, we enacted measures to enhance access controls at airports and improve security vetting for airport workers.

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Today, we consider H.R. 876, a bill that seeks to address this risk by requiring TSA to carry out a cost and feasibility study of incorporating new approaches to bolster access controls to a diverse range of airports.

In an effort to help airports better understand the effectiveness of their current airport worker screening systems, the measure also directs TSA to increase covert testing of such systems.

One feature of the bill that I want to highlight is a provision targeted at fostering greater vigilance and awareness among airport workers regarding the insider threat risk.

Specifically, it directs TSA to work with airport operators, air carriers, and unions to develop insider threat security awareness training for airport workers within 180 days of enactment of the bill.

H.R. 876, which was introduced in February and approved by the full committee in March, has bipartisan support, including the support of Representative BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN, the top-ranking Democrat on the Homeland Security Committee's Transportation Security Subcommittee.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the passage of H.R. 876, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I echo the sentiment of my colleague, Mr. PAYNE. He is spot on in his discussion about the vulnerabilities that have been highlighted overseas that can easily come our way if we don't act on this bill. I applaud his comments and thank him for those.

This issue is critical to the safety of traveling Americans. We must act today to close every known security gap.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 876, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

HOMELAND SECURITY FOR CHILDREN ACT

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1372) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to ensure that the needs of children are considered in homeland security planning, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1372

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 “Homeland Security for Children Act”.

SEC. 2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR STRATEGY, POLICY, AND PLANS.

Paragraph (6) of section 709(c) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 349(c)) is amended by inserting “, including feedback from organizations representing the needs of children,” after “stakeholder feedback”.

SEC. 3. TECHNICAL EXPERT AUTHORIZED.

Paragraph (2) of section 503(b) of the Homeland Security Act (6 U.S.C. 313(b)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (G), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (H), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(I) identify and integrate the needs of children into activities to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate against the risk of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other manmade disasters, including catastrophic incidents, including by appointing a technical expert, who may consult with relevant outside organizations and experts, as necessary, to coordinate such integration, as necessary.”.

SEC. 4. REPORT.

Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act and annually thereafter for five years, the Under Secretary for Strategy, Policy, and Plans of the Department of Homeland Security shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report describing the efforts the Department has undertaken to review and incorporate feedback from organizations representing the needs of children into Department policy in accordance with paragraph (6) of section 709(c) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (as added by section 2 of this Act), including information on the following:

(1) The designation of any individual responsible for carrying out such paragraph (6).

(2) Any review, formal or informal, of Department policies, programs, or activities to assess the suitability of such policies, programs, or activities for children and where feedback from organizations representing the needs of children should be reviewed and incorporated.

(3) Any review, change, modification, or promulgation of Department policies, programs, or activities to ensure that such policies, programs, or activities are appropriate for children.

(4) Coordination with organizations or experts outside the Department pursuant to such paragraph (6) conducted to inform any such review, change, modification, or promulgation of such policies, programs, or activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. DONOVAN) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1372, the Homeland Security for Children Act.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are about 74 million children in the United States, and while we are constantly making progress to achieve national resilience in the face of the next emergency, we must continue to ensure special consideration is made to integrate emergency planning at the Department of Homeland Security that addresses the unique needs of children when emergencies arise. I want to thank Mr. PAYNE for introducing H.R. 1372, which will ensure such consideration is made.

Recently, the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications held a series of hearings focused on the progress and the future of achieving national preparedness in the face of events like Hurricane Katrina and Superstorm Sandy. Among the child safety efforts made in the last 10 years, FEMA created the National Emergency Child Locator Center within the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children to ensure the swift reunification of children should a major emergency displace communities.

Mr. Speaker, I know this personally, having been an elected official on Staten Island during the tragedy in lower Manhattan in September of 2001. All three bridges from Staten Island to New Jersey were closed, the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge was closed, and ferry service was stopped from Staten Island to Manhattan. We had many of our residents stuck at work in Manhattan.

Their children were on Staten Island and could not be reached when being released from school.

I know Mr. PAYNE can comment on this as well, but I just want to publicly thank him, because I experienced that myself.

The subcommittee heard from weather-tested first responders who, among other important issues, stressed the importance of integrating the needs of children into emergency planning, reminding us that, after all, children are not just mini-adults.

While DHS and FEMA have taken steps to elevate the safety of our most important populations, DHS can still do more to ensure Department policies, programs, and activities to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate against disasters, and also consider the needs of children throughout our impacted communities.

By authorizing a children's needs technical expert at FEMA, as H.R. 1372 seeks to do, we can make certain that the needs of children are integrated into emergency preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation activities.

Further, H.R. 1372 will require DHS's Office of Strategy, Policy, and Plans to appropriately consider the needs of children throughout Departmental activities and report such efforts to Congress.

H.R. 1372 provides peace of mind that the future of our most treasured assets, our children, are safe in the face of emergencies. Additionally, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that this legislation would not have a significant impact on the Federal budget.

I want to thank Chairman SHUSTER of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and Chairman BARLETTA of the Transportation and Infrastructure's Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management for working with the Committee on Homeland Security to see that this legislation receives timely consideration on the House floor.

As chairman of the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications, I am committed to ensuring FEMA has resources at its disposal to meet its mission of safeguarding a more resilient nation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my fellow Members to join me in supporting this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC, March 10, 2017.

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

DEAR CHAIRMAN MCCAUL: I write concerning H.R. 1372, the “Homeland Security for Children Act.” 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. 1372, the Committee on Transportation