

It is imperative that bills like this continue. It is imperative that Congressman VELA, Congresswoman MCSALLY, and the others on their subcommittee continue their great work identifying issues along the border, both north and south, and that the BEST concept continues and, indeed, hopefully, expands in the future. Targeted law enforcement that involves people on both sides of the border and law enforcement is the only way we are ever going to solve this problem. I commend them for their work on this.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2281 the "Border Enforcement Security Task Force Reauthorization Act of 2017."

As a Senior Member on the House Committee on Homeland Security; and former Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security, I know well the importance of protecting our nation's borders.

I thank my colleague Congressman VELA for sponsoring this bipartisan legislation, which reauthorizes the Border Enforcement Security Task Force (BEST) program.

An escalation in drug trafficking and transnational criminal activity along our nation's southern border has led to record levels of violence and drug trafficking-related homicides.

Despite significant efforts to combat the drug trade, many governments in the region suffer from overwhelmed criminal justice systems and law enforcement agencies.

There must be a multi-pronged approach to solving the drug crisis in the United States, it must include treatment upon demand; education; increase resources for border interdiction and seizure of illicit drugs and advanced technology to detect and track those who may be engaged in illegal activity along the border.

The Border Enforcement Security Task Force is accomplishing the important law enforcement component of border security.

The Border Enforcement Security Task Force achieves its goal of border security enhancement by facilitating collaboration among federal, state, local, tribal, and foreign law enforcement agencies to execute coordinated activities in furtherance of border security and homeland security; and enhancing information-sharing, including the dissemination of homeland security information among such agencies.

The BEST program is currently administered by DHS, and involves information sharing and law-enforcement operations between personnel from federal, state, local, tribal, and foreign law-enforcement agencies to combat criminal activity near the United States borders.

This program has established teams of law enforcement agents from over 100 law enforcement agencies that form units to investigate transnational criminal activity.

This approach supports better cooperation and collaboration among federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies when investigating criminal activity along the southwest and northern borders, as well as at the nation's major seaports.

Since their inception, BEST Units have collectively initiated more than 10,654 cases.

These actions have resulted in more than:

2,718 criminal arrests
7,245 administrative arrests
110,711 pounds of cocaine
5,517 pounds of ecstasy
1,764 pounds of heroin
1,036,749 pounds of marijuana
6,325 pounds of methamphetamine
2,988,561 rounds of ammunition
4,657 vehicles
\$130.2 million in U.S. currency
15,062 weapons

This bill instructs the Secretary of Homeland Security to also consider:

The cross-border threats posed by transnational criminal organizations;

The Department's homeland and border security strategic priorities; and

The departmental Joint Task Forces and other multi-agency cross-border operations when establishing new BEST Units.

In addition, this bill would update the Secretary's existing reporting requirement to provide an assessment of how BEST Units enhance information-sharing among law enforcement partners, coordinate with Departmental Joint Task Forces, and advance the Department's homeland and border security strategic priorities.

This legislation will improve and update the information sharing practices between our law enforcement agencies so they will operate in a cohesive manner.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2281 the BEST program because it had proven throughout the years to improve our border security, along with improving how our law enforcement agencies operate and share vital information.

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. 2281, 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.

□ 1600

REMOVING OUTDATED RESTRICTIONS TO ALLOW FOR JOB GROWTH ACT

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1177) to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to release on behalf of the United States the condition that certain lands conveyed to the City of Old Town, Maine, be used for a municipal airport, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1177

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 "Removing Outdated Restrictions to Allow for Job Growth Act".

SEC. 2. RELEASE OF REVERSIONARY INTEREST.

(a) RELEASE.—Notwithstanding section 32(c) of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant

Act (7 U.S.C. 1011(c)), if the City of Old Town, Maine, makes a written request to the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary shall release, convey, and quitclaim, without monetary consideration, all rights, title, and interest of the United States in and to the lands specified in subsection (b).

(b) LANDS SPECIFIED.—The lands subject to subsection (a) include only the lands—

(1) conveyed by the United States to the City of Old Town, Maine, under section 32(c) of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act (7 U.S.C. 1011(c)) by the deed dated June 5, 1941;

(2) proposed for conveyance by the City of Old Town, Maine, for the purpose of economic development; and

(3) described in the written request submitted by the City of Old Town, Maine, to the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to subsection (a).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. 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 material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1177, Removing Outdated Restrictions to Allow for Job Growth Act.

In the early 1980s, the city of Old Town, Maine, purchased land from the Federal Government to be part of the Old Town airport. The deed included a use restriction, as required by a 1941 amendment to the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of 1937, limiting use of the land to a municipal airport or other public use.

Old Town has invested heavily in this land in order to attract businesses, but the outdated deed restriction needs to be lifted before further economic development can occur.

H.R. 1177 provides for the removal of the deed restriction on the parcel of land around the Old Town airport to allow for business development. The bill allows the City of Old Town to send a letter to the Secretary of Agriculture detailing which lands it would like released from the deed restriction and directs the Secretary to release that land to the city of Old Town.

Passage of this commonsense provision will allow economic development in Old Town to move forward, creating as many as 200 much-needed jobs. This legislation will provide certainty to private investors in the community and help the local economy thrive.

I would like to thank the gentleman from Maine (Mr. POLIQUIN) for addressing this issue, and our chairman on the

House Agriculture Committee, Chairman CONAWAY, for moving this bill forward.

This is a good government bill that eliminates red tape to unleash private investment. At a time when rural America is struggling—it is people like Representative POLIQUIN and all of us—we must do all we can to encourage growth and development in rural communities, many that we all serve, but also the one that Representative POLIQUIN serves in Old Town, Maine. I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1177 is a bill that will allow the city of Old Town, Maine, to move forward with economic development plans that have been hampered by Federal red tape. H.R. 1177 removes the current deed restriction on the land surrounding the Old Town airport. This will allow the city to implement economic development initiatives that will create jobs and spur economic activity in the area.

As a pilot, I am glad to see that the airport will not be impacted by this change and will continue to meet the region's air transportation needs. Again, H.R. 1177 is common sense, reasonable legislation. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes."

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

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON) for supporting this legislation.

I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. POLIQUIN), who actually was the one who brought this bill to the attention of the House Agriculture Committee and to the floor here today. It is his hard work, and there are not many in this institution who work harder than Representative POLIQUIN in addressing the needs of rural America.

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois for those kind remarks.

I am so proud to represent the most honest and hardworking Americans you can find anywhere. Maine's Second Congressional District is, if not the largest, the second largest congressional district east of the Mississippi River. It is about an 8-hour drive from Fryeburg to Madawaska, and you are going to spend about half your time dodging moose and other critters on the road. We are tough, we are rugged, but we need jobs. We need jobs.

We have had a situation in our State for the past 30 years where many of our paper mills and sawmills and textile mills and leather tanneries have closed. We have a handful left. And right smack in the middle of our State is the great city of Old Town, Maine, just a little bit north of Bangor. Old Town has also suffered the closure of a significant mill—or two, actually.

Ron Harriman, who is the economic development director of Old Town, reached out to our office and said: Bruce, we have a problem here. We have a terrific piece of property surrounding our airport. We have gone through extensive work and cost to the town to extend utilities to this piece of land. But lo and behold, there is a Federal deed restriction on that land that dates back decades that doesn't allow us to sell the land and develop it for more jobs.

I don't doubt at the time, Mr. Speaker, that the Federal Government that was buying up local property across the country, reclaiming it and turning it into agricultural land, I don't question the purpose of that and the good intentions of that; but that was a long time ago.

We now have a situation where the city of Old Town needs to be able to sell this property in order to attract other investment and other jobs to help our families in central Maine. Removing this deed restriction will allow that to happen.

I am asking everybody in this Chamber, Republicans and Democrats—and I thank the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON)—please support H.R. 1177. There are many times, Mr. Speaker, when all the government needs to do is get out of the way. This is one example. Let the Federal Government get out of the way. We know how to create jobs in the State of Maine. Let's remove this red tape. Let's let this land be sold for folks who want to create jobs. I would be very grateful for everybody in this Chamber to support H.R. 1177 and let the people of central Maine live better lives with more jobs and more freedom.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support passage of this commonsense legislation, H.R. 1177.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1177.

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. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. 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.

EDWARD T. SCHAFER AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTER

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2154) to rename the Red River Valley Agricultural Re-

search Center in Fargo, North Dakota, as the Edward T. Schafer Agricultural Research Center, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2154

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

SECTION 1. RENAMING OF THE RED RIVER VALLEY AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTER IN FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA AS THE EDWARD T. SCHAFER AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTER.

(a) RENAMING.—The Red River Valley Agricultural Research Center in Fargo, North Dakota, shall hereafter be known and designated as the "Edward T. Schafer Agricultural Research Center".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in any law, regulation, map, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be considered to be a reference to the Edward T. Schafer Agricultural Research Center.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. 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 material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of H.R. 2154, to rename the Red River Valley Agricultural Research Center in Fargo, North Dakota, as the Edward T. Schafer Agricultural Research Center. And this, Mr. Speaker, is in spite of the fact that it is located at North Dakota State University, which, in January of 2015, beat my Illinois State Red Birds for the FCS football championship and caused me to have to bring cupcakes from Normal, Illinois, to pay a bet with my colleague who is the author of this bill, Congressman KEVIN CRAMER. So I still support this bill in spite of those actions because it is a good bill, Mr. Speaker.

Ed Schafer served as North Dakota's Governor from 1992 to 2000, and as our Nation's Secretary of Agriculture from 2008 to 2009. Renaming the Red River Valley Agricultural Research Center in Fargo, North Dakota, to honor Secretary Schafer is a fitting tribute to his distinguished career in public service.

Located in Secretary Schafer's home State and at one of the Nation's premier land grant universities, this research center continues to advance its vital work on improving crops to strengthen our Nation's food security. I greatly appreciate the work—in spite