

the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 883.

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.

CHILD PROTECTION IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2017

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 695) to amend the National Child Protection Act of 1993 to establish a national criminal history background check system and criminal history review program for certain individuals who, related to their employment, have access to children, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 695

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 “Child Protection Improvements Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. NATIONAL CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECK AND CRIMINAL HISTORY REVIEW PROGRAM.

The National Child Protection Act of 1993 (42 U.S.C. 5119 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 3—

(A) by amending subsection (a)(3) to read as follows:

“(3)(A) The Attorney General shall establish a program, in accordance with this section, to provide qualified entities located in States which do not have in effect procedures described in paragraph (1), or qualified entities located in States which do not prohibit the use of the program established under this paragraph, with access to national criminal history background checks on, and criminal history reviews of, covered individuals.

“(B) A qualified entity described in subparagraph (A) may submit to the appropriate designated entity a request for a national criminal history background check on, and a criminal history review of, a covered individual. Qualified entities making a request under this paragraph shall comply with the guidelines set forth in subsection (b), and with any additional applicable procedures set forth by the Attorney General or by the State in which the entity is located.”;

(B) in subsection (b)—

(i) in paragraph (1)(E), by striking “unsupervised”;

(ii) in paragraph (2)—

(I) by redesignating subparagraph (A) as clause (i);

(II) in subparagraph (B)—

(aa) by adding “and” at the end; and

(bb) by redesignating such subparagraph as clause (ii);

(III) by striking “that each provider who is the subject of a background check” and inserting “(A) that each covered individual who is the subject of a background check conducted pursuant to the procedures established pursuant to subsection (a)(1)”;

(IV) by adding at the end the following:

“(B) that each covered individual who is the subject of a national criminal history background check and criminal history review conducted pursuant to the procedures established

pursuant to subsection (a)(3) is entitled to challenge the accuracy and completeness of any information in the criminal history record of the individual by contacting the Federal Bureau of Investigation under the procedure set forth in section 16.34 of title 28, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor thereto.”;

(iii) in paragraph (3), by inserting after “authorized agency” the following: “or designated entity, as applicable”; and

(iv) in paragraph (4), by inserting after “authorized agency” the following: “or designated entity, as applicable.”;

(C) in subsection (d), by inserting after “officer or employee thereof,” the following: “nor shall any designated entity nor any officer or employee thereof.”;

(D) by amending subsection (e) to read as follows:

“(e) FEES.—

“(1) STATE PROGRAM.—In the case of a background check conducted pursuant to a State requirement adopted after December 20, 1993, conducted with fingerprints on a covered individual, the fees collected by authorized State agencies and the Federal Bureau of Investigation may not exceed eighteen dollars, respectively, or the actual cost, whichever is less, of the background check conducted with fingerprints.

“(2) FEDERAL PROGRAM.—In the case of a national criminal history background check and criminal history review conducted pursuant to the procedures established pursuant to subsection (a)(3), the fees collected by a designated entity shall be set at a level that will ensure the recovery of the full costs of providing all such services. The designated entity shall remit the appropriate portion of such fee to the Attorney General, which amount is in accordance with the amount published in the Federal Register to be collected for the provision of a criminal history background check by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

“(3) ENSURING FEES DO NOT DISCOURAGE VOLUNTEERS.—A fee system under this subsection shall be established in a manner that ensures that fees to qualified entities for background checks do not discourage volunteers from participating in programs to care for children, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities.”;

(E) by inserting after subsection (e) the following:

“(f) NATIONAL CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECK AND CRIMINAL HISTORY REVIEW PROGRAM.—

“(1) NATIONAL CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECK.—Upon a designated entity receiving notice of a request submitted by a qualified entity pursuant to subsection (a)(3), the designated entity shall forward the request to the Attorney General, who shall, acting through the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, complete a fingerprint-based check of the national criminal history background check system, and provide the information received in response to such national criminal history background check to the appropriate designated entity. The designated entity may, upon request from a qualified entity, complete a check of a State criminal history database.

“(2) CRIMINAL HISTORY REVIEW.—

“(A) DESIGNATED ENTITIES.—The Attorney General shall designate, and enter into an agreement with, one or more entities to make determinations described in paragraph (2). The Attorney General may not designate and enter into an agreement with a Federal agency under this subparagraph.

“(B) DETERMINATIONS.—A designated entity shall, upon the receipt of the information described in paragraph (1), make a determination of fitness described in subsection (b)(4), using the criteria described in subparagraph (C).

“(C) CRIMINAL HISTORY REVIEW CRITERIA.—The Attorney General shall, by rule, establish the criteria for use by designated entities in making a determination of fitness described in

subsection (b)(4). Such criteria shall be based on the criteria established pursuant to section 108(a)(3)(G)(i) of the Prosecutorial Remedies and Other Tools to end the Exploitation of Children Today Act of 2003 (42 U.S.C. 5119a note).”; and

(F) by striking—

(i) “provider” each place it appears, and inserting “covered individual”; and

(ii) “provider’s” each place it appears, and inserting “covered individual’s”; and

(2) in section 5—

(A) by amending paragraph (9) to read as follows:

“(9) the term ‘covered individual’ means an individual—

“(A) who has, seeks to have, or may have access to children, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities, served by a qualified entity; and

“(B) who—

“(i) is employed by or volunteers with, or seeks to be employed by or volunteer with, a qualified entity; or

“(ii) owns or operates, or seeks to own or operate, a qualified entity.”;

(B) in paragraph (10), by striking “and” at the end;

(C) in paragraph (11), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(D) by inserting after paragraph (11) the following:

“(12) the term ‘designated entity’ means an entity designated by the Attorney General under section 3(f)(2)(A).”.

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act and the amendments made by this Act shall be fully implemented by not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. 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 H.R. 695, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, we have spent a great deal of time this afternoon discussing legislation designed to detect and punish sexual predators. These bills are all strong, well crafted, and laudable. I urge my colleagues to support them.

However, there is another facet to this problem, which is prevention. This may be the most important action we as Congress can take in the realm of child exploitation laws. We must do all we can to prevent child exploitation from happening in the first place.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I am pleased to bring H.R. 695, the Child Protection Improvements Act, before the House today. This legislation is extremely important in that it makes permanent a successful pilot program that allowed youth-serving organizations access to FBI fingerprint database searches.

In 2003, the PROTECT Act created the Child Safety Pilot Program, which ran from 2003 until 2011, and provided access to FBI fingerprint background checks for a variety of child-serving nonprofits.

The pilot conducted over 105,000 background checks during its existence. 6.2 percent of potential volunteers were found to have criminal records of concern. While that may seem like a small percentage, Mr. Speaker, it works out to over 6,500 individuals.

In addition, over 40 percent of individuals with criminal records of concern had crimes in States other than where they were applying to volunteer, meaning that only a nationwide check would have flagged these individuals' criminal records.

The criminal offenses detected among some of these checks included convictions for criminal sexual conduct with a child, child endangerment, and manslaughter. Twenty-six percent of these individuals showed a different name on their record than the one they used on their job application.

H.R. 695 allows organizations such as the YMCA to submit fingerprints to a designated entity which, in turn, submits them to the FBI for processing. The system protects privacy rights by ensuring that the specifics of a criminal record are never disclosed without explicit consent by the applicant, and it provides opportunity for individuals to correct errors in their records directly with the FBI.

Importantly, the bill does not mandate that youth-serving organizations use this process. It merely makes the process more accessible and more affordable for organizations that wish to use it.

Mr. Speaker, the harsh reality is that there are individuals who will put themselves in positions where they are entrusted with children so they can then betray that trust in the worst way imaginable. That is why bills like H.R. 695, and other bills we have discussed today, are so important.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BISHOP) for introducing this bill, and I urge my colleagues to support this strong bipartisan legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 695, the Child Protection Improvements Act, and tip my hat to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF), the author of the bill, who we will hear from shortly.

We have a special responsibility to protect our young people and vulnerable adults. For that reason, I am pleased that we are considering this measure which would provide a robust, easily accessible, cost-effective background check system for organizations that work with youth and vulnerable

adults. I support it for a number of reasons.

To begin with, it will facilitate more comprehensive criminal background checks which provide a critical layer of protection. These checks help identify individuals who could potentially harm participants in programs for children, young people, and vulnerable adults as well.

Background checks also serve to ensure the integrity and accountability of the organizations that sponsor these programs by reducing potential threats. Results from background checks that search criminal histories nationwide are more reliable than background checks that only search criminal histories in a few States. I think that is obvious.

Secondly, the State background checks are no substitute whatsoever for the FBI's fingerprint-based system, which is the only nationwide database that allows a search of criminal histories in every single State.

Currently, this database can only be accessed through the State law enforcement agencies, and many States limit the ability of organizations to access the system, with some States completely even forbidding access—no access whatsoever. As a result, organizations must navigate a labyrinth of State laws or rely on private companies to perform background checks of employees and volunteers.

H.R. 695, on the other hand, would provide organizations with the ability to access the FBI's superior system without impacting the autonomy of States or the organizations. States would be able to continue or establish their own background check systems, and organizations would not be required to perform FBI background checks of potential applicants or volunteers.

Finally, the need for this legislation is clearly justified by the Child Safety Pilot Program, which we implemented over a decade ago. This program documented the effectiveness of nationwide background checks for youth-serving organizations. Based on a comprehensive review of thousands of criminal history records spanning an 8-year period, the program demonstrated that people who might pose a risk to the safety of children, nevertheless, attempted to work with children.

For example, the program identified applicants who, to avoid detection, used aliases, incorrect dates of birth, or wrong Social Security numbers. Some of these applicants had serious criminal histories, including even homicides, sexual assaults, child endangerment, and even rape.

More than a third of criminal history hits were from out-of-state, and more than half of the people with criminal history hits failed to disclose them on their application.

H.R. 695 would give organizations access to the FBI's comprehensive background check system and thereby help ensure the safety of our youth and others.

Accordingly, I hope that all of my colleagues will join me in supporting this important measure.

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, at this time, it is my pleasure to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BISHOP), one of the two chief sponsors of this legislation.

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman GOODLATTE for his great work in bringing this matter forward.

Mr. Speaker, protection of children is not a partisan matter, and I am grateful to the committee, committee staff, and Chairman GOODLATTE for his leadership in this matter and bringing this forward.

With school ending and summer camp starting, this is the time to bring awareness to and pass the Child Protection Improvements Act.

Every year, millions of people work with or volunteer to help our children wherever they are as camp counselors, local youth sports coaches, mentors. You name it. All across America, there are organizations where people can make a difference in the lives of our Nation's youth, and our children can absolutely benefit from these programs. Take the Boys and Girls Clubs, MENTOR, or the YMCA, just to name a few. These groups and dozens of others, which exist virtually in all of our districts, have come to the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) and to me asking for help.

Just like any parent, they too want to ensure that people working with our kids are decent, with clean backgrounds and good intentions. Mr. Speaker, that is where Congress comes in. We have a duty to ensure every youth-serving organization in America can afford and access the best background checks on staff and volunteers so they can properly vet people who might have traveled across State lines. This means utilizing the FBI's gold-standard database.

Shockingly enough, not every organization has the option today, but we have the ability to change that. The Child Protection Improvements Act would allow all youth-serving organizations to utilize the FBI fingerprint-based background checks. We are simply eliminating the red tape that prevents the access in some of these States so every organization can adequately look out for our children, no matter where they live.

For those who are justifiably concerned about the cost, it should also be noted that the CPIA is fiscally responsible, as it does not authorize any new spending. The program will be supported by fees assessed for background checks by the requesting nonprofit organizations.

Mr. Speaker, every kid deserves a childhood where they can explore, grow, and do fun things beyond the

walls of their home and school. As a father of three myself, I ask my colleagues to support this commonsense measure to catch potential threats and keep our kids safe.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Michigan (Mr. BISHOP) for his contribution.

I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF), the ranking member of the Intelligence Committee and the author of the bill.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Child Protection Improvements Act. I would like to thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BISHOP) who has been an excellent partner working with me on this bill, the first version of which was introduced in 2007.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank Chairman GOODLATTE and Ranking Member CONYERS for their work on the bill as well.

I volunteered with Big Brothers Big Sisters many years ago. I was paired with an extraordinary young man named David who is now himself a Big Brother. I have always said that I have learned as much or more from David and the program as he ever learned from me.

The experience also helped me understand the huge amount of trust that we put in volunteers at organizations all around the country. In the vast majority of cases, that trust is well placed. But, unfortunately, there are exceptions.

For that reason, in 2003, Congress created the Child Safety Pilot Program to demonstrate the feasibility of allowing youth-serving nonprofits to access FBI background checks.

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The FBI maintains the database of criminal histories from every State in the Nation, searchable by fingerprint. An FBI search is really the gold standard when it comes to background checks, as it cannot be evaded by using a fake name, and it will find convictions from every State. I believe that the gold standard is what we should strive for when it comes to protecting children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities who are put in a potentially vulnerable situation.

Between 2003 and 2011, youth-serving organizations were able to run over 100,000 background checks through this pilot program, and about 6 percent of the potential volunteers were revealed to have criminal records of concern. Applicants were found with convictions for everything from murder to child abuse, to sexual assault; and frequently those convictions were from out of State, so only a national background check would have found them.

H.R. 695 ensures that every child-serving organization in America will have access to the most comprehensive and effective background check pos-

sible. H.R. 695 will also protect the applicant's privacy and does not allow for the individual's specific criminal record to be disclosed without explicit consent by the potential volunteer.

We have demonstrated that background checks for nonprofits working with children can be conducted quickly, affordably, and accurately. It is time to create a system that is permanent and that will protect children and other vulnerable populations while ensuring the privacy of volunteers.

I urge the passage of this bipartisan bill.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, and I am prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me also congratulate Mr. SCHIFF and Mr. BISHOP. And as was indicated on the floor, thank you very much, Mr. CONYERS.

This is the kind of bill that is corrective and effective. This bill would allow a more effective and comprehensive criminal background check, which will help identify the integrity and accountability of the organizations that sponsor these programs.

Many of us have worked with the Boys and Girls Clubs, Boys and Girls Scouts, and many other organizations that really work to help children. These nationwide criminal background checks are more reliable than background checks that only search criminal histories in a few States.

Many States currently limit the ability of organizations to access their database and, thus, force organizations to depend on private companies to perform background checks of employees and volunteers. If anybody has been on the board of a nonprofit dealing with children, you realize that you want to put most of your resources investing in the programs to help these children. H.R. 695, however, would alleviate this burden of expense and allow organizations to access the FBI's more robust system.

In the Child Safety Pilot Program, which we implemented over 10 years ago, it demonstrates the effectiveness of nationwide background checks for youth-serving organizations. The program has effectively exposed applicants who use aliases, incorrect dates of birth, and other identifiers, some of whom have serious criminal backgrounds. That is the preventative way to protect our children, by ensuring a very healthy, robust vetting of individuals who want to engage with our children.

H.R. 695 would allow organizations to access the FBI's comprehensive background check system and to create a more accurate determination of individuals who want to work with children. Volunteers we welcome, but we want to ensure that those volunteers are there to take care of our children,

to help our children, and improve the lives of our children. H.R. 695 is a very important contributor to that effort.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I am pleased to make my closing remarks.

Mr. Speaker, the Child Protection Improvements Act is a reasonable, bipartisan piece of legislation intended to protect our children and vulnerable adults from harm and give those who love them peace of mind.

Although we still have work to do to address the accuracy and reliability of some criminal history records and give individuals an opportunity to challenge incomplete or inaccurate records, this is a good bill. For those reasons, I urge everyone in this Chamber to support the bill.

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I commend the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BISHOP). I thank the ranking member of the full committee and the ranking member of the subcommittee and the chairman of the subcommittee for working on this important legislation with me and the committee staff.

I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense 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 Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 695, 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.

TARGETED REWARDS FOR THE GLOBAL ERADICATION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1625) to amend the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 to include severe forms of trafficking in persons within the definition of transnational organized crime for purposes of the rewards program of the Department of State, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1625

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 "Targeted Rewards for the Global Eradication of Human Trafficking" or the "TARGET Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) Trafficking in persons is a major transnational crime that threatens United States national security and humanitarian interests.