

Now, we know that foster care does wonders for many children every day, but it may not be the best match for every child, and the decision should not come down to cost.

In my district of Los Angeles, for instance, we have a program called the Exodus program, where formerly homeless families live in an on-site apartment complex and receive comprehensive services, including substance abuse treatment, counseling, child development, and family reunification services. Over the last 7 years, more than 80 percent of enrolled families have completed the program, and 95 percent have been able to keep their families together.

Even though we know that parent-child substance abuse models like Exodus have shown promising results, current law does not financially incentivize States to utilize these programs where they are available.

The Supporting Families in Substance Abuse Treatment Act would address this problem by ensuring that if parents and children are placed in these programs and stay together, the State can receive the full Federal match for the child's living costs. States would retain full authority to decide which placement is best, but that consideration will now be based on what is best for the child, not what is most affordable for the State.

States should be given the option to use family-based treatment options without risking the loss of Federal foster care reimbursement. I urge my colleagues to consider our Nation's families and how this legislation may impact those with heads of household who are struggling with addiction. We can heal them without creating new trauma or pain for their children.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2857.

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, having no other speakers, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS).

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2857, to support foster care maintenance payments for children with parents in a licensed residential facility.

Last month, when the National Foster Youth Institute sponsored Foster Youth Shadow Day, several of the youth, in a townhall meeting that we had, described their parents' challenges with substance abuse. One young lady said that both of her parents were addicted to heroin, and that she was taken into court and, in front of her, the judge said to her parents: "If you don't clean up, we're going to take your children away."

□ 1745

After she left court, she was taken away. She was removed from her parents. Ultimately, her parents continued to use, and, sadly, both of them died. This young woman grew up feel-

ing guilty and feeling that part of the reason why her parents passed away was because she was used as leverage, and that if her parents had been kept together in drug treatment along with her maybe she wouldn't be an orphan today and her parents would have lived and she wouldn't have had to grow up in foster care. H.R. 2857 will allow programs like SHIELDS for Families that does address parental substance abuse and keeps families together to have the resources to expand their programs.

Today, we heard five bills that addressed challenges in the child welfare system. We know that there is a lot more that needs to be done, but today we passed bills addressing substance abuse, relative caregivers, we identified and addressed barriers to placement, and I am hoping that one next step we could take would be to extend the kinship navigator programs so that organizations like Community Coalition can continue to provide support to relatives and expand their Kinship in Action program.

As we improve various parts of the system, at some point we need to address the structural problem with how the system is financed. Right now, we have to remove a child and break up a family in order to have the resources to help the child. We know much more now. We know what leads a parent to neglect the child: substance abuse, mental health issues, poverty. We need to continue to reform the system and provide the resources to prevent a crisis. When problems are identified, why should we wait for the neglect to occur?

Once again, I want to thank Chairman BRADY, Ranking Member NEAL, and all of the sponsors of the legislation today, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2857.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I want to commend Representative NOEM and all of the cosponsors of this important bill. These are programs that have been proven to work. They are what are called evidence based, where the research demonstrates that, with them, individuals have been able to improve the quality of not only their lives, but certainly the lives of their children and the lives of everyone with whom they come into contact.

I agree that today has been a tremendous day for the Ways and Means Committee and also a tremendous day for the people of the United States of America, where we have come together with five bills that will be passed at the end of the day dealing with the needs, hopes, and aspirations of our vulnerable population of children. You really can't have a better day than that.

And so again, I commend Chairman BRADY, Ranking Member NEAL, and all of the Members for their participation, engagement, and involvement.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, today I want to thank all of my colleagues for working with me on this legislation and collaborating on the Supporting Families in Substance Abuse Treatment Act that is before us today.

This is a critical step in addressing the needs that we have in our communities with the urgent opioid and methamphetamine crisis in our country while protecting the foundation of our society, which is the family.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the support of this legislation that is before us today, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2857, 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.

WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY ACT OF 2017

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2484) to ensure that the United States promotes the meaningful participation of women in mediation and negotiation processes seeking to prevent, mitigate, or resolve violent conflict.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2484

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 "Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Around the world, women remain underrepresented in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and post-conflict peace building efforts.

(2) Women in conflict-affected regions have achieved significant success in—

(A) moderating violent extremism;

(B) countering terrorism;

(C) resolving disputes through nonviolent mediation and negotiation; and

(D) stabilizing societies by enhancing the effectiveness of security services, peacekeeping efforts, institutions, and decision-making processes.

(3) Research suggests that peace negotiations are more likely to succeed and to result in durable peace agreements when women participate in the peace process.

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention and conflict resolution processes helps to promote more inclusive and democratic societies and is critical to

the long-term stability of countries and regions;

(2) the political participation, and leadership of women in fragile environments, particularly during democratic transitions, is critical to sustaining lasting democratic institutions; and

(3) the United States should be a global leader in promoting the meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention, management, and resolution, and post-conflict relief and recovery efforts.

SEC. 4. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It shall be the policy of the United States to promote the meaningful participation of women in all aspects of overseas conflict prevention, management, and resolution, and post-conflict relief and recovery efforts, reinforced through diplomatic efforts and programs that—

(1) integrate the perspectives and interests of affected women into conflict-prevention activities and strategies;

(2) encourage partner governments to adopt plans to improve the meaningful participation of women in peace and security processes and decision-making institutions;

(3) promote the physical safety, economic security, and dignity of women and girls;

(4) support the equal access of women to aid distribution mechanisms and services;

(5) collect and analyze gender data for the purpose of developing and enhancing early warning systems of conflict and violence;

(6) adjust policies and programs to improve outcomes in gender equality and the empowerment of women; and

(7) monitor, analyze, and evaluate the efforts related to each strategy submitted under section 5 and the impact of such efforts.

SEC. 5. UNITED STATES STRATEGY TO PROMOTE THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACE BUILDING.

(a) **REQUIREMENT.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and again four years thereafter, the President, in consultation with the heads of the relevant Federal departments and agencies, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees and make publicly available a single government-wide strategy, to be known as the Women, Peace, and Security Strategy, that provides a detailed description of how the United States intends to fulfill the policy objectives in section 4. The strategy shall—

(1) support and be aligned with plans developed by other countries to improve the meaningful participation of women in peace and security processes, conflict prevention, peace building, transitional processes, and decision-making institutions; and

(2) include specific and measurable goals, benchmarks, performance metrics, timetables, and monitoring and evaluation plans to ensure the accountability and effectiveness of all policies and initiatives carried out under the strategy.

(b) **SPECIFIC PLANS FOR DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES.**—Each strategy under subsection (a) shall include a specific implementation plan from each of the relevant Federal departments and agencies that describes—

(1) the anticipated contributions of the department or agency, including technical, financial, and in-kind contributions, to implement the strategy; and

(2) the efforts of the department or agency to ensure that the policies and initiatives carried out pursuant to the strategy are designed to achieve maximum impact and long-term sustainability.

(c) **COORDINATION.**—The President should promote the meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention, in coordination and consultation with international

partners, including, as appropriate, multilateral organizations, stakeholders, and other relevant international organizations, particularly in situations in which the direct engagement of the United States Government is not appropriate or advisable.

(d) **SENSE OF CONGRESS.**—It is the sense of Congress that the President, in implementing each strategy submitted under subsection (a), should—

(1) provide technical assistance, training, and logistical support to female negotiators, mediators, peace builders, and stakeholders;

(2) address security-related barriers to the meaningful participation of women;

(3) encourage increased participation of women in existing programs funded by the United States Government that provide training to foreign nationals regarding law enforcement, the rule of law, or professional military education;

(4) support appropriate local organizations, especially women's peace building organizations;

(5) support the training, education, and mobilization of men and boys as partners in support of the meaningful participation of women;

(6) encourage the development of transitional justice and accountability mechanisms that are inclusive of the experiences and perspectives of women and girls;

(7) expand and apply gender analysis, as appropriate, to improve program design and targeting; and

(8) conduct assessments that include the perspectives of women regarding new initiatives in support of peace negotiations, transitional justice and accountability, efforts to counter violent extremism, or security sector reform.

SEC. 6. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACE BUILDING.

(a) **FOREIGN SERVICE.**—The Secretary of State, in conjunction with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, shall ensure that all appropriate personnel (including special envoys, members of mediation or negotiation teams, relevant members of the civil service or Foreign Service, and contractors) responsible for or deploying to countries or regions considered to be at risk of, undergoing, or emerging from violent conflict obtain training, as appropriate, in the following areas, each of which shall include a focus on women and ensuring meaningful participation by women:

(1) Conflict prevention, mitigation, and resolution.

(2) Protecting civilians from violence, exploitation, and trafficking in persons.

(3) International human rights law and international humanitarian law.

(b) **DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.**—The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that relevant personnel receive training, as appropriate, in the following areas:

(1) Training in conflict prevention, peace processes, mitigation, resolution, and security initiatives that specifically addresses the importance of meaningful participation by women.

(2) Gender considerations and meaningful participation by women, including training regarding—

(A) international human rights law and international humanitarian law, as relevant; and

(B) protecting civilians from violence, exploitation, and trafficking in persons.

(3) Effective strategies and best practices for ensuring meaningful participation by women.

SEC. 7. CONSULTATION AND COLLABORATION.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States

Agency for International Development may establish guidelines or take other steps to ensure overseas United States personnel of the Department of State or the United States Agency for International Development, as the case may be, consult with appropriate stakeholders, including local women, youth, ethnic and religious minorities, and other politically underrepresented or marginalized populations, regarding United States efforts to—

(1) prevent, mitigate, or resolve violent conflict; and

(2) enhance the success of mediation and negotiation processes by ensuring the meaningful participation of women.

(b) **COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION.**—The Secretary of State should work with international, regional, national, and local organizations to increase the meaningful participation of women in international peacekeeping operations, and should promote training that provides international peacekeeping personnel with the substantive knowledge and skills needed to ensure effective physical security and meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention and peace building.

SEC. 8. REPORTS TO CONGRESS.

(a) **BRIEFING.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of the first submission of a strategy required under section 5, the Secretary of State, in conjunction with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development and the Secretary of Defense, shall brief the appropriate congressional committees on existing, enhanced, or newly established training carried out pursuant to section 6.

(b) **REPORT ON WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY STRATEGY.**—Not later than 2 years after the date of the submission of each strategy required under section 5, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that—

(1) summarizes and evaluates the implementation of such strategy and the impact of United States diplomatic efforts and foreign assistance programs, projects, and activities to promote the meaningful participation of women;

(2) describes the nature and extent of the coordination among the relevant Federal departments and agencies on the implementation of such strategy;

(3) outlines the monitoring and evaluation tools, mechanisms, and common indicators to assess progress made on the policy objectives set forth in section 4; and

(4) describes the existing, enhanced, or newly established training carried out pursuant to section 6.

SEC. 9. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.**—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Armed Services, and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Armed Services, and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.

(2) **RELEVANT FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES.**—The term “relevant Federal departments and agencies” means—

(A) the United States Agency for International Development;

(B) the Department of State;

(C) the Department of Defense;

(D) the Department of Homeland Security; and

(E) any other department or agency specified by the President for purposes of this Act.

(3) **STAKEHOLDERS.**—The term “stakeholders” means nongovernmental and private sector entities engaged in or affected by conflict prevention and stabilization, peace building, protection, security, transition initiatives, humanitarian response, or related efforts.

The **SPEAKER** pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material in the **RECORD** on H.R. 2484.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Women, Peace, and Security Act, H.R. 2484.

I want to recognize Representatives KRISTI NOEM and JAN SCHAKOWSKY. I want to recognize the two of them for their bipartisan effort in putting together this legislation, this important piece of legislation. I think it is going to have a great impact.

I also want to thank Mr. ENGEL for his important leadership.

Our consideration of this measure is really the culmination of many years of bipartisan work by Members of the House, including Representative JAN SCHAKOWSKY and Representative KRISTI NOEM, and by our prior administration officials, as well, who have worked on this, and many advocates—many advocates—who want to see better, more sustainable solutions to ending wars, to combating terrorism, and to improving human rights around the world. What we are seeing today is that women's participation is really essential to confronting these fundamental challenges.

Last year, the Foreign Affairs Committee held a hearing where we heard powerful testimony about the importance of including women in peace negotiations and in the security negotiations and security institutions that have been set up around the globe. Women, of course, have the fundamental human right to have their voices heard in discussions affecting their lives and their families' lives, and that is a case in and of itself that we must continue to make.

But women's participation is also critical to realizing better outcomes with respect to these negotiations. Simply put, when women are at the negotiating table and it affects their community, peace is more likely. Compelling research shows that peace agreements are much more likely to be reached, and certainly more likely to

last, when women's groups are genuinely involved.

Women peacemakers often press warring parties to move beyond mere power-sharing agreements—which, of course, benefit only a small percentage of fighters—to more comprehensive and longer term accords which benefit the civilian population as a whole.

We have seen this play out from Colombia to Rwanda, to Sri Lanka, where women's groups have pushed for practical solutions to deescalate and resolve the conflict, and certainly, in Northern Ireland, where, indisputably, the bravery and perseverance in the face of reprisal and pressure led women on both sides of that conflict to stay engaged until there was a lasting peace; at least, until today, there is a lasting peace in Northern Ireland, and that is because of their involvement.

Efforts to keep the peace through policing and peacemaking missions also—this is an additional point—benefit from women's participation because it leads to better crime reporting and higher levels of trust within the communities they serve.

Women are essential to confronting one of the greatest national security threats of our time, and that is the spread of violent extremism because, if we think about it, women, of course, are truly on the front lines of this fight. They possess unique insights into the community, into their families, and are capable of gathering information often that men cannot or do not see. Yet their input is frequently overlooked, and I would just give one example, of many.

Activist Wazhma Frogh in Afghanistan recalls when women from a small Afghan village tried desperately to warn a government official that young men in their community were being recruited by Islamist militants at the local weddings, the minister laughed them off. He said: The militants that we are fighting are much too sophisticated to go and recruit at the weddings here in the community. Well, of course, a month later, unfortunately, some of those same young men that had been recruited attacked a bus, killing 32 civilians.

My committee has heard similar stories from women around the world who want to reclaim their communities from the spread of radical ideologies. We must acknowledge women as partners in this fight, and that is why the legislation before us today recognizes that it is in our national interest to promote women's participation in resolving violence and conflict.

This concept has been building support for some time. The Bush administration was right to press hard for women's participation in peace negotiations and political processes in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere, and the Obama administration expanded on these programs to require a governmentwide approach to women's inclusion in conflict resolution overseas.

Today, this bipartisan legislation before us builds on these efforts. It will

continue to require a governmentwide strategy to promote women's participation, along with specific goals and benchmarks and regular reporting to Congress in order to gauge progress.

It also requires that appropriate State, USAID, and Defense Department personnel receive training in how to facilitate women's participation in conflict resolution, security initiatives, and efforts to protect civilians from violence and to protect them from exploitation.

I urge all Members to support this measure's passage.

I again thank KRISTI NOEM and JAN SCHAKOWSKY for their good work on this bill.

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

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 12, 2017.

Hon. EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing to you concerning H.R. 2484, the “Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017.” There are certain provisions in the bill which fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Armed Services.

In the interest of permitting your committee to proceed expeditiously to floor consideration of this important legislation, I am willing to waive this committee's further consideration of H.R. 2484. I do so with the understanding that by waiving consideration of the bill, the Committee on Armed Services does not waive any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the legislation which fall within its Rule X jurisdiction.

Please place a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging our jurisdictional interest into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor. Thank you for the cooperative spirit in which you have worked regarding this matter and others between our respective committees.

Sincerely,
WILLIAM M. “MAC” THORNBERRY,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 12, 2017.

Hon. WILLIAM M. “MAC” THORNBERRY,
Chairman, House Armed Services Committee,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Foreign Affairs on H.R. 2484, the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017, and for agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of that bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to consideration by the House.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Armed Services, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees from your committee to any House-Senate conference on this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on H.R. 2484 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with your Committee

as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this measure.

I want to thank the bill's authors, Representative SCHAKOWSKY and Representative NOEM, for their years' worth of work on this measure. I also want to thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for helping move it forward.

Wherever there are conflicts around the world, women and girls face particular vulnerabilities, but they also possess unique abilities to bring peace and prosperity to their communities.

Research has shown that getting women involved in conflict resolution and peace building leads to better outcomes. That is why the Obama administration launched its executive order on Women, Peace, and Security in 2011 to make sure women had a seat at the table when it came to conflict prevention and resolution.

Thanks to the Obama administration's efforts, the United States has worked to include women in conflict prevention, negotiation, and resolution. We have promoted efforts to enhance the physical and economic security of women around the world, and we have sought to break through the barriers that have stopped women from being full participants in peace processes.

□ 1800

The bill we are considering will make these policies permanent. It would build on what the Obama administration has accomplished by making sure agency personnel across our government are fully trained on the unique strengths women bring to conflict prevention and resolution. It would also require annual reporting so Congress can stay apprised of these efforts.

Making this strategy permanent is absolutely imperative. It is important that we fully recognize and appreciate how women's participation can help make our foreign policy stronger.

I am pleased to support this measure, and I urge all my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM), a member of the Committee on Ways and Means and the author of this important bill.

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, you can't hardly turn on the TV today or open a newspaper, scroll through your news feed without learning of another outbreak of violence around the globe. Especially in a world as volatile and insecure as ours is today, we have a responsibility to take full advantage of prov-

en peace-building tactics. This includes involving women in conflict prevention and resolution.

Research covering conflicts from Northern Ireland to Africa has shown that peace agreements are 35 percent more likely to last at least 15 years when women are involved. Even knowing this, women are many times left out during negotiations.

The truth is that conflict knows no gender, just as peace should know no gender. With that said, women are many times impacted by conflict in different ways than their male counterparts.

ISIL, for instance, has used human trafficking and sex slavery, which disproportionately impacts women, as an income-generating business for their terrorist activities. Women need to be able to play a major role in addressing this and finding solutions to combat it.

Moreover, in many war-torn countries, women control large segments of the economy. In fact, women are the sole income earners in nearly one-third of all households worldwide. While their husbands and sons are serving as soldiers, women are running the markets, the schools, other public and private institutions. By virtue of that, they are running the local economy and have an unmistakable voice in community discussions. Their understanding can prove invaluable when mitigating conflict and building peace.

Particularly in areas where increased stability creates greater security for the United States, we must make sure that the work that we are doing produces lasting results.

I am confident the Women, Peace, and Security Act and the accountability it provides will help produce sustainable outcomes for Americans, and that also touches on our national security.

While our U.S. Government, in recent years, has made efforts to include women in peace negotiations, the bipartisan Women, Peace, and Security Act better ensures that women have a seat at the table during these discussions through meaningful congressional oversight. It is but one instrument in a toolbox our military and diplomatic leaders can use when looking at producing long-term results, and leaders can use it when looking to produce peace, but it is still a tool that we should not ignore.

I am grateful to my colleagues: Representative JAN SCHAKOWSKY for all of her passionate work on this issue; Chairman ED ROYCE and Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL for their efforts on this legislation as well.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY), the coauthor of this bill, a true advocate for women, and my colleague.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Congressman JOAQUIN CASTRO, for yielding to me.

I am so proud to rise in support of H.R. 2484, the Women, Peace, and Secu-

rity Act, which I introduced along with my partner, KRISTI NOEM. We have been working on this bill for quite a while.

I want to really thank Chairman ED ROYCE for not only his eloquent words today and his clear description about why this is so important, but for working closely with us to make this day a reality. I am hopeful that we will be able to go through the Senate and get this bill finally enacted.

The Women, Peace, and Security Act promotes the participation of women in the peace process and is a step forward for our security and our economic prosperity as well. When women are involved in peace negotiations, a peace agreement is more likely to last. In fact, the International Peace Institute found that a peace agreement is 35 percent more likely to last for at least 15 years if women participate in drafting the agreement. The study also found that with each 5 percent increase in women's participation in the political process, a nation is five times less likely to use violence when faced with international crisis or conflict.

When women and girls are equal partners in all aspects of decision-making, countries are more likely to be peaceful and economically prosperous.

Despite the strong evidence in favor of women's political participation, women remain underrepresented in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and the post-conflict peace-building efforts that are happening around the world, and the United States can help to change that.

The Women, Peace, and Security Act will build upon the 2011 National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, which made clear that the meaningful inclusion of women in peace and security processes is imperative for national and global security. And you heard how in Northern Ireland and all the way to Rwanda, the participation of women has been absolutely essential.

Our legislation establishes women's participation as a permanent element of U.S. foreign policy. It would encourage the United States to assist women mediators and negotiators by addressing barriers to their equal and secure participation in the peace process.

It would institute comprehensive training modules on the protection, rights, and specific needs of women in conflict and require the administration to evaluate the impact of U.S. foreign assistance on women's meaningful participation.

In addition, Women, Peace, and Security Act would require the President to report to Congress its strategy to promote women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution, and it would empower Congress to exercise oversight of that strategy's implementation.

The United States plays a crucial role in encouraging peace agreements all over the world. By making sure

that we bring women into the peace process, we can improve national and global security.

So, once again, I just want to thank Congresswoman NOEM, my partner on this bipartisan legislation, as well as Chairman ED ROYCE and Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL, for their support. I want to thank the many advocacy groups who have been persistent throughout these years in bringing it to us, the evidence of the success of women when women participate in the peace process.

So I thank the gentleman again for yielding.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time to close.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, seeing no other speakers on my side, I am prepared to close as long as there are no other speakers on the majority side.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank, once again, Chairman ED ROYCE, Ranking Member ENGEL, and Representatives SCHAKOWSKY and NOEM for their hard work.

I again urge a “yes” vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, from Liberia to Northern Ireland, to, frankly, all over the planet, we have watched women play pivotal roles in pushing their governments, in pushing combatants and politicians to bring an end to conflict.

In recent years, we have seen armed conflicts flare around the world, producing the largest number of refugees on record. Efforts to negotiate an end to these conflicts are more important than ever. We know that when women are included in these discussions, we are more likely to see an enduring peace.

As a witness at our hearing on women’s participation explained: “Including women is not only the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do.”

The legislation before us today will strengthen U.S. efforts to promote the inclusion of women in peace negotiations in order to create more sustainable agreements and more stable partners for the United States and for the U.S. allies.

So, again, I want to thank Representatives NOEM and SCHAKOWSKY for their bipartisan work. I also want to particularly thank the staff on both sides of the aisle who have worked so hard over the past couple of years, including Jessica Kelch, Cassandra Varanka, Brittany Comins, Elizabeth Cunningham, and Janice Kaguyutan. We appreciate all of your good work.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I ask for an “aye” vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2484, the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 which expresses that the United States should be a global leader in promoting the meaningful par-

ticipation of women in efforts directed at conflict prevention, management, and resolution.

This bill directs the President to develop and submit to Congress a Women, Peace, and Security Strategy that will:

1. Be aligned with other nations’ plans to improve and encourage women to participate in peace and security over processes, conflict prevention, peace building, and decision making; and

2. Lay out goals and evaluation plans to measure strategy effectiveness.

Additionally, H.R. 2484 directs that employees and contractors of the Department of State, Department of Defense, and the U.S. Agency for International Development that personnel deployed to countries or regions at risk or emerging from violent conflict be provided training in conflict prevention, mitigation, and resolution.

This training will allow those deployed to these regions to collaborate and support women who live in these conflict ridden communities to develop peace and security strategies.

As a member of the Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues, I understand the importance of women’s security and its role in conflict prevention and resolution.

This is why in the 114th Congress I introduced H. Res. 528 that seeks to create a Victims of Terror Protection Fund for the displaced refugees, migrants and victims of Boko Haram’s terror in the region, many of which are women and children.

One reason women play such a critical role in the peacebuilding process is because they constitute half of every community.

Educating women and men to work in tandem is an imperative step toward instilling peace in communities and mending broken bonds.

An important aspect of H.R. 2484 is the inclusion of training personnel who work firsthand in these conflicted regions regarding international human rights laws and the protection of trafficked people.

Nearly 21 million people have fallen victim to human trafficking globally, and more than half of them are women and girls.

These numbers are staggering, and victims who have been liberated from this awful slavery require special consideration and support to overcome the horrors they have experienced with the aid of women peacekeepers.

Women serve as incredible advocates for peace as central caretakers of the family and have already played prominent roles in peace processes in the Horn of Africa.

Overall, H.R. 2484 makes an important contribution by requiring the agencies that focus abroad to collaborate on incorporating women in the peacebuilding processes.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 2484, the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words in support of Representative KRISTI NOEM’s Women, Peace and Security Act (H.R. 2484). Among other things, it highlights the role women must play in peacemaking.

In the limited time we have, I would just like to highlight the role of one woman who served as a peacemaker, whom I have had the opportunity to get to know—Nuala O’Loan, who served as the Police Ombudsman in Northern Ireland from 2000 to 2007, and someone who

has contributed to our understanding in the Congress as she twice testified at hearings held on the Northern Ireland peace process.

Baroness O’Loan—she was made a Dame of the British Empire and a member of the House of Lords in recognition for her role in the cause of peace—had the difficult task of looking into how the police handled the Omagh bombing. That bombing, by a splinter group of the Irish Republican Army, was intended to reignite sectarian tension and stop the movement towards peace that was memorialized in the Good Friday Agreement. The bomb was indiscriminate, however, killing both Protestant and Catholic alike, and helped underscore the need for peace.

In the ensuing years, Baroness O’Loan became known as an even-handed intermediary. Indeed, she was so even-handed that she was criticized by extremists on both sides, and her retirement party was boycotted by hardliners from the Unionist and Republican camps. On the other hand, the average citizen, whether Protestant or Catholic, supported her in her role as Police Ombudsman in roughly equal numbers, something that was borne out by independent polling.

Nuala O’Loan is but one example of a woman serving as peacemaker. There are many more Nualas around the world, and I applaud Congresswoman NOEM for encouraging us to recognize the role these women play in helping bring a little light to the darkness.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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. 2484.

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.

SECURING OUR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD ACT

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker’s table the bill (H.R. 1238) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to make the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for Health Affairs responsible for coordinating the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security related to food, agriculture, and veterinary defense against terrorism, and for other purposes, with the Senate amendments thereto, and concur in the Senate amendments.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the Senate amendments.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendments:

(1) On page 4, lines 1 and 2, strike [relating to food and agriculture] and insert “or the Secretary of Health and Human Services”.

(2) On page 4, strike line 3 and all that follows through the end of the matter following line 6 and insert the following:

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 is amended—

(1) by striking the items relating to sections 523, 524, 525, 526, and 527; and