

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on additional motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the votes incur objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record votes on the postponed questions will be taken later.

ENHANCING DETECTION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING ACT

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2664) to direct the Secretary of Labor to train certain Department of Labor personnel how to effectively detect and assist law enforcement in preventing human trafficking during the course of their primary roles and responsibilities, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2664

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 “Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

In this Act the term “human trafficking” means an act or practice described in paragraph (9) or (10) of section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102).

SEC. 3. TRAINING FOR DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL TO IDENTIFY HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Labor shall implement a program to—

(1) train and periodically retrain relevant personnel across the Department of Labor that the Secretary considers appropriate, how to effectively detect and assist law enforcement in preventing human trafficking during the course of their primary roles and responsibilities; and

(2) ensure that such personnel regularly receive current information on matters related to the detection of human trafficking, including information that becomes available outside of the Department’s initial or periodic retraining schedule, to the extent relevant to their official duties and consistent with applicable information and privacy laws.

(b) TRAINING DESCRIBED.—The training referred to in subsection (a) may be conducted through in-class or virtual learning capabilities, and shall include—

(1) methods for identifying suspected victims of human trafficking and, where appropriate, perpetrators of human trafficking;

(2) training that is most appropriate for a particular location or environment in which the personnel receiving such training perform their official duties;

(3) other topics determined by the Secretary to be appropriate reflecting current trends and best practices for personnel in their particular location or professional environment;

(4) a clear course of action for referring potential cases of human trafficking to the Department of Justice and other appropriate authorities; and

(5) a post-training evaluation for personnel receiving the training.

SEC. 4. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and each year thereafter, the Secretary of Labor shall report to the appropriate congressional committees on the training provided to the personnel referred to in section 3(a), including—

(1) an evaluation of such training and the overall effectiveness of the program required by this Act;

(2) the number of cases referred by Department of Labor personnel in which human trafficking was suspected and the metrics used by the Department to accurately measure and track its response to instances of suspected human trafficking; and

(3) the number of Department of Labor employees who have completed such training as required by this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) and the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands (Mr. SABLAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2664.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2664, the Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act.

Labor trafficking is the illegal exploitation of an individual for commercial gain. It knows no geological limits. It happens across our country and around the globe, including in my home State of Michigan.

Victims of labor trafficking are not a uniform group of people. Victims are young children, teenagers, men, and women.

In my home State of Michigan, the National Human Trafficking Hotline reported over 38 cases in 2016 involving labor trafficking. This is a 52 percent increase in the number of reported cases since 2015.

Globally, the International Labor Organization estimates there are 21 million people trapped in forced labor.

The growing number of human trafficking cases is alarming and more needs to be done to identify victims, catch traffickers, and end this form of modern-day slavery.

In the course of inspecting workplace safety and labor law compliance within the United States, Department of Labor employees often have a front line to view and to identify patterns of labor exploitation. Providing these employees with the proper training to detect and respond to the signs of human trafficking is an important part of the larger comprehensive effort to eradicate this unthinkable crime.

The Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act would ensure the Department has a formal framework in

place to detect trafficking and refer cases to law enforcement for prosecution.

Specifically, H.R. 2664 would:

Direct the Department of Labor to train appropriate staff on how to effectively detect instances of human trafficking;

Ensure personnel regularly receive information on current trends and best practices;

Allow flexible training options, including in-class and virtual learning options;

Establish a clear course of action for referring suspected instances of human trafficking to law enforcement; and

Require an evaluation and report to Congress on the implementation of the training and the metrics used to measure and track the agency’s response to human trafficking.

Mr. Speaker, one of the biggest obstacles we face in the fight against human trafficking is awareness. H.R. 2664 will ensure Department of Labor employees have the right training so that they recognize and effectively respond to this modern-day slavery.

I also thank Ranking Member SABLAN for his bipartisan support and work on this issue.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2664, a bill to assist the United States Department of Labor in identifying and preventing cases of human trafficking.

I thank Chairman WALBERG for his leadership on this issue and for introducing this legislation of which I am an original cosponsor. As chair and ranking member of the Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions of the Education and the Workforce Committee, Mr. WALBERG and I have found common ground on a number of important issues facing the American people, and human trafficking is one of them.

We may think that human trafficking is something that occurs in far-off countries. And, yes, according to the International Labor Organization, there are 21 million men, women, and children around the world who are currently subjected to forced labor. Unfortunately, however, the injustice of human trafficking happens right here at home in the United States as well.

Polaris, a nonprofit that operates the National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline here in the United States received reports of over 8,000 cases of human trafficking in our country last year, an increase of 35 percent over the year before.

I have seen cases of this terrible scourge firsthand in my own district, the Northern Mariana Islands. A number of construction companies lured foreign workers to come to the Marianas with false promises and misrepresentations about pay and conditions.

The companies then withheld the employees' wages and confiscated their passports. The workers were subjected to horrible working conditions, crowded unsanitary barracks with barely enough food and water. They were forced to work in unsafe conditions, suffering serious injuries without access to adequate medical care. There was even a workplace fatality.

To their credit, the Department of Labor's OSHA and Wage and Hour divisions have worked to address these injustices, issuing fines and citations, recovering back wages. But we need to identify human traffickers and prevent cases like this before they happen.

That is the purpose of our bill, the Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act. H.R. 2664 directs the Department of Labor to train appropriate Department staff on how to detect human trafficking, and ensure that these staff people get regular updates on how traffickers are adjusting to avoid detection.

□ 1515

Our bill establishes training for a clear course of action for referring cases of suspected human trafficking to the Department of Justice and other appropriate authorities so these offenders are prosecuted.

And the bill requires the Department to report back to Congress within a year on the progress that is being made because Congress needs to do more than simply enact programs with lofty goals. We also need to build in mechanisms to tell us whether our programs are working as intended.

Mr. Speaker, the Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act will, I believe, give the Department of Labor the tools and resources it needs to combat human trafficking. I ask my colleagues to vote "yes" on this bill.

I would like to also thank the leadership of the House, especially Chairwoman VIRGINIA FOXX and Ranking Member BOBBY SCOTT of the Education and the Workforce Committee, for moving this bill to the floor. And again, I thank my friend, Chairman WALBERG, for his leadership in this important area of public policy.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX), the distinguished chairman of the Education and the Workforce Committee.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank both of my colleagues for their leadership on H.R. 2664 and bringing this important matter to the attention of the House.

I rise to express my strong support for this bill, and to commend, again, my colleagues for making a difference in the fight to end modern slavery.

Over the past few years, we have only begun to comprehend the horrors of human trafficking and how it established a foothold in this country. Thanks to the vigilance of faith-based

groups, humanitarians across the globe, and the courage of survivors, we are learning more about the tactics and loopholes human traffickers exploit to prey on the most vulnerable among us.

Children are often the ones most vulnerable to exploitation. It is estimated that one in six endangered runaways are likely victims of this horrific crime. Earlier this year, with the leadership of Representatives Guthrie and Courtney, the House passed the Improving Support for Missing and Exploited Children Act.

That bipartisan legislation supports the critical efforts of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. It includes positive reforms to encourage new and innovative ways to recover and protect missing and exploited children, including those who are victims of trafficking. We need to do everything possible to ensure this vital work will continue, and that is what H.R. 1808 was all about.

But this is an issue that demands our ongoing attention. More solutions are needed, and that is why we are here today, to build on the bipartisan work we have already accomplished.

The Department of Labor has a unique vantage point for spotting violations in workplaces that can be tell-tale signs of modern slavery and labor exploitation. This bill equips DOL personnel to form partnerships with law enforcement to detect and address signs of human trafficking in America's workplaces.

Mr. Speaker, if we can shed light in any corner where this evil may lurk, we must.

Again, I commend Mr. WALBERG's leadership on this issue and Mr. SABLAN for working with him so passionately. I am proud that the Committee on Education and the Workforce could do its part to support their work and bring this bill to the floor.

I urge all Members to vote in favor of the Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act.

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS).

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2664, the Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act, a bill to assist the U.S. Department of Labor in identifying and preventing cases of human trafficking.

Human trafficking is a global and domestic threat to basic human rights and humanity as we know it. However, the injustice of human trafficking is not just a global program. Human rights abuses are happening right here in the United States every day and in every region across the country.

Polaris, a nonprofit that operates the National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline here in the U.S. received reports of over 8,000 cases of human trafficking in our country last year, an increase of 35 percent over the year before.

Government agencies must continue to work together to identify and eradicate all cases of human trafficking. We can and must do better to prevent cases of abuse before they happen. That is the purpose of this bill, the Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act.

H.R. 2664 directs the Department of Labor to train appropriate Department staff on how to detect human trafficking and ensure that all personnel at the Department of Labor are provided with regular screening tools to identify and detect trafficking activity.

This bill establishes training for a clear course of action, including referring cases of suspected human trafficking to the Department of Justice and other appropriate authorities to properly investigate and prosecute offenders.

This bill also requires the Department of Labor to report back to Congress within a year on the progress that is being made by such efforts.

Mr. Speaker, the Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act supports current efforts to combat human trafficking by providing the Department of Labor the tools and resources it needs to identify and properly respond to human rights abuses.

I ask my colleagues for a vote in favor of this bill.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO).

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2664, the Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act.

We all know human trafficking is a serious problem all over the world, but it is not a distant concept. It exists in communities all across this country. Last year, in Pennsylvania alone, there were over 150 human trafficking cases reported, and labor trafficking was the second highest type of trafficking in the Commonwealth. We should and must do all that we can to combat this disgusting activity.

This legislation before us now would help train Department of Labor inspectors to identify patterns and circumstances surrounding this abuse so that they can assist law enforcement in recognizing and stopping labor exploitation. A significant component of the fight against human trafficking is knowing where it exists, and this legislation is an important step forward.

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

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LANCE).

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman WALBERG for his invitation to join him on the floor today to discuss combating human trafficking and in support of the Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act.

When people hear the term "human trafficking," they often think of far-away places, or perhaps even movie

plots. But, unfortunately, human trafficking is a horrible 21st century problem here in the United States.

We have to do all we can to help combat the scourge of human trafficking, and this measure is a strong addition to the actions already taken here in the House, and I commend the chairman, Ranking Member SABLAN, and also the full committee chair, Ms. FOXX, and Ranking Member SCOTT for their leadership on this issue.

Making sure Department of Labor employees can identify these practices will be another tool to work against these terrible crimes. We need workforce law violation investigators to be on the lookout for patterns of human trafficking and labor exploitation, and this bill will make it happen.

Since 2007, the National Human Trafficking Hotline has received nearly 150,000 reports of trafficking here in the United States. The majority of these victims are women and children forced into heinous situations. They need our help. I urge all my colleagues to join me in supporting this measure and to continue to do all we can to combat human trafficking.

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I urge all my colleagues to please support, vote "aye" on H.R. 2664.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, each year millions of men, women, and children are trafficked around the world, including in the United States. It is important that we combat this epidemic.

The Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act is truly a bipartisan bill that will ensure that those who are in the field have knowledge, skills, and tools that they need to identify instances of human trafficking, assist victims, and properly refer cases so perpetrators can be brought to justice.

I would like to reiterate my appreciation to Representative SABLAN for his support and work on this important issue. This is truly a bipartisan issue. It is an American issue. It is a human issue.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 2664, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2664.

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.

EMPOWERING LAW ENFORCEMENT TO FIGHT SEX TRAFFICKING DEMAND ACT

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the

bill (H.R. 2480) to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to include an additional permissible use of amounts provided as grants under the Byrne JAG program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2480

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 "Empowering Law Enforcement to Fight Sex Trafficking Demand Act".

SEC. 2. ADDITIONAL AUTHORIZED USE OF BYRNE JAG FUNDS.

Section 501(a)(1) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3751(a)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(1) Programs to combat human trafficking (including programs to reduce the demand for trafficked persons)."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) 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 in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 2480, 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.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we continue our battle against the scourge of human trafficking with H.R. 2480, the Empowering Law Enforcement to Fight Sex Trafficking Demand Act. This bill, introduced by our colleague, Congresswoman HARTZLER of Missouri, adds antihuman trafficking efforts as an allowable use for funds under the Byrne JAG program, the Justice Department's flagship grant program for State and local governments and law enforcement. It specifies that the JAG funds may be used for demand reduction operations.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that the fight against human trafficking starts at the local level. It infects every community, and our local officials and law enforcement are on the front lines in this battle. They are in the best position to assess how to address this issue in their communities and how to use these taxpayer dollars.

As part of any comprehensive approach in combating trafficking, local government and law enforcement must address what many call the demand issue; that is, going after those who are buying young victims off the street and, very often, off the internet. This is simple economics applied to a horrific crime.

Human trafficking is driven by the demand for commercial sex, and this is costing victims their sense of worth and their dignity. By deterring demand, traffickers will have fewer buyers and may abandon their illegal and horrifyingly reprehensible activity.

These demand reduction operations and programs are most often carried out at the local level, and it is important to ensure local governments have the tools they need to prevent this destructive crime by deterring people from buying victims.

□ 1530

We cannot tolerate sex trafficking and must be able to act swiftly to combat this horrific crime. H.R. 2480 ensures our communities will be able to do just that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congresswoman HARTZLER for introducing this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support her bill.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me thank the chairman and ranking member of the Judiciary Committee for the work that we have done in a bipartisan manner on human trafficking, sex trafficking. Let me thank the gentlewoman, the sponsor, and the cosponsor, Mr. CLAY, for their leadership on this legislation and for recognizing that we must give direction, as Members of the United States Congress, to how grants are to be utilized. This is a very, very important initiative to be able to help our law enforcement.

Let me give you the real life of some of those who have been sex-trafficked.

The life of Esperanza: She was waiting for a cousin outside her high school in Mexico one day when a strange man drove up in a car and forced her inside with him and sped away. At that moment, Esperanza had, in effect, become a sex slave. "He beat me; he raped me," she told CNN.

A few times, she tried to escape and failed to escape. The gentleman, the person, the perpetrator, the heinous man, Poncho, now 47, always tracked her down and then beat her again.

Eventually, Esperanza realized she was pregnant. Three months later, she said Poncho drove her across the Mexican/U.S. border and on to Houston, Texas, where he forced her to work in a cantina called La Costenita.

This is a story that reads inside Houston's sex trade. I am a Representative of the congressional district in Houston where we have recognized that it is one of the hot spots of the sex trade.

But I do want to acknowledge that law enforcement, a sheriff, the police chief, the mayor, the head of the city, local government, and county government have all come together, Members of Congress, faith organizations, and recognized and made a resistant stance