

to make an informed choice on who should be responsible for conducting background investigations, we have got to know the costs.

Finally, the Oversight Committee also adopted an amendment offered by my friend and colleague, the Congressman from Illinois (Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY), that would require a report on the process for performing and adjudicating background investigations for personnel in the Executive Office of the President.

This would help Congress ensure that those with access to the most sensitive information in the White House are thoroughly vetted.

And I thank the gentleman for his thoughtful amendment which also passed unanimously in our committee.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of H.R. 3210. I am proud to be the original Democratic cosponsor.

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

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. KNIGHT), the sponsor of the bill.

Mr. KNIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Mr. CONNOLLY for his help and his partnership in the SECRET Act. Today, I rise in support of this straightforward bipartisan legislation, the SECRET Act, or Securely Expediting Clearances Through Reporting Transparency Act.

I am proud to say that this bill originated from concerns voiced by my constituents. California's 25th District serves as a hub for many national security programs, and by extension, requires a highly skilled, security-cleared industrial base and workforce. But this doesn't just affect southern California. This is a national issue and must be addressed now.

Many employers are either unable to recruit workers due to excessive backlog of security clearance investigations or are forced to place employees in unfulfilling positions while they wait unacceptable amounts of time for their investigations to be completed.

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Mr. Speaker, we are fortunate to live in a country with selfless citizens who seek to serve our Nation in critical national security positions and work towards safety at home and abroad. We need these bright minds to solve incredibly difficult problems and develop the next generation of American-made technology. We should reward them for choosing to work toward something greater than themselves, not punish them with jobs they don't want just because our bureaucracies can't move fast enough.

I introduced the SECRET Act so Congress can do its job of oversight better. The transparency afforded in this bill will better inform us of how substantial the security clearance backlog is and how long it takes for investigations to be completed. Equipped with that information, we will hold the ex-

ecutive branch accountable and keep our country safe.

I thank Chairman GOWDY and his committee staff for the diligent work on this bill, and I urge my colleagues for their support.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and friend, Mr. KNIGHT, for this bill. His leadership is really critical.

In my district, like his, thousands and thousands of jobs are open because of this issue. We simply haven't gotten the security clearances done in an expeditious way. We want them thorough, but we also, frankly, want our national security being addressed at full throttle, and that means full employment in these jobs.

I couldn't agree more with his sentiments, and I thank him again for his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY), my friend and colleague and one of the up-and-coming stars of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia for yielding, and I thank Mr. KNIGHT and Mr. MITCHELL for their leadership on this. I also want to thank Ranking Member ELIJAH CUMMINGS for all that he has done to try to get the answers about executive branch background checks.

For over 6 months, various Oversight and Government Reform Committee members have been working to get basic answers from the White House about its process for granting security clearances. In a February 2017 hearing, my colleague, Congresswoman PLASKETT, asked the Director of the National Background Investigations Bureau if any senior administration officials with access to sensitive material were under criminal investigation. Chairman Chaffetz specifically asked the Office of Personnel Management to get back to Representative PLASKETT about her request. Unfortunately, neither OPM nor NBIB have answered these basic questions. That is why I am pleased that the Oversight and Government Reform Committee unanimously adopted my amendment during consideration of H.R. 3210 last week.

My amendment is very simple. It requires the NBIB to report to Congress on the process for conducting and adjudicating security clearances at the White House.

This bill is a necessary first step for Congress to conduct the oversight necessary to ensure that all personnel in the U.S. Government, regardless of administration, regardless of office, regardless of the President who happens to be in office at the time, will be thoroughly vetted and will not pose a threat to our national security.

I encourage all Members to support this bipartisan bill.

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

Mr. Speaker, this issue that Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY refers to is an issue

that spans administrations and requires attention not for partisan matters, but for the safety and security of our country.

I am pleased with the amendment. I supported the amendment in committee, and, as noted, it did pass unanimously.

The reason I support this bill is because it pursues some commonsense goals. Think about it: 650,000 outstanding requests, and the only way we get information on that is we get a briefing, no routine reporting.

I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time to close.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Michigan for those comments, and I again thank him for his leadership. I thank Mr. KNIGHT for his vision for this bill. I am pleased to be an original cosponsor, and I am pleased to make sure this was shepherded through committee on a unanimous vote.

I think we all recognize the criticality of classified background checking to make sure people trusted with our Nation's secrets, in fact, have been properly checked and vetted. But, on the other hand, backlogs hurt our national security, and so expediting it and accelerating reporting on it are really critical, it seems to me, for both intelligence, homeland security, and defense work that protects our citizens.

This is a very important step forward, and I urge its passage.

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

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, as I noted, I am new here in Congress, and I was astonished to find that we had no routine reporting on security clearances. I was astonished to find how much of a backlog we face and the damage it is doing to national security inefficiency.

I support this bill because it pursues a commonsense goal: transparency and efficient operation of the government. I support the amendment on transparency on oversight of the clearances in the White House because I think it is something that should have happened a long time ago.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3210, 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.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY LAND CONVEYANCE ACT

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

bill (H.R. 2370) to authorize Escambia County, Florida, to convey certain property that was formerly part of Santa Rosa Island National Monument and that was conveyed to Escambia County subject to restrictions on use and reconveyance.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2370

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 "Escambia County Land Conveyance Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) COUNTY.—The term "County" means Escambia County, Florida.

(2) NON-FEDERAL LAND.—The term "non-Federal land" means the former Santa Rosa Island National Monument land in the State that was conveyed by the United States to the County under the Act of July 30, 1946 (60 Stat. 712, chapter 699), and by deed dated January 15, 1947.

(3) STATE.—The term "State" means the State of Florida.

SEC. 3. RECONVEYANCE OF NON-FEDERAL LAND TO ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding the restrictions on conveyance in the Act of July 30, 1946 (60 Stat. 712, chapter 699), and the deed to the non-Federal land from the United States to the County dated January 15, 1947, and subject to subsections (c) through (g), the County may convey all right, title, and interest of the County in and to the non-Federal land or any portion of the non-Federal land, to any person or entity, without any restriction on conveyance or reconveyance imposed by the United States in that Act or deed.

(b) EFFECT ON LEASEHOLD INTERESTS.—No person or entity holding a leasehold interest in the non-Federal land as of the date of enactment of this Act shall be required to involuntarily accept a fee interest to the non-Federal land in place of the leasehold interest in the non-Federal land.

(c) CONVEYANCE OF LAND WITHIN SANTA ROSA COUNTY, FLORIDA.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—As a condition of the authority granted to the County to convey the non-Federal land under subsection (a), all right, title, and interest of the County in and to any portion of the non-Federal land that is within the jurisdictional boundaries of Santa Rosa County, Florida, shall be conveyed by the County to Santa Rosa County, Florida, by the date that is 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—A conveyance under paragraph (1) shall—

(A) be absolute;

(B) terminate—

(i) any subjugation of Santa Rosa County, Florida, to the County; or

(ii) any regulation of Santa Rosa County, Florida, by the County; and

(C) be without consideration, except that the County may require Santa Rosa County, Florida, to pay the actual costs associated with the conveyance of the non-Federal land to Santa Rosa County, Florida.

(3) ASSUMPTION OF OWNERSHIP; IMPOSITION OF RESTRICTIONS.—On conveyance of the non-Federal land to Santa Rosa County, Florida, under paragraph (1), Santa Rosa County, Florida—

(A) shall assume ownership of the non-Federal land free of the restrictions on the non-Federal land described in subsection (g); and

(B) may establish any lawful restrictions on, or criteria for the reconveyance of, the

non-Federal land to any leaseholder of the non-Federal land.

(4) RECONVEYANCE.—Santa Rosa County, Florida, or any other person to whom Santa Rosa County, Florida, reconveys the non-Federal land may reconvey the non-Federal land or any portion of the non-Federal land conveyed to Santa Rosa County, Florida, under paragraph (1).

(d) INCORPORATION OR ANNEXATION.—An owner or leaseholder of the non-Federal land conveyed under this section may pursue incorporation, annexation, or any other governmental status for the non-Federal land, if the owner or leaseholder complies with the legal conditions required for incorporation, annexation, or the other governmental status.

(e) JURISDICTION.—The non-Federal land shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the county or unit of local government in which the non-Federal land is located.

(f) PROCEEDS.—Any proceeds from the conveyance of the non-Federal land by the County or Santa Rosa County, Florida (other than amounts paid for the direct and incidental costs associated with the conveyance), under this section shall—

(1) be considered to be windfall profits; and

(2) revert to the United States.

(g) PRESERVATION.—As a condition of the grant of the authority to convey the non-Federal land under subsection (a), the County shall preserve in perpetuity the areas of the non-Federal land that, as of the date of enactment of this Act, are dedicated for conservation, preservation, public recreation access, and public parking, in accordance with any resolutions of the Board of Commissioners of the County.

(h) DETERMINATION OF COMPLIANCE.—The County and Santa Rosa County, Florida—

(1) except as provided in subsection (c)(1), shall not be subject to a deadline or requirement to make any conveyance or reconveyance of the non-Federal land authorized under this section; and

(2) may establish terms for the conveyance or reconveyance of the non-Federal land authorized under this section, subject to this Act and applicable State law.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. McCLINTOCK) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GAETZ), the author of this measure.

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman McCLINTOCK as well as the great leadership of the House Natural Resources Committee.

This legislation impacts residents on Navarre Beach and Pensacola Beach in Florida's First Congressional District. Some of those residents are now being double taxed because they have been

forced to pay ad valorem property tax payments to the government in addition to lease payments. This legislation will grant fee simple title to these affected residents so that they are not double taxed and simply make an ad valorem payment like all other Floridians.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2370, introduced by Representative GAETZ, settles a long-standing land management issue in his Florida district. Specifically, the bill transfers land associated with the former Santa Rosa Island National Monument to Escambia County. Once it is transferred to Escambia County, the bill authorizes a second transfer to Santa Rosa County, without any conditions or further restrictions.

The land in question was provided to the county by the Federal Government in 1947 under the condition it remain in use for a public purpose. In 1956, the county decided a 100-year lease to neighboring Santa Rosa County was in the public interest. In the 61 years since, the counties have grown and prospered, but due to the terms of the original conveyance and subsequent lease, there is some confusion about Santa Rosa County's power to tax.

This bill will clear up some administrative challenges that have arisen out of this unusual arrangement, a goal that we support. However, it will also allow for developments that conflict with the terms of the original conveyance.

As drafted, this bill authorizes activities that will do significant environmental damage to a fragile coastal barrier island and potentially lead to the privatization of land on Santa Rosa Island. Neither of these results is in the public interest or consistent with congressional intent.

Congress granted Escambia County this land with one condition, which this bill completely ignores. We understand how important this bill is for Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties, but honoring the original intent of this land grant is as important as well.

It is our hope that we can work with our colleagues in the Senate to make improvements to this legislation that will continue to protect the interests of the American taxpayers in this land deal.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by assuaging the concerns raised by my friend from Missouri. A provision in the bill—and I will simply read it—I think, answers his concerns rather clearly. It says:

"... the county shall preserve in perpetuity the areas of the non-Federal land that, as of the date of enactment of this act, are dedicated for conservation, preservation, public recreation access, and public parking, in accordance with any resolutions of the Board of Commissioners of the county."

As my friend has pointed out, Congress established the Santa Rosa National Monument and directed the Secretary of the Interior to convey the Federal land in the monument to Escambia County, Florida, back in 1946. Just 6 months later, the land was deeded to the county. Under the terms of the conveyance, Escambia County was given the authority to lease the property on Santa Rosa Island; however, they were not allowed to issue title on the property or otherwise dispose of it or reconvey it.

In the intervening years since then, Santa Rosa Island has experienced tremendous economic growth. This growth prompted county leaders to assess property taxes on the leased lands. The imposition of taxes led to several lawsuits centered on the question of whether island residents and businessowners paying lease fees for their land could be taxed, despite not having outright ownership of the property.

Courts have reached different conclusions based on differences in the language of particular leases, which has created fairness issues for the county governments of Escambia and Santa Rosa. One property may be subject to property taxes, while a virtually identical property next door may not. This uneven treatment has prompted interest in removing the deed restriction prohibiting reconveyance, which then allows the county governments to convey ownership and create a uniform tax treatment for all properties on the beach.

Recently, both Escambia County and neighboring Santa Rosa County passed resolutions asking for a Federal solution to allow current Santa Rosa Island leaseholders the option of attaining fee simple title while protecting public access to the beaches and conservation areas on the island.

I commend my colleague, Congressman GAETZ, for listening to his constituents and working to find a solution.

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

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I appreciate my friend from California for that explanation. Hopefully, my colleague, Representative GAETZ, will try to strike a balance between protecting our environment, protecting the pristine nature of that island, as well as looking out for the best interests of his constituents when this bill gets to the Senate. So, therefore, we will not oppose it.

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

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments.

I would simply add that one of the overarching objectives of the Federal Lands Subcommittee is to restore the Federal Government as a good neighbor to those communities impacted by the public lands. This bill is an example of that principle at work, and I would urge adoption of the measure.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2370.

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.

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AFRICAN AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS NETWORK ACT OF 2017

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1927) to amend title 54, United States Code, to establish within the National Park Service the African American Civil Rights Network, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1927

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 “African American Civil Rights Network Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this Act are—

(1) to recognize—

(A) the importance of the African American civil rights movement; and

(B) the sacrifices made by the people who fought against discrimination and segregation; and

(2) to authorize the National Park Service to coordinate and facilitate Federal and non-Federal activities to commemorate, honor, and interpret—

(A) the history of the African American civil rights movement; and

(B) the significance of the civil rights movement as a crucial element in the evolution of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000a et seq.); and

(C) the relevance of the African American civil rights movement in fostering the spirit of social justice and national reconciliation.

SEC. 3. U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS NETWORK PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subdivision 1 of Division B of subtitle III of title 54, United States Code, is amended by inserting after chapter 3083 the following:

“CHAPTER 3084—U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS NETWORK

“Sec.

“308401. Definition of network.

“308402. U.S. Civil Rights Network.

“308403. Cooperative agreements and memoranda of understanding.

“308404. Sunset.

“§ 308401. Definition of network

“In this chapter, the term ‘Network’ means the African American Civil Rights Network established under section 308402(a).

“§ 308402. U.S. Civil Rights Network

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish, within the Service, a program to be known as the ‘U.S. Civil Rights Network’.

“(b) DUTIES OF SECRETARY.—In carrying out the Network, the Secretary shall—

“(1) review studies and reports to complement and not duplicate studies of the historical importance of the African American

civil rights movement that may be underway or completed, such as the Civil Rights Framework Study;

“(2) produce and disseminate appropriate educational materials relating to the African American civil rights movement, such as handbooks, maps, interpretive guides, or electronic information;

“(3) enter into appropriate cooperative agreements and memoranda of understanding to provide technical assistance under subsection (c); and

“(4)(A) create and adopt an official, uniform symbol or device for the Network; and

“(B) issue regulations for the use of the symbol or device adopted under subparagraph (A).

“(c) ELEMENTS.—The Network shall encompass the following elements:

“(1) All units and programs of the Service that are determined by the Secretary to relate to the African American civil rights movement during the period from 1939 through 1968.

“(2) With the consent of the property owner, other Federal, State, local, and privately owned properties that—

“(A) relate to the African American civil rights movement;

“(B) have a verifiable connection to the African American civil rights movement; and

“(C) are included in, or determined by the Secretary to be eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places.

“(3) Other governmental and nongovernmental facilities and programs of an educational, research, or interpretive nature that are directly related to the African American civil rights movement.

“§ 308403. Cooperative agreements and memoranda of understanding

“To achieve the purposes of this chapter and to ensure effective coordination of the Federal and non-Federal elements of the Network described in section 308402(c) with System units and programs of the Service, the Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements and memoranda of understanding with, and provide technical assistance to the heads of other Federal agencies, States, units of local government, regional governmental bodies, and private entities.

“§ 308404. Sunset

“This program shall expire on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this chapter.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of chapters for title 54, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to chapter 3083 the following:

“3084 U.S. Civil Rights Network308401”.

SEC. 4. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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