

colleague from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) on her hard work in offering this viable and meaningful solution.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 347.

I yield back the balance of my time. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 347.

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.

TRANSIT SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY ACT

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 549) to amend the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 to clarify certain allowable uses of funds for public transportation security assistance grants and establish periods of performance for such grants, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 549

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 “Transit Security Grant Program Flexibility Act”.

SEC. 2. ALLOWABLE USES OF FUNDS FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ASSISTANCE GRANTS.

Subparagraph (A) of section 1406(b)(2) of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (6 U.S.C. 1135(b)(2); Public Law 110-53) is amended by inserting “and associated backfill” after “security training”.

SEC. 3. PERIODS OF PERFORMANCE FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ASSISTANCE GRANTS.

Section 1406 of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (6 U.S.C. 1135; Public Law 110-53) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (m) as subsection (n); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (1) the following new subsection:

“(m) PERIODS OF PERFORMANCE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), funds provided pursuant to a grant awarded under this section for a use specified in subsection (b) shall remain available for use by a grant recipient for a period of not fewer than 36 months.

“(2) EXCEPTION.—Funds provided pursuant to a grant awarded under this section for a use specified in subparagraph (M) or (N) of subsection (b)(1) shall remain available for use by a grant recipient for a period of not fewer than 55 months.”.

SEC. 4. GAO REVIEW.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a review of the transit security grant program under section 1406 of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (6 U.S.C. 1135; Public Law 110-53).

(b) SCOPE.—The review required under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(1) An assessment of the type of projects funded under the transit security grant program referred to in such paragraph.

(2) An assessment of the manner in which such projects address threats to transportation infrastructure.

(3) An assessment of the impact, if any, of this Act (including the amendments made by this Act) on types of projects funded under the transit security grant program.

(4) An assessment of the management and administration of transit security grant program funds by grantees.

(5) Recommendations to improve the manner in which transit security grant program funds address vulnerabilities in transportation infrastructure.

(6) Recommendations to improve the management and administration of the transit security grant program.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act and again not later than five years after such date of enactment, the Comptroller General shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report on the review required under this section.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. DONOVAN) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise today in support of H.R. 549, the Transit Security Grant Program Flexibility Act. With more than 10 billion riders using surface transportation annually and limited security screening, it should not be surprising to us that terrorists have an interest in targeting mass transit. We saw it in London, Madrid, Brussels, and when a terrorist left a backpack of IEDs at a transit station in Elizabeth, New Jersey, last fall.

Given the repeated calls from ISIS and other radical Islamic terrorist groups for lone wolves and sympathizers to plan smaller attacks where larger crowds gather, we must ensure that the first responders and transit agencies have the tools they need to secure our transit systems.

That is why, last Congress, I introduced the Transit Security Grant Program Flexibility Act. This bill addresses concerns raised during a field hearing the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications held last year in Ranking Member PAYNE's district on preparedness for incidents impacting surface transportation. As chairman of that subcommittee, I introduced this legislation to ensure action follows our sub-

committee's oversight, and that is why I reintroduced this commonsense legislation in the 115th Congress.

Witnesses at last year's field hearing testified about the importance of the transit security grant program, but found that the period of performance was a challenging timeframe to meet, especially for completing vital, large-scale capital security projects. These projects are vital to transit agencies to help enhance their security features systemwide and harden infrastructure.

H.R. 549 addresses this challenge by codifying the period of performance for transit security grant program awards at 36 months for the majority of eligible projects and extending the period of performance for large-scale capital security projects to 55 months.

Additionally, transit security grant program awards can be used to provide personnel with effective security training. Unfortunately, recipients of these awards are not currently permitted to use transit security grant program funds to pay for backfilling personnel attending such training. In some cases, that extra cost at the transit agency has resulted in an inability to send staff for vital security training. My bill will permit transit security grant program funds to be used for this purpose, consistent with other Homeland Security grant programs.

The current threat environment is evolving and complex, which makes it even more imperative that the transit security grant program provide flexible solutions for grant recipients. I am proud to sponsor this bipartisan legislation, which passed the House by voice vote last year.

I urge all Members to join me in supporting H.R. 549.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in support of H.R. 549, the Transit Security Grant Program Flexibility Act.

As the threats to our homeland continue to evolve, transit systems, domestically and abroad, have become a leading target for terrorists. Last year, the Committee on Homeland Security's Subcommittee for Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications held field hearings in New Jersey to assess how transit owners and operators and local first responders were coordinating efforts to secure domestic mass transit and to determine what the Federal Government could do to assist those efforts.

At the hearing, transit operators repeatedly praised the transit security grant program, although they raised serious concerns about funding, which has decreased dramatically since its peak in 2009. Witnesses also testified that the period of the performance for the transit safety grant program was too short to support infrastructure-hardening projects.

Under H.R. 549, the period of performance for security-hardening projects would be extended from 36 months to 55

months in order to make it possible for transit agencies to complete projects that may take longer than the time period allowed under current law.

This bipartisan bill was passed in the House last Congress, and I urge my colleagues to again support this measure.

It is very important that we give transit professionals the flexibility that they need to keep our transit systems safe and secure. H.R. 549 will allow transit security grant program grantees to use the funds designated for security-hardening projects more efficiently and within a more reasonable timeframe.

I urge my colleagues to support this important measure.

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

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

I, once again, urge my colleagues to support H.R. 549.

I yield back the balance of my time. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. DONOVAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 549.

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.

FIRST RESPONDER ACCESS TO INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES ACT

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 687) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish a process to review applications for certain grants to purchase equipment or systems that do not meet or exceed any applicable national voluntary consensus standards, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 687

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 “First Responder Access to Innovative Technologies Act”.

SEC. 2. APPROVAL OF CERTAIN EQUIPMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2008 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 609) is amended—

(1) in subsection (f)—

(A) by striking “If an applicant” and inserting the following:

“(1) APPLICATION REQUIREMENT.—If an applicant”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(2) REVIEW PROCESS.—The Administrator shall implement a uniform process for reviewing applications that, in accordance with paragraph (1), contain explanations to use grants provided under section 2003 or 2004 to purchase equipment or systems that do not meet or exceed any applicable national voluntary consensus standards developed under section 647 of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006.

“(3) FACTORS.—In carrying out the review process under paragraph (2), the Administrator shall consider the following:

“(A) Current or past use of proposed equipment or systems by Federal agencies or the Armed Forces.

“(B) The absence of a national voluntary consensus standard for such equipment or systems.

“(C) The existence of an international consensus standard for such equipment or systems, and whether such equipment or systems meets such standard.

“(D) The nature of the capability gap identified by the applicant and how such equipment or systems will address such gap.

“(E) The degree to which such equipment or systems will serve the needs of the applicant better than equipment or systems that meet or exceed existing consensus standards.

“(F) Any other factor determined appropriate by the Administrator.”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(g) REVIEW PROCESS.—The Administrator shall implement a uniform process for reviewing applications to use grants provided under section 2003 or 2004 to purchase equipment or systems not included on the Authorized Equipment List maintained by the Administrator.”.

(b) INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT.—Not later than three years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report assessing the implementation of the review process established under paragraph (2) of subsection (f) of section 2008 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (as added by subsection (a) of this section), including information on the following:

(1) The number of requests to purchase equipment or systems that do not meet or exceed any applicable consensus standard evaluated under such review process.

(2) The capability gaps identified by applicants and the number of such requests granted or denied.

(3) The processing time for the review of such requests.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. DONOVAN) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

As chairman of the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications, I rise today in support of H.R. 687. This legislation would establish a review process for grant applicants seeking to purchase equipment or systems that do not meet or exceed national voluntary consensus standards.

With threats consistently evolving, it is reassuring to see new technology

emerge which will promote the safety of our communities and first responders. However, emerging technology is frequently developed faster than voluntary consensus standards can be implemented.

Recipients of grants under FEMA's State Homeland Security Grant Program and the Urban Area Security Initiative must procure equipment that meets these standards. Unfortunately, if emerging technology or equipment does not have a voluntary consensus standard and a grant recipient would like to use those funds to purchase such technology, FEMA does not have a uniform process to consider applications for that equipment.

H.R. 687 requires FEMA to develop such a process for reviewing these requests. Previously, this bill was introduced in the 114th Congress by the subcommittee's ranking member, Mr. PAYNE, and subsequently received bipartisan support by my subcommittee and the Committee on Homeland Security as well as the House when it was passed under suspension of the rules in September of 2016.

I thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) for reintroducing this commonsense bill. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of H.R. 687 because it will ensure our first responders have the ability to purchase equipment and emerging technology needed to effectively adapt to the current threat landscape.

Earlier this month, the Committee on Homeland Security released the January Terror Threat Snapshot, which found that the United States remains a top target for terrorists. It is clear that the threat to our communities is not going away.

Congress has the responsibility to make America safer and stronger. We can do so by ensuring commonsense measures are in place to ensure first responders have the tools that they need to address these threats.

I urge all Members to join me in supporting H.R. 687.

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

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

I rise in support of H.R. 687, the First Responder Access to Innovative Technologies Act.

Mr. Speaker, in my time serving as ranking member of the Committee on Homeland Security's Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications, I have come to learn a great deal about the very important, very challenging job of first responders. These brave men and women run toward danger with our safety as their number one priority.

Since the September 11 attacks, the private sector has redoubled its efforts to develop innovative technologies for first responders to use and to carry out their vital missions.

Yet, through our subcommittee's oversight, we have seen where, in some instances, industry standards have