

will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

ASHLYNNE MIKE AMBER ALERT IN INDIAN COUNTRY ACT

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 772) to amend the PROTECT Act to make Indian tribes eligible for AMBER Alert grants, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 772

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 “Ashlynne Mike AMBER Alert in Indian Country Act”.

SEC. 2. AMBER ALERT GRANTS FOR INDIAN TRIBES.

Section 304 of the PROTECT Act (34 U.S.C. 20504) is amended—

(1) by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

“(a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Attorney General shall carry out a program to provide grants to States and Indian tribes for—

“(1) the development or enhancement of programs and activities for the support of AMBER Alert communications plans; and

“(2) the integration of tribal AMBER Alert systems into State AMBER Alert systems.”;

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (3), by striking “and” at the end;

(B) by redesignating paragraph (4) as paragraph (5); and

(C) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following:

“(4) the integration of State or regional AMBER Alert communication plans with an Indian tribe; and”;

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) by striking “The Federal” and inserting the following:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the Federal”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

“(2) WAIVER OF FEDERAL SHARE.—If the Attorney General determines that an Indian tribe does not have sufficient funds available to comply with the Federal share requirement under paragraph (1) for the cost of activities funded by a grant for the purpose described in subsection (b)(4), the Attorney General may increase the Federal share of the costs for such activities to the extent the Attorney General determines necessary.”;

(4) in subsection (e), by striking “for grants under” and inserting “and standards to improve accountability and transparency for grants awarded under”;

(5) by redesignating subsection (f) as subsection (g);

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

“(f) DEFINITION OF INDIAN TRIBE.—In this section, the term ‘Indian tribe’ means a federally recognized Indian tribe or a Native village, Regional Corporation, or Village Corporation (as those terms are defined in section 3 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1602).”;

(7) in subsection (g)(1), as so redesignated—

(A) by striking “2004” each place it appears and inserting “2019”; and

(B) by striking “subsection (b)(3)” and inserting “paragraphs (3) and (4) of subsection (b)”.

SEC. 3. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall submit a report evaluating the readiness, education, and training needs, technological challenges, and specific obstacles encountered by Indian tribes in the integration of State or regional AMBER Alert communication plans to—

(1) the Committee on Indian Affairs of the Senate;

(2) the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate;

(3) the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives; and

(4) the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 772, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be a sponsor of the AMBER Alert in Indian Country Act, in memory of the life of Ashlynne Mike.

I want to thank the House leadership and Chairman GOODLATTE for bringing this bill before the House for consideration.

Eleven-year-old Ashlynne lived in the Navajo Nation, the largest Indian reservation in the United States, located in four States: Arizona, Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico. Her favorite color was yellow, and she enjoyed playing music for her friends and family. She was a kindhearted young girl who had enormous potential.

After school on Monday, May 2, 2016, while Ashlynne and her 9-year-old brother Ian waited and played near the local bus stop, a stranger approached and lured them into his vehicle by offering them a ride home.

He abducted the children and took them to a remote part of the reservation, where he abused Ashlynne, slaughtered her, and left her brother to fend for himself in the desert. Ashlynne died alone.

Ashlynne had been abducted around 4 p.m. Her father filed a missing person report at 6:53 p.m., within 3 hours. Unfortunately, authorities did not send an AMBER Alert until 2:30 a.m. on Tuesday, almost 10 hours after Ashlynne went missing.

According to law enforcement records, Tom Begay, Jr., Ashlynne’s perpetrator, admitted that Ashlynne was alive when he left her stranded in the desert.

Mr. Speaker, had Indian Country been included as partners in the

AMBER Alert plans, law enforcement might have rescued Ashlynne in time. She might still be alive and with us today.

When a child is abducted, action in those first hours is crucial to their safe return. The AMBER Alert program has proven effective at instantly providing information to the public to assist in the effort.

According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, of the AMBER Alerts issued in 2016, 94 percent of the recovered children were found within the first 72 hours, including 47 percent who were found within the first 3 hours.

Between 1997 and February 2017, the AMBER Alert program has been credited with the safe recovery of 868 children. AMBER Alerts save lives.

Today, we have the opportunity to ensure all children may benefit from the AMBER Alert program if necessary, no matter where they reside.

This bill will reauthorize the Department of Justice grant program that assists State and local governments in developing and implementing AMBER Alert communications plans. It will explicitly require the Department of Justice to perform a needs assessment of AMBER Alert capabilities on Indian reservations.

It will also, for the first time, require funds be used to integrate Tribal AMBER Alert systems with those of neighboring jurisdictions to ensure that AMBER Alerts reach as many people as swiftly as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I again thank House leadership and Chairman GOODLATTE for bringing this bill forward and acknowledging the importance of filling a gap in our AMBER Alert system that might have prevented the death of Ashlynne.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill. If enacted, this bill will help to build a truly national and cohesive network of AMBER Alert.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of S. 772, the AMBER Alert in Indian Country Act. I strongly favor this important legislation because it will provide Indian Tribes with the ability to respond quickly to child abductions, thereby increasing the chances that we can avert catastrophe.

Through the grant program reauthorized by S. 772, Tribal law enforcement agencies would develop the capacity to immediately initiate their own AMBER Alerts and allow Tribal alert systems to be integrated with the more advanced AMBER Alert communications plans of State and regional law enforcement.

The AMBER Alert program is a powerful tool that engages geographically targeted networks of law enforcement, broadcast and transparency agencies, digital signage companies, internet service providers, and the wireless industry to issue urgent notifications in

the most serious cases of child abduction. Such alerts can instantly galvanize an entire community in the search for an abducted and endangered child.

From its inception through January of 2018, the AMBER Alert program has directly led to the rescue of more than 900 children. Presently, the AMBER Alert program is used in all 50 States, here in the District of Columbia, in Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

AMBER Alert systems have evolved to utilize all available technology in notifying the public of a child abduction. Native American Tribal communities, however, are unable to take full advantage of this lifesaving program. Currently, Tribal law enforcement must rely on State or regional law enforcement agencies off-reservation to issue the complete AMBER Alert on their behalf. This is unfortunate, and indeed it is notable because the rate of child abduction is reportedly down across the country with the sole exception of Indian Country.

As we all know, time is of the essence when a child is abducted or goes missing. AMBER Alert plans provide a comprehensive, rapid-response system, which is critical to success in such cases. Statistics show that roughly 74 percent of abducted children who are murdered are killed within the first 3 hours of their abduction.

The time spent to coordinate with State or regional law enforcement before issuing an AMBER Alert can be lengthy and can have a dire consequence.

In 2003, the PROTECT Act established a grant program to be administered by the attorney general for the States, with the goals of strengthening AMBER Alert communications plans nationwide and developing a seamless network through the Nation, which dramatically increases the likelihood that abducted children will be recovered swiftly and safely.

S. 772 would reauthorize \$10 million for the program and would make Indian Tribal communities eligible to receive grant funds for the very first time. With this funding, Tribes will be able to develop and implement AMBER Alert communications plans of their own, and also integrate their AMBER Alert systems into and with State and regional communications plans.

Awarded funds may also be used for education, training, and law enforcement tools and equipment related to the AMBER Alert plans.

If enacted, this legislation will help build a truly national and cohesive network of AMBER Alert systems. Tribal law enforcement will have the ability to directly issue AMBER Alerts without having to rely on outside law enforcement, while outside agencies will be available to fill in any gaps when necessary through the improved coordination.

Mr. Speaker, accordingly, I encourage my colleagues to join us in supporting this crucial piece of bipartisan legislation.

S. 772 was introduced in response to a fatal abduction that occurred on the Navajo Nation in New Mexico. Eleven-year-old Ashlynne Mike was kidnapped after school, along with her brother. Her brother escaped, and, alas, she did not.

That case focused attention on gaps in communication and coordination between Tribal and off-reservation law enforcement.

In the past, the Navajo Tribe has relied on New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah to activate AMBER Alerts. Before an alert issued, Tribal officers have been required to meet a list of requirements to establish a case. If the criteria are met, the officers may only then begin the process of requesting States to issue the AMBER Alert.

Based on several accounts of this case, the AMBER Alert was issued 10 or more hours after Ashlynne was abducted.

Her abductor confessed to brutalizing her and leaving her alive to fend for herself in the desert. It was too late for Ashlynne when she was found dead a day later.

Children are precious to us, and they deserve our protection wherever they may live, either on reservations or off reservations.

Mr. Speaker, because we should do everything that we can to ensure that appropriate resources are allocated to efforts to recover missing or abducted children, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague from across the aisle. This bill is truly a bipartisan effort, worked on by Members of both parties. It is because of its importance.

The particular case that both of us have cited today does focus the attention on the massive hole where there are more than 500 Indian Tribes that do not have access to the AMBER Alert system. It is the only part of this Nation and its territories that is not covered by the AMBER Alert system. This will solve that problem.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Judiciary and Homeland Security Committees and as founder and co-chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus I rise in strong support of S. 772, "AMBER Alert in Indian Country Act of 2017."

This bill ensures that Native American tribes would be eligible for Justice Department grants to establish AMBER Alert systems, authorizing a \$10 million grant program.

The bill would allow grants to cover costs associated with integrating tribal AMBER Alert systems into state and regional plans to ensure broader distribution of alerts involving Indian children.

This legislation provides crucial infrastructure to keep children and adults safe in all of America, whether they live on a reservation or not.

The Justice Department will be able to waive their 50 percent funds matching cap if any Native American Tribe is not able to fully fund their nonfederal share of the project.

Law enforcement agencies use the AMBER Alert system through radio, television, phones, email, and road alerts to alert the public of child abductions.

This system is responsible for the successful return of over 800 missing children.

The lack of coordination between tribal and state authorities, and the resulting delays in broadcasting an AMBER Alert, were blamed for the 2016 death of Ashlynne Mike, an 11-year-old Navajo girl.

More than 7,500 Native American children are listed as missing in the United States. This legislation will reduce that number.

This legislation facilitates coordination between tribal and state authorities, resulting in faster unification of families of abducted children.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will make a difference and deserves the overwhelming support of this body.

The sheer volume of abduction of love ones is enough to support this legislation.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in protecting our children and those suffering from abuse by supporting S. 772.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 772, 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.

□ 1700

STOP, OBSERVE, ASK, AND RESPOND TO HEALTH AND WELLNESS ACT OF 2018

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 767) to establish the Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond to Health and Wellness Training pilot program to address human trafficking in the health care system, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 767

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 "Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond to Health and Wellness Act of 2018" or the "SOAR to Health and Wellness Act of 2018".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) HUMAN TRAFFICKING.—The term "human trafficking" has the meaning given the term "severe forms of trafficking in persons" as defined in section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102).

(2) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

SEC. 3. PROGRAM ESTABLISHMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a program to be known as the Stop,