

Within 120 days of enactment, TSA would conduct a feasibility study on the expanded use of computed tomography for air cargo.

Following the study, TSA would be required to initiate a pilot program to achieve enhanced air cargo security screening through the use of new or emerging technologies.

Within 150 days of enactment, TSA would be required to report to Congress on actions to improve the effectiveness of the Certified Cargo Screening Program.

The Government Accountability Office is tasked with reviewing the effectiveness of DHS' approach to addressing the air cargo security risk, including the risk-based strategy for examining air cargo and ensuring compliance with air cargo security rules.

TSA would be required to request that the Aviation Security Advisory Committee's Subcommittee on Air Cargo conduct a comprehensive review of TSA's Known Shipper Program.

Mr. Speaker, thirteen years ago, the U.S. National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States (9/11 Commission) expressed concerns "regarding the screening and transport of checked bags and cargo."

The Commission called for more attention and resources to be directed to reducing or mitigating the threat posed by explosives in vessels' cargo holds.

Today, the threat of a terrorist attack using air cargo is significant.

In fact, in July, then-Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly identified cargo-based aviation attacks as a major concern, explaining "there are people out there, very smart people, very sophisticated people who do nothing but try to figure out how to blow up an airplane in flight."

Secretary Kelly also said "There is a fair amount of cargo, what we would attribute to just cargo flown on passenger airplane on space available. Terrorists are constantly looking for ways to do this."

This increase in the air cargo security risk comes at a time when the volume of goods being moved by air cargo has increased, with 2016 volume back to approximately 98.4 percent of pre-recession levels with airlines transporting 52 million metric tons of goods.

In response to this security risk, H.R. 4176 directs the Transportation Security Administration to take a number of steps to enhance its responsibilities for air cargo and require the agency to aggressively move towards addressing current and future threats to air cargo.

Specifically, H.R. 4176 clarifies air cargo security responsibilities at TSA, encourages further technological developments for screening air cargo, directs a review of existing air cargo programs, and requires the Department of Homeland Security to make the Air Cargo Advance Screening Program permanent.

The threat posed by terrorists' abilities and desires to exploit vulnerabilities cannot be understated and they have demonstrably set their targets on air cargo.

We need to be timely and precise in addressing air cargo security, as we cannot afford, nor should the American public tolerate, otherwise.

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for H.R. 4176 so we can make Americans more secure from the threat of an air cargo-based terrorist attack.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. ESTES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4176, 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.

ENHANCING DHS' FUSION CENTER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ACT

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5099) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish in the Department of Homeland Security a fusion center technical assistance program.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5099

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 DHS' Fusion Center Technical Assistance Program Act".

SEC. 2. FUSION CENTER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Section 210A of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 124h) is amended—

- (1) by redesignating subsections (j) and (k) as subsections (k) and (l), respectively; and
- (2) by inserting after subsection (i) the following new subsection (j):

"(j) FUSION CENTER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.—

"(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary, in consultation with officials from the National Network of Fusion Centers and, to the greatest extent practicable, other relevant stakeholders, shall establish a fusion center technical assistance program.

"(2) ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM.—In carrying out the fusion center technical assistance program established under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

"(A) provide technical assistance to fusion centers regarding—

"(i) grants administered under sections 2003 and 2004;

"(ii) terrorism prevention activities; and

"(iii) intelligence and information sharing;

"(B) provide to fusion centers notice of any changes to the activities referred to in subparagraph (A);

"(C) make available best practices regarding—

"(i) fusion center operations;

"(ii) information sharing and analysis of homeland security threats, including cyber threats;

"(iii) protecting privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties; and

"(iv) such other best practices as the Secretary determines appropriate; and

"(D) carry out such other activities as the Secretary determines appropriate."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. ESTES) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Mem-

bers have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H.R. 5099, the Enhancing DHS' Fusion Center Technical Assistance Program Act.

Today, the Nation is facing a complex and evolving threat. Terrorist attacks, like the New York City vehicle attack and the Pulse nightclub shooting, have been carried out by individuals inspired by ISIS and other terrorist organizations. These type of lone wolf attacks appear to be the new normal.

This means that now, more than ever, it is imperative that we have strong preventive activities in place, including intelligence and information sharing.

Since 9/11, States and major urban areas established fusion centers to build up the preventive activities by creating an avenue for greater collaboration between Federal, State, and local governments with regards to terrorism and information sharing.

These State and locally owned fusion centers have largely evolved from terrorist-focused centers to all-crimes, all-hazard centers working on a range of relevant Homeland Security issues, including cybersecurity.

I was able to see the work of one of these fusion centers firsthand when I visited my home State's fusion center, the Kansas Intelligence Fusion Center—KIFC—earlier this year. I was very impressed with their operation. I want to ensure that the Department of Homeland Security is fully supporting this center and the other 78 fusion centers across the United States.

That is why I was troubled to hear about a key fusion center resource in the DHS not living up to its potential.

In 2009, the DHS created a fusion center technical assistance program to provide fusion centers with assistance on a range of topics, including suspicious activity reporting and other relevant trainings. However, based on the findings from the committee's recent fusion center report and my meetings with fusion center personnel, this program is not meeting the needs of the National Network of Fusion Centers.

This is why I introduced H.R. 5099, the Enhancing DHS' Fusion Center Technical Assistance Program Act. This bill provides formal authorization for the DHS fusion center technical assistance program and a clear set of directives on the services to be provided by the program, including assistance related to available grant funding and DHS terrorism prevention programs, as well as intelligence and information sharing.

The bill expands the role of the program to include being a repository of best practices relevant to fusion center activities, including cybersecurity. This is a commonsense bill that should help strengthen the Nation's ability to prevent and protect against terrorist attacks and other Homeland Security relevant events.

Earlier this month, this legislation was passed out of the Committee on Homeland Security by a voice vote. I would like to thank Chairman McCARTHY and Mr. GALLAGHER for cosponsoring this legislation. I urge all my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5099, the Enhancing DHS' Fusion Center Technical Assistance Program Act.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5099 would authorize the Department of Homeland Security's existing fusion center technical assistance program. Currently, there are 79 fusion centers operating in the United States. Each fusion center relies on the DHS to help assist with intelligence products and information-sharing activities, terrorism prevention initiatives, and Homeland Security grant programs.

This bill seeks to solidify engagement between representatives at the fusion centers with their partners in the departments like FEMA and the DHS intelligence branch. Specifically, the program provides technical assistance on topics like best practices for information sharing regarding threats and operating a fusion center.

By codifying this existing program, H.R. 5099 seeks to strengthen the DHS partnership with fusion centers to ensure that they are well-positioned to address a wide range of diverse security threats that may emerge.

The bill passed committee unanimously and would amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002. I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

Mr. Speaker, the security and well-being of our country is dependent upon the timely sharing of threat information between our law enforcement and intelligence personnel.

Importantly, one of the key areas where the DHS will provide expertise to fusion centers under H.R. 5099 is with respect to the protection of privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 5099, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the ranking member for his support on this legislation. I would once again urge my colleagues to support this commonsense bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. ESTES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5099.

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.

VEHICULAR TERRORISM PREVENTION ACT OF 2018

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4227) to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to examine what actions the Department of Homeland Security is undertaking to combat the threat of vehicular terrorism, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4227

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 "Vehicular Terrorism Prevention Act of 2018".

SEC. 2. STRATEGY ON VEHICULAR TERRORISM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than six months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall—

(1) assess the activities the Department of Homeland Security is undertaking to support emergency response providers and the private sector to prevent, mitigate, and respond to the threat of vehicular terrorism; and

(2) based on such assessment, develop and 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 strategy to improve the Department's efforts to support the efforts of emergency response providers and the private sector to prevent, mitigate, and respond to such threat.

(b) CONTENTS.—The strategy required under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) An examination of the current threat of vehicular terrorism.

(2) Methods to improve Department of Homeland Security information sharing activities with emergency response providers and the private sector regarding best practices to prevent, mitigate, and respond to the increasing threat of vehicular terrorism.

(3) Training activities the Department can provide, including possible exercises, for emergency response providers to prevent and respond to the threat of vehicular terrorism.

(4) Any additional activities the Secretary of Homeland Security recommends to prevent, mitigate, and respond to the threat of vehicular terrorism.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROVIDERS.—The term "emergency response providers" has the meaning given such term in section 2(6) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 101(6)).

(2) VEHICULAR TERRORISM.—The term "vehicular terrorism" means any action that utilizes automotive transportation to inflict violence and intimidation on individuals for a political purpose.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

Kansas (Mr. ESTES) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. 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 the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ESTES of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4227, the Vehicular Terrorism Prevention Act, introduced by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA).

H.R. 4227 requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to examine the threat of vehicular terrorism and develop a strategy to improve DHS support for the efforts of emergency responders and the private sector to prevent, mitigate, and respond to such a threat.

Terror groups, including ISIS and al-Qaida, have urged supporters to carry out attacks in their home countries using any means necessary, including vehicle ramming. Terrorists and inspired homegrown extremists have heeded this directive and have carried out vehicle-based attacks in the past several years, including in France, England, Spain, Ohio, and, most recently, New York City.

The majority of prevention, mitigation, and response activities related to vehicle attacks are carried out by first responders and the private sector. DHS has existing resources and programs that can be better utilized to prepare frontline personnel in local communities to address this threat. This includes guidance related to the use of existing grant programs, increased information sharing, promoting suspicious activity reporting, increasing available exercises and training programs, dedicated research and development targeting mitigation measures, and utilizing critical infrastructure protection programs for vehicle ramming prevention.

H.R. 4227, the Vehicular Terrorism Prevention Act, requires the Secretary to develop a plan on how to improve and increase those capabilities. This bill passed by voice vote in the Committee on Homeland Security in early March.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Representative LATTA for his work on this important measure, and I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4227, the Vehicular Terrorism Prevention Act of 2018.