

you having consulted with the Committee regarding revisions to the bill, and in order to expedite this bill for floor consideration, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology will forego action on the bill. This is being done on the basis of our mutual understanding that doing so will in no way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology with respect to the appointment of conferees, or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation.

I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding, and would request that you include a copy of this letter and your response in the Congressional Record during the floor consideration of this bill. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC, June 14, 2018.

Hon. LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space, and
Technology, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SMITH: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 4991, the "Supporting Research and Development for First Responders Act." I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology will not seek a sequential referral on the bill.

The Committee on Homeland Security concurs with the mutual understanding that by foregoing a sequential referral of this bill at this time, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this bill or similar legislation in the future. In addition, should a conference on this bill be necessary, I would support a request by the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology for conferees on those provisions within your jurisdiction.

I will insert copies of this exchange in the Congressional Record during consideration of this bill on the House floor. I thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL T. McCAUL,
Chairman.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4991, the Supporting Research and Development for First Responders Act.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4991 would authorize the National Urban Security Technology Laboratory, also known as NUSTL, within the Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate.

Established in 1947, NUSTL has a long, rich history of supporting the first responder community. This laboratory, located in New York City, is central to the research and development of technologies that give first responders the tools to mitigate, respond to, and recover from national security threats.

In recent years, NUSTL's work has fostered the emergence of thousands of innovative radiation detectors for use in the Securing the Cities program. NUSTL's engagement with homeland security stakeholders has ensured that

as technology is developed, the particular concerns of end users, such as first responders, are taken into consideration. With the homeland security threat evolving daily, the importance of this lab to national security cannot be overstated.

While the good work of NUSTL is evident to myself and my colleagues on the House Homeland Security Committee, President Trump, unfortunately, does not have the same level of appreciation. In the last two budget cycles, the Trump administration, in its efforts to free up resources to build a wall along the southern border, has proposed completely cutting funding for NUSTL. The elimination of this laboratory as a first responder resource is absolutely senseless.

I am glad to see that our committee worked in a bipartisan fashion to craft this legislation, which would ensure that the work being performed at NUSTL will continue.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in advancing research development of technologies for first responders by supporting H.R. 4991.

Mr. Speaker, NUSTL's work is integral to protecting our Nation's first responders from threats.

On the one hand, it is unfortunate that the Trump administration's proposal to cut spending for NUSTL is what prompted the creation of H.R. 4991 in the first place; however, it has given this Chamber an opportunity to recognize the value of NUSTL and push for it to maintain its place at the Department of Homeland Security.

So I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 4991, and I thank my colleague across the aisle for his work on this important bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, Mr. LANGEVIN from Rhode Island, for his help in this matter. And I once again urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 4991, as amended, and 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. 4991, 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.

JOINT TASK FORCE TO COMBAT OPIOID TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2018

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5762) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize a Joint Task Force to enhance integration of the Department of Homeland Security's border security operations to detect, interdict, disrupt, and prevent narcotics, such as fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, from entering the United States, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5762

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 "Joint Task Force to Combat Opioid Trafficking Act of 2018".

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF JOINT TASK FORCE TO COUNTER OPIOIDS.

Section 708 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 348) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(2)(A), by adding at the end the following new clause:

"(iv) Enhancing the integration of the Department's border security operations to detect, interdict, disrupt, and prevent narcotics, such as fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, from entering the United States."; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (9) through (13) as paragraphs (11) through (15), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (8) the following new paragraph:

"(9) ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—The Director of a Joint Task Force may engage with representatives from a private sector organization for the purpose of carrying out the mission of such Joint Task Force, and any such engagement shall not be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

"(B) ASSISTANCE FROM PRIVATE SECTOR.—

"(i) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding subsection (b)(1), the Secretary, with the agreement of a private sector organization, may arrange for the temporary assignment of an employee of such organization to a Joint Task Force in accordance with this paragraph.

"(ii) AGREEMENT.—The Secretary shall provide for a written agreement between the Department, the private sector organization concerned, and the employee concerned regarding the terms and conditions of the assignment of such employee under this paragraph.

"(C) NO FINANCIAL LIABILITY.—Any agreement under this paragraph shall require the private sector organization concerned to be responsible for all costs associated with the assignment of an employee under this paragraph.

"(D) DURATION.—An assignment under this paragraph may, at any time and for any reason, be terminated by the Secretary or the private sector organization concerned and shall be for a total period of not more than two years.

"(10) COLLABORATION WITH TASK FORCES OUTSIDE DHS.—The Secretary may enter into a memorandum of understanding by which a Joint Task Force established under this section to carry out any purpose specified in subsection (b)(2)(A) and any other Federal, State, local, tribal, territorial, or international entity or task force established for a similar purpose may collaborate for the purpose of carrying out the mission of such Joint Task Force."

SEC. 3. NOTIFICATION; REPORTING.

(a) NOTIFICATION.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall—

(1) make a determination regarding whether to establish a Joint Task Force under section 708 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to carry out the purpose specified in clause (iv) of subsection (b)(2)(A) of such section, as added by section 2 of this Act; and

(2) submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate written notification of such determination, including, if such determination is in the negative, information on the basis for such negative determination.

(b) REPORTING.—If the Secretary of Homeland Security establishes a Joint Task Force under section 708 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to carry out the purpose specified in clause (iv) of subsection (b)(2)(A) of such section, as added by section 2 of this Act, the Secretary shall—

(1) beginning with the first report required under subsection (b)(6)(F) of such section 708, include with respect to such a Joint Task Force—

(A) a gap analysis of funding, personnel, technology, or other resources needed in order to detect, interdict, disrupt, and prevent narcotics, such as fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, from entering the United States; and

(B) a description of collaboration pursuant to subsection (b)(10) of such section (as added by section 2 of this Act) between such a Joint Task Force and any other Federal, State, local, tribal, territorial, or international task force, including the United States Postal Service and the United States Postal Inspection Service; and

(2) in each report required under subsection (b)(11)(C) of section 708 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as redesignated by section 2 of this Act, an assessment of the activities of such a Joint Task Force, including an evaluation of whether such Joint Task Force has enhanced integration of the Department's efforts, created any unique capabilities, or otherwise enhanced operational effectiveness, coordination, or information sharing to detect, interdict, disrupt, and prevent narcotics, such as fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, from entering the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. DONOVAN) and the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) 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 may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous materials 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.

Mr. Speaker, the opioid epidemic continues to devastate communities across this Nation every day. One hundred fifteen Americans die every single day from an opioid overdose. Opioid abuse doesn't discriminate. It touches people from every age group, race, class, gender, and background.

□ 1700

In my home State of New York, more than 3,000 lives were lost in 2016 alone. Mr. Speaker, 3,000.

Some Americans are becoming addicted after taking doctor-prescribed doses for an injury or surgery. Others are trying them in illicit forms and are becoming addicted. Opioids are highly addictive and overprescribed. It is a major part of this epidemic.

Another disturbing trend we are seeing is illicit drugs being laced with fentanyl, which is 100 times more powerful than morphine, leading to accidental overdoses. I have seen estimates concluding that more than 2 million of our fellow Americans are addicted to opioids. Too many lives have been lost, and too many families have been destroyed.

As we work to confront the epidemic, we must prevent the abuse of opioids, stop the flow of opioids into the United States, and treat those Americans who have become addicted. Last week, the House passed 35 bills to address the opioid epidemic through stronger prevention, treatment, and enforcement activities. Today, we continue that work.

H.R. 5762 would further enable law enforcement to stop the flow of opioids such as fentanyl from entering the United States. This bill would create a joint task force within the Department of Homeland Security to organize opioid interdiction efforts across multiple components and agencies. The task force would coordinate the assets and personnel of Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Citizenship and Immigration Services, the Coast Guard, and other resources to track, interdict, and prevent the illicit flow of opioids through the United States in a unity of effort campaign.

It will also leverage domestic and international partners to provide a multifaceted approach to tackling this issue. Most illicit opioids are produced in China, being smuggled by mail, where vulnerabilities in the postal system are exploited. We are also seeing increased traffic from Mexico, with opioids hidden in vehicles and cargo entering through our ports of entry.

The joint task force approach to the opioid epidemic is effective because it fosters information sharing and exchange between all relevant stakeholders to combat the opioid epidemic.

There is no quick or easy solution to this epidemic, though H.R. 5762 is a step in the right direction. It empowers the Department of Homeland Security and its mission partners to tackle the opioid crisis head-on by organizing a joint task force focused on preventing opioids from reaching our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join me in voting for H.R. 5762, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5762, the Joint Task Force to Combat Opioid Trafficking Act of 2018.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I thank my colleague, the gentleman from New

York, Chairman DONOVAN, for his kind and strong words of support for this bill. This has been a truly bipartisan effort on the committee, and I thank the gentleman for his work on this and for his support.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we are in the midst of a public health emergency that is devastating communities across the country, including my home State of Rhode Island. No matter your race, gender, age, religion, or socioeconomic status, Americans are suffering from the opioid overdose epidemic.

We know that approximately 42,000 fatalities were attributed to opioids in 2016, and we know that fentanyl is exacerbating the problem. This powerful synthetic opioid, which is 25 to 50 times stronger than heroin and 50 to 100 times more powerful than morphine, has caused 15 times more deaths in Rhode Island during 2016 than in 2009.

In its purest form as a powder, or as grains similar to the size of salt, fentanyl's lethal potency often harms people when unknowingly mixed with other illicit drugs, like heroin, or marketed on the street as a different substance entirely.

Since the majority of opioids interdicted by the United States are seized at ports of entry and the southern border accounts for at least 75 percent of all opioids collected, I am pleased to offer a solution that will strengthen the Department of Homeland Security's fight against this drug crisis. This bill authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish a task force to enhance the internal integration of the department's border security operations to detect, interdict, disrupt, and prevent narcotics, including fentanyl, from entering the United States in the first place.

Secretary Jeh Johnson was the first to use the joint task force model to achieve better unity of effort across the department's components when it comes to fulfilling the Homeland Security mission.

All of DHS' many agencies, from Customs and Border Protection to the U.S. Coast Guard, have an important role to play when it comes to combating opioid trafficking, which makes the joint task force a particularly apt structure to address the crisis. If Homeland Security Investigations is looking into a fentanyl distribution ring in Omaha, they need to coordinate efforts with Customs offices in El Paso so that packages en route to Nebraska are properly inspected.

The JTF model is intended to ensure this coordination is baked into the culture at the various components and that cases don't slip through the cracks. The goal is not to add red tape for the hardworking DHS personnel protecting our Nation but to keep them all on the same page as a single, unified effort. This coordination is worth it.

Mr. Speaker, Congress recognized the value of Secretary Johnson's pilot

JTFs when we formally authorized them in 2016. As new challenges confront the department, we must make use of this organizational structure in innovative ways to maintain the synergies that drove the creation of DHS in the first place.

Stopping the proliferation of fentanyl is particularly well suited to the JTF approach. Unlike many more traditional narcotics, fentanyl is often shipped directly to dealers from overseas. Fentanyl's extremely high potency allows these shipments to be small enough to go undetected unless carefully scrutinized.

That is why it is essential that the joint task force on opioids collaborate with private-sector organizations and any other Federal, State, local, Tribal, territorial, or international entity to increase operational effectiveness, coordination, and information sharing.

We need to work with partners, especially the United States Postal Service and private parcel delivery services like UPS and FedEx, to ensure suspicious packages are inspected. Having a single task force coordinating the department's efforts makes it much easier for other organizations to know to whom to go.

The collaboration called for in this bill, combined with the implementation of Ms. TSONGAS' INTERDICTION Act, which focuses on drug detection technologies, will ensure that DHS is maximally effective in combating the flood of synthetic opioids trafficked into the United States.

The crisis gripping our Nation, Mr. Speaker, is complex. We recognize that. We cannot succeed in stemming the opioid epidemic unless the Federal Government recognizes the opportunity to integrate and collaborate not only across agencies but also with our private-sector partners.

I hope my colleagues will join this bipartisan effort to curb the prevalence of illicit opioids on our streets, in our communities, in our neighborhoods, and in our homes by supporting H.R. 5762.

Mr. Speaker, now more than ever, we need to take action to curb the flow of synthetic opioids into America. The need plays out in tragedies around the country every day.

Rhode Island's Brandon Goldner was just 23 years old when, after being revived seven times in a 2-month period, he tragically lost his life to an opioid overdose. Losing Brandon and so many others to opioids demands that we, as lawmakers, act quickly to reduce the stigma associated with drug use and ensure that there are adequate treatment options that are available.

I am proud to come from a State that has developed a comprehensive strategy to combat the opioid crisis by supporting local and State partners at every level of education, treatment, and prevention through the creation of a statewide overdose prevention and intervention task force.

This is a constant battle, and reducing the prevalence of opioids available

to those who might use or abuse the substance is an important step that we can take today by passing this bill. Every one of my colleagues has their own Brandon story. Everyone has talked with grieving parents, children, friends, and coworkers.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that the Committee on Homeland Security is doing its part to ensure that we bring a whole-of-government approach to combating this whole-of-society problem, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

The bill before us today will enhance internal DHS operations, force the collaboration across Federal agencies, and develop partnerships with the private sector to limit opioids coming into our country and getting distributed throughout our communities.

Like every bill that makes it to the floor, this legislation is the result of a collaborative effort.

Mr. Speaker, I must thank Senator CLAIRE McCASKILL, who has been a true champion in driving policy to address the opioid crisis and who first proposed applying the JTF model to this epidemic. She has been a true leader on this issue.

I also thank my good friend and longtime colleague on the committee and cosponsor, Congressman PETER KING, who has helped ensure that this effort is a bipartisan one.

Likewise, I owe a debt of gratitude to our ranking member, Mr. THOMPSON, and our chairman, Mr. McCAUL, who worked with me in turn to make a good idea even better legislation.

Like anything we do, nothing would have been possible without the tireless work of our staff, in particular that of Rosaline Cohen and Alex Carnes with the committee, and Elyssa Malin in my office.

Mr. Speaker, I have said before that the opioid epidemic is incredibly complex. With the number of factors driving this tragic increase in overdoses, there is no silver bullet to this public health emergency. Rather, it demands a whole-of-society approach. This bill will bring that unity of effort to the Department of Homeland Security, so that it can be a more effective partner in turning the tide against opioid abuse.

I hope all of my colleagues will join with me in supporting the creation of this joint task force and support this bill. Again, I thank Chairman DONOVAN, the gentleman from New York, for his words of support and his effort to see that this bill got to the floor in the first place. I hope to see it pass.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I once again urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5762. I thank my friend from Rhode Island for his leadership on this 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 New York (Mr. DONOVAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5762, 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.

SHIELDING PUBLIC SPACES FROM VEHICULAR TERRORISM ACT

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4627) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize expenditures to combat emerging terrorist threats, including vehicular attacks, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4627

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 "Shielding Public Spaces from Vehicular Terrorism Act".

SEC. 2. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.

The Homeland Security Act of 2002 is amended—

(1) in paragraph (11) of section 302 (6 U.S.C. 182), by inserting "research and development to combat emerging terrorist threats, such as vehicular attacks, and" before "the long-term"; and

(2) in subparagraph (B) of section 308(b)(2) (6 U.S.C. 188(b)(2))—

(A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking "expertise in—" and inserting "expertise in the following:";

(B) by redesignating clause (xiv) as clause (xv); and

(C) by inserting after clause (xiii) the following new clause:

"(xiv) Combatting emerging terrorist threats, including vehicular attacks."

SEC. 3. ALLOWABLE USES.

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

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (11) through (14) as paragraphs (12) through (15), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (10) the following new paragraph:

"(11) addressing security vulnerabilities of public spaces, including through the installation of bollards and other target hardening activities;" and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (3)(B), by striking "(a)(10)" and inserting "(a)(12)"; and

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

"(6) FIREARMS.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—A grant awarded under section 2003 or 2004 may not be used for the provision to any person of a firearm or training in the use of a firearm.

"(B) NO EFFECT ON OTHER LAWS.—Nothing in this paragraph may be construed to preclude or contradict any other provision of law authorizing the provision of firearms or training in the use of firearms."

SEC. 4. REPORT.

The Secretary 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 on