

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

Mr. HILL. 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 Arkansas (Mr. HILL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4294, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

FIGHT ILLICIT NETWORKS AND DETECT TRAFFICKING ACT

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6069) to require the Comptroller General of the United States to carry out a study on how virtual currencies and online marketplaces are used to buy, sell, or facilitate the financing of goods or services associated with sex trafficking or drug trafficking, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6069

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 “Fight Illicit Networks and Detect Trafficking Act” or the “FIND Trafficking Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds the following:

(1) According to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) 2017 National Drug Threat Assessment, transnational criminal organizations are increasingly using virtual currencies.

(2) The Treasury Department has recognized that: “The development of virtual currencies is an attempt to meet a legitimate market demand. According to a Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago economist, U.S. consumers want payment options that are versatile and that provide immediate finality. No U.S. payment method meets that description, although cash may come closest. Virtual currencies can mimic cash’s immediate finality and anonymity and are more versatile than cash for online and cross-border transactions, making virtual currencies vulnerable for illicit transactions.”

(3) Virtual currencies have become a prominent method to pay for goods and services associated with illegal sex trafficking and drug trafficking, which are two of the most detrimental and troubling illegal activities facilitated by online marketplaces.

(4) Online marketplaces, including the darkweb, have become a prominent platform to buy, sell, and advertise for illicit goods and services associated with sex trafficking and drug trafficking.

(5) According to the International Labour Organization, in 2016, 4.8 million people in the world were victims of forced sexual exploitation, and in 2014, the global profit from commercial sexual exploitation was \$99 billion.

(6) In 2016, within the United States, the Center for Disease Control estimated that there were

64,000 deaths related to drug overdose, and the most severe increase in drug overdoses were those associated with fentanyl and fentanyl analogs (synthetic opioids), which amounted to over 20,000 overdose deaths.

(7) According to the U.S. Department of the Treasury 2015 National Money Laundering Risk Assessment, an estimated \$64 billion is generated annually from U.S. drug trafficking sales.

(8) Illegal fentanyl in the United States originates primarily from China, and it is readily available to purchase through online marketplaces.

SEC. 3. GAO STUDY.

(a) *STUDY REQUIRED.*—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study on how virtual currencies and online marketplaces are used to facilitate sex and drug trafficking. The study shall consider—

(1) how online marketplaces, including the darkweb, are being used as platforms to buy, sell, or facilitate the financing of goods or services associated with sex trafficking or drug trafficking (specifically, opioids and synthetic opioids, including fentanyl, fentanyl analogs, and any precursor chemicals associated with manufacturing fentanyl or fentanyl analogs) destined for, originating from, or within the United States;

(2) how financial payment methods, including virtual currencies and peer-to-peer mobile payment services, are being utilized by online marketplaces to facilitate the buying, selling, or financing of goods and services associated with sex or drug trafficking destined for, originating from, or within the United States;

(3) how virtual currencies are being used to facilitate the buying, selling, or financing of goods and services associated with sex or drug trafficking, destined for, originating from, or within the United States, when an online platform is not otherwise involved;

(4) how illicit funds that have been transmitted online and through virtual currencies are repatriated into the formal banking system of the United States through money laundering or other means;

(5) the participants (state and non-state actors) throughout the entire supply chain that participate in or benefit from the buying, selling, or financing of goods and services associated with sex or drug trafficking (either through online marketplaces or virtual currencies) destined for, originating from, or within the United States;

(6) Federal and State agency efforts to impede the buying, selling, or financing of goods and services associated with sex or drug trafficking destined for, originating from, or within the United States, including efforts to prevent the proceeds from sex or drug trafficking from entering the United States banking system;

(7) how virtual currencies and their underlying technologies can be used to detect and deter these illicit activities; and

(8) to what extent can the immutable and traceable nature of virtual currencies contribute to the tracking and prosecution of illicit funding.

(b) *SCOPE.*—For the purposes of the study required under subsection (a), the term “sex trafficking” means the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act that is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age.

(c) *REPORT TO CONGRESS.*—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives a report summarizing the results of the study required under subsection (a), together with any recommendations for legislative

or regulatory action that would improve the efforts of Federal agencies to impede the use of virtual currencies and online marketplaces in facilitating sex and drug trafficking.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend from California, JUAN VARGAS, and my colleague from Pennsylvania, KEITH ROTHFUS, for their work together to cosponsor H.R. 6069, the Fight Illicit Networks and Detect Trafficking Act.

This is extremely important, and it is in keeping with the work that we have been doing in our subcommittee on terror finance, illicit financing, and also the work we have done on this House floor about stopping human trafficking that we see in this country and, also, the intensive work in the last 2 weeks on opioid legislation in trying to stop these kinds of drugs coming into our country.

This legislation would require the Government Accounting Office, the GAO, to study and report to Congress on how online marketplaces, including those on the dark web, are used as platforms to facilitate the financing of goods associated with drug trafficking or sex trafficking.

They would study payment methods, including virtual currencies and peer-to-peer payment services, that are also being used in drug and sex trafficking online; illicit funds that have been transmitted online and how virtual currencies are reintegrated into the U.S. financial system; and finally, Mr. Speaker, the study would have the participants of sex trafficking or drug trafficking trade online that benefit from the trade.

Although virtual currencies can be used for legal purchases, they have become a common financial payment method for criminals.

Online marketplaces, including the dark web, have become a prominent platform to buy, sell, and advertise for illicit goods and services associated with sex trafficking and drug trafficking.

According to the International Labor Organization, in 2016, 4.8 million people in the world were victims of forced sexual exploitation, and in 2014, the global profit from commercial sexual exploitation was \$99 billion.

According to the U.S. Treasury’s 2015 National Money Laundering Risk Assessment, an estimated \$64 billion is

generated from U.S. drug trafficking operations.

Illegal fentanyl in the United States originates primarily from China and is readily available to purchase through online marketplaces. Certainly, all of my colleagues have heard extensively, over the last 2 weeks, the stunning horrors of how fentanyl has entered our marketplace, with one estimate that, just last year alone, enough came across our borders in this country to kill half the U.S. population.

According to the DEA, in 2017, the National Drug Threat Assessment, transnational criminal organizations are increasingly using virtual currencies. This bill will allow Congress to fully understand the extent to which virtual currencies are being used to facilitate drug and sex trafficking.

The bill will also study how virtual currencies can be used to detect and deter illicit activities and propose legislative solutions to fight these crimes.

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

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. VARGAS), a respected, active member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6069, the Fight Illicit Networks and Detect Trafficking Act, FIND.

Allow me first to thank Chairman HENSARLING for his leadership and also Ranking Member WATERS for her leadership, and also for their support of this legislation.

I would also like to thank my good friend, Mr. FRENCH HILL. I thank him for his kind words and for his support of this bill.

I especially would like to thank Mr. ROTHFUS for his leadership on the Terrorism and Illicit Finance Subcommittee and for generously agreeing to colead this commonsense, narrowly tailored legislation.

As you may know, a virtual currency is a digital representation of value that can be digitally traded. Since the creation of bitcoin, the first and most widely known example of cryptocurrency, thousands of cryptocurrencies have emerged and are designed to serve a variety of purposes.

Some forms of virtual currency provide a digital alternative to cash that lacks the oversight of a government or central bank and, potentially, offers greater anonymity than conventional payment systems.

Just as virtual currencies have grown in use in legitimate commerce, they have also become an increasingly popular financial payment method for criminals. Virtual currencies have been and continue to be exploited to pay for goods and services associated with illicit illegal sex and drug trafficking. These are two of the most detrimental and troubling illegal activities sold online.

According to the DEA 2017 National Drug Threat Assessment, transnational

criminal organizations are increasingly using virtual currencies due to their ease of use and the anonymity they provide.

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While evidence points to the growth of virtual currencies as a payment method for illicit sex and drug trafficking, the true scope of the problem and the potential solutions have not been fully established.

According to the International Labour Organization, in 2016, 4.8 million people in the world were victims of forced sexual exploitation, and in 2014, the global profit from commercial sexual exploitation was \$99 billion.

Unfortunately, virtual currencies are also being used as a payment method for transnational drug traffickers.

As you may know all too well, the United States is struggling to combat the rising number of lives cut short by the tragic use of opioids. As was stated earlier by my good friend Mr. HILL, in 2016 alone, the CDC estimated that there were 64,000 deaths—64,000 deaths—in the U.S. related to drug overdose.

The most severe increases in drug overdoses were those associated with fentanyl and also fentanyl analogs. Fentanyl is an extremely deadly opioid that is 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine. Fentanyl is being illicitly manufactured in China and Mexico, with most of the illegal fentanyl in the United States originating from China, and it is readily available to purchase through the online marketplaces.

If we are to craft effective regulatory and legislative solutions to combat these transnational criminal organizations, we need to fully study and analyze how virtual currencies and online marketplaces are used to facilitate sex and drug trafficking to determine how to best eliminate their use.

H.R. 6069, the FIND Trafficking Act of 2018, requires the Comptroller General of the United States to: one, carry out a study on how virtual currencies and online marketplaces are used to facilitate sex or drug trafficking; and, two, make recommendations to Congress on legislative and regulatory actions that would impede the use of virtual currencies and online marketplaces in facilitating sex and drug trafficking.

It is my sincere hope that this bill is the first step toward crafting bipartisan legislation to impede and eventually eliminate the use of virtual currencies by transnational criminal organizations that facilitate drug and sex trafficking.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I again thank both my colleagues here for their kind words about this bill and the bipartisan work that we have had on this bill.

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

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, for the bipartisan work on this bill, I want to again thank Mr. ROTHFUS and my good friend

Mr. VARGAS. You can see that he has the heart of a Jesuit and the mind of a Harvard lawyer.

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 Arkansas (Mr. HILL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6069, 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.

HYDROGRAPHIC SERVICES IMPROVEMENT AMENDMENTS ACT

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 221) to reauthorize the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act of 1998, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 221

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 "Hydrographic Services Improvement Amendments Act".

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF HYDROGRAPHIC SERVICES IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1998.

(a) REAUTHORIZATIONS.—Section 306 of the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act of 1998 (33 U.S.C. 892d) is amended—

(1) by inserting before "There are authorized" the following: "(a) IN GENERAL.—";

(2) in subsection (a) (as designated by paragraph (1))—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking "surveys—" and all that follows through the end of the paragraph and inserting "surveys, \$70,814,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.";

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking "vessels—" and all that follows through the end of the paragraph and inserting "vessels, \$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.";

(C) in paragraph (3), by striking "Administration—" and all that follows through the end of the paragraph and inserting "Administration, \$29,932,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.";

(D) in paragraph (4), by striking "title—" and all that follows through the end of the paragraph and inserting "title, \$26,800,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023."; and

(E) in paragraph (5), by striking "title—" and all that follows through the end of the paragraph and inserting "title, \$30,564,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023."; and

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

"(b) ARCTIC PROGRAMS.—Of the amount authorized by this section for each fiscal year—

"(1) \$10,000,000 is authorized for use to acquire hydrographic data, provide hydrographic services, conduct coastal change analyses necessary to ensure safe navigation, and improve the management of coastal change in the Arctic; and

"(2) \$2,000,000 is authorized for use to acquire hydrographic data and provide hydrographic services in the Arctic necessary to delineate the United States extended Continental Shelf.".

(b) LIMITATION ON ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES FOR SURVEYS.—Section 306 of such Act (33