

component has different standards, different procedures, and different adjudicators for contractor fitness. Lack of a department-wide uniform standard hinders reciprocity across the department. As a result, the committee has received testimony that contractors who work for multiple DHS components are investigated over and over and over again. What a waste of time and resources.

Today, DHS contractors routinely wait 3 to 4 months, if not longer, to be investigated, regardless of whether they have already been determined to be fit by another DHS component. This wait time is costly for not only the contractor, but it also hinders the ability of the Department of Homeland Security to execute its mission.

Today, neither the contractor nor their employer is regularly informed of the status of their investigation. Enactment of H.R. 6374 would help ensure that Federal contractor firms can access timely information regarding the status of their employees' fitness investigations.

Thanks to language that was authored by Representative CORREA and accepted in committee, H.R. 6374 also recognizes that weaknesses in DHS fitness processes not only undermine the onboarding of Federal contractors in a timely way but also the onboarding of new DHS employees.

Representative CORREA's amendment would require the department to take steps to improve the suitability determination process for Federal applicants and appointees and to report on the degree to which components and offices are granting reciprocity to individuals who are employed by other components or offices within the DHS.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this measure. H.R. 6374 improves the Department of Homeland Security's contractor investigation process by requiring a uniform set of standards, encouraging reciprocity among components, and enhancing communication between the department and the private sector.

It is our duty as Members of Congress to ensure processes are followed and that such processes are effective and efficient. H.R. 6374 seeks to do just that.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 6374, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I echo the sentiments of my good friend and colleague from New Jersey. I once again urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6374, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6374, the "Fitness Information Transparency Act of 2018," or the "FIT Act," which will streamline federal contractor fitness determinations for receiving and maintaining contract awards for the Department of Homeland Security.

This bill will standardize the fitness standards for contractors for the Department of Homeland Security that reflect employability

standards to ensure contractors meet public trust obligations relating to the work they will do on behalf of the American people.

During the Homeland Security Committee markup of H.R. 6374, an amendment I offered was adopted.

The Jackson Lee Amendment improves the FIT Act by establishing an "Exigent Circumstances Fitness Determination Review" process.

The Jackson Lee Amendment provides that "The Chief Security Officer may conduct an immediate review of a contractor employee's fitness determination when a contractor employee has engaged in violent acts against individuals, property, or public spaces based on the contractor employee's association with persons or organizations that advocate, threaten, or use force or violence, or any other illegal or unconstitutional means, in an effort to prevent others from exercising their rights under the Constitution or laws of the United States or of any State, based on factors including, at a minimum, race, religion, national origin, or disability."

In July 2018, news reports surfaced that Northrup Grumman had business with a government contractor who employed Michael Miselis, an active member of the California-based Rise Above Movement (RAM), a well-known violent white supremacist group.

RAM's membership has deep roots in California's racist skinhead movement and the violence of RAM members has been a hallmark of the group and its members.

The Anti-Defamation League describes RAM as a white supremacist group whose members believe they are fighting against a "modern world" corrupted by the "destructive cultural influences" of liberals, Jews, Muslims and non-white immigrants.

RAM members consider themselves to be part of the "Alt Right" and operates like a street-fighting club.

RAM members actively train to do physical battle with their ideological foes, and have been involved in violent clashes during political rallies and demonstrations.

Mr. Miselis had a security clearance and worked for Northrup Grumman, a major defense contractor, at the time he engaged in physical violence against persons protesting racism and white supremacy in Charlottesville, Virginia.

In May 2018, Northrup Grumman was informed of Mr. Miselis' membership in RAM and the violent assaults he initiated while he was in Charlottesville participating in activities in support of white supremacy, which were captured on video and in photos.

Mr. Miselis worked for a government contractor and held a security clearance authorizing him to work on projects that were of vital interest to our nation and its defense.

Northrup Grumman did not dismiss him until the story broke earlier this month with media reports on the violence Mr. Miselis engaged in at the white supremacists' rally held in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Mr. Speaker, the United States is a nation of laws, which gives us the freedom to agree, and most importantly disagree, with not only each other, but with our government.

But the limitations on the right to express political views was best described by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., who said: "The right to swing my fist ends where the other man's nose begins."

There is a limit to the expression of free speech and the freedom to assemble and that limit is violence.

The awarding of security clearances to contractors must be better managed and the consequences for involvement in activities that would be cause for dismissal from the armed services or any federal agency should not go unnoticed.

The Jackson Lee Amendment makes the clear statement to DHS contractors that the awarding of contracts that involve the security of our nation should not be taken lightly and that the allocation of federal funds to contractors who employ persons who advocate or participate in acts against persons on account of their race, creed, religious beliefs, or gender who engage in constitutionally protected activities will not be tolerated.

For these reasons, I support H.R. 6374 and urge my colleagues to support this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6374, 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.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY CHIEF DATA OFFICER AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6447) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish the position of Chief Data Officer of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6447

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 "Department of Homeland Security Chief Data Officer Authorization Act".

SEC. 2. CHIEF DATA OFFICER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.

Section 703 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 343) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(c) CHIEF DATA OFFICER.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation with the Chief Information Officer, shall designate a career appointee (as such term is defined in section 3132 of title 5, United States Code) of the Department as the Chief Data Officer of the Department.

"(2) QUALIFICATIONS.—The Chief Data Officer shall possess demonstrated training and experience in the management, governance, generation, collection, protection, analysis, use, and sharing of data, including the protection and de-identification of personally identifiable information.

"(3) FUNCTIONS.—The Chief Data Officer shall be responsible for the following:

"(A) Ensuring that the Department conforms with data management best practices recognized across industry and the Federal Government.

"(B) Coordinating the organization and integration of data across the Department for improved interoperability, analysis, and decision-making.

“(C) Reviewing the impact of the infrastructure of the Department regarding data integrity and interoperability.

“(D) Coordinating the release of data for public use following appropriate privacy reviews within the Department, as coordinated with the Chief Privacy Officer.

“(E) Promoting the use of modern data systems to improve Department operations.

“(F) Coordinating the storage of Department records in accordance with the National Archives and Records Administration’s General Records Schedules.

“(G) Overseeing, in coordination with the Chief Privacy Officer of the Department, as appropriate, the Department’s compliance with the following responsibilities:

“(i) Issuing guidelines ensuring and maximizing the quality, objectivity, utility and integrity of information (including statistical information).

“(ii) Establishing administrative mechanisms that allow affected persons to seek and obtain correction of information maintained and disseminated by relevant components of the Department that does not comply with the Department’s guidelines.

“(iii) Reporting to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget about the number and nature of complaints received by relevant components of the Department regarding the accuracy of information disseminated and how such complaints were handled by such components.

“(H) Coordinating with appropriate officials of the Department, including the Chief Privacy Officer, component privacy officers, component Chief Data Officers, and program managers, regarding the use of data within their respective components and under their authorities.

“(I) Serving as the liaison to other Federal agencies and the Office of Management and Budget on data and the best way to use existing Department data for statistical purposes.

“(4) COMPONENT CHIEF DATA OFFICERS.—The heads of each operational component of the Department, in consultation with the Chief Data Officer of the Department and the Chief Information Officer of such component, shall designate a career appointee (as such term is defined in section 3132 of title 5, United States Code) from each such component of the Department as the Chief Data Officer of their respective component. Each such component Chief Data Officer shall—

“(A) have the qualifications described under subsection (c)(2); and

“(B) coordinate with and assist the Chief Data Officer of the Department in the implementation of the functions specified in subparagraphs (A) through (F) of paragraph (3) for their respective component.

“(5) REPORTS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this subsection and periodically thereafter as necessary, the Secretary 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 implementation of this subsection, including any concerns regarding such implementation.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) and the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 6447, the Department of Homeland Security Chief Data Officer Authorization Act, sponsored by my colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER).

In today’s data-driven world, organizations like the Department of Homeland Security generate, collect, and maintain enormous quantities of data in carrying out their day-to-day operations. Unfortunately, data continues to be underutilized as an asset by organizations, especially in the Federal Government, largely as a result of poor internal data management and governance practices.

To address these shortcomings, the private sector and Federal, State, and local entities have increasingly begun appointing the position of chief data officer to their management teams. Such a position would work to improve data management and governance at an organization in order to format data for better analysis and use.

The work conducted by chief data officers can help organizations achieve operational efficiencies, improve policy insight and decisionmaking, achieve data interoperability across legacy IT systems, and increase transparency.

To date, several entities within Homeland Security, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement, have designated chief data officers. Recognizing this growing trend, H.R. 6447 authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with Homeland Security’s chief information officer, to designate a Homeland Security-wide chief data officer.

The chief data officer is tasked with overseeing policies to manage, organize, and format Homeland Security data in order to better carry out data analysis for use in departmental operations.

Additionally, H.R. 6447 requires the heads of all Homeland Security operational components, in consultation with the chief data officer and component chief information officers, to appoint component-level chief data officers.

Homeland Security is charged with the responsibility of keeping our homeland and its citizens safe. As such, it is imperative that Homeland Security possess the capability and capacity and tools to make informed decisions in today’s rapidly evolving threat environment. The appointment of chief data officers at the department and its components is integral to providing Homeland Security with the tools to make data-driven decisions in the 21st century.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to join me in supporting this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6447, the Department of Homeland Security

Chief Data Officer Authorization Act. H.R. 6447 would require the Department of Homeland Security to designate a chief data officer for the department. This official would be responsible for coordinating the organization and integration of data across the department for improved analysis and decisionmaking.

DHS generates, collects, and maintains vast quantities of data, but has difficulty uniformly analyzing it because of its inconsistencies in how data is collected and maintained throughout the department.

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The chief data officer would serve as the lead official for coordinating internal data processes to achieve data and interoperability across DHS systems.

Importantly, H.R. 6447 includes language authored by the Representative from Florida (Mrs. DEMINGS) to delegate responsibility for overseeing the Data Quality Act to the chief data officer.

Under the Data Quality Act, Federal agencies are required to issue guidelines to maximize the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information, including statistical information they disseminate. Additionally, the law requires agencies to establish mechanisms for persons to correct data that does not comply with guidelines.

At this time, when truth is under assault, it is critical that there be vigilant watchdogs to help ensure that information provided by the Department of Homeland Security is accurate. With that, I encourage my colleagues to support this measure.

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

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding.

I rise today on behalf of H.R. 6447, the Chief Data Officer Authorization Act. This bill designates the chief data officer to increase transparency and to ensure best practices are implemented throughout the DHS. My bill is the culmination of listening to my constituents and DHS employees along the border regarding transparency, communication, and oversight issues at the Department of Homeland Security.

Every day 240,000 employees at DHS go to work to ensure the security of our Nation. Many of these men and women are under intense pressure to identify efficiencies and do more with less. This bill answers their request for help in managing and sharing information to protect the homeland.

I have also heard from my constituents who are concerned about government transparency. I truly understand the need to keep the public informed on how their government is working for them. This bill is in answer to those concerns.

This bill also ensures Members of Congress receive the answers and the

data they need to effectively perform our constitutional oversight responsibilities.

I echo the sentiments of many of my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation. Today is a big step forward for the American people.

This bill ensures DHS does not fall behind other government agencies as we increase transparency for those we serve. I urge my colleagues to support the passage of this bill.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no speakers on this bill, and I am prepared to close.

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers. If the gentlewoman from New Jersey has no other speakers, I am prepared to close once she does.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be here with my friend, Mr. KATKO, and I am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, enactment of H.R. 6447 would help improve DHS' ability to integrate and analyze data and ensure the reliability of the data it disseminates.

Further, it would help ensure that Congress is provided timely and accurate data to facilitate effective oversight. As such, I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 6447.

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

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague and friend from New Jersey. It is always a pleasure to work on bills with her because there is always very good bipartisan spirit. I think that is something that is lost often in this Chamber.

I am happy to support this bill. It is commonsense legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

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 New York (Mr. KATKO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6447, 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.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 6157, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2019

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1 of rule XXII and by direction of the Committee on Appropriations, I have a motion at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Cole moves that the House take from the Speaker's table the bill, H.R. 6157, with the Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate amendment, and request a conference with the Senate thereon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Oklahoma is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, this is a necessary step to continue to move the fiscal year 2019 appropriations process forward under regular order.

On June 28, the House passed H.R. 6157, the FY 2019 Defense Appropriations bill by a vote of 359-49. The Senate took up that bill and added the Labor-HHS Appropriations bill and has now sent H.R. 6157 back to the House.

With the appointment of these conferees, the House and the Senate may begin to resolve the differences with the goal of passing H.R. 6157 before the end of the fiscal year. As such, I strongly support this motion.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the motion.

The previous question was ordered.

The motion was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to instruct at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Ms. DeLauro moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 6157 be instructed to agree to division B (relating to appropriations for Labor, Education, and Health and Human services) of the matter proposed to be added by the Senate amendment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XXII, the gentleman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, we have unfortunate circumstances. We do not have a bill that the majority has brought up for consideration, the Labor-HHS appropriations bill, as I believe it is our duty. I will remind everyone that this bill was twice delayed in the markup for Labor-HHS, so we are trying to make the best of a bad situation.

Meanwhile, the Senate has passed a Labor-HHS-Education bill. The Senate bill is not perfect. In fact, there is much to improve, but it provides a foundation for conference negotiations between the House and the Senate.

The House bill, unfortunately, despite an increase of \$18 billion in non-defense spending, the House Labor-HHS-Education bill is held to level

funding. Out of a total increase of \$18 billion, the Labor-HHS-Education bill should receive an increase of about \$5.5 billion, and yet we received a zero increase, and Chairman COLE has heard me say this over and over and over again.

This allocation means that the House bill includes no new investments in the Child Care and Development Block Grant, nor new funding to help students afford a postsecondary education. The House bill also eliminates funding for family planning and teen pregnancy prevention programs, as well as health and safety grants. It even cuts funding for community health centers by \$100 million, and the list goes on.

In addition, the House Labor-HHS-Education bill is loaded with ideological poison pill riders, including riders to block funding for the Affordable Care Act, block funding for family planning, block funding for Planned Parenthood clinics, and it adds new riders to protect Monsanto and to allow religious discrimination in child welfare services.

However, there is one crucially important issue that is addressed in the House bill that must be included in the final conference report. That is the President's manufactured crisis at the border. I speak, of course, of family separation, which has inflicted terrible trauma on children, their parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, and uncles.

The administration's policy of separating families is child abuse. Experts have sounded the alarm on the lasting damage that we are doing to these children. Parents are the buffer. With them, the children can endure incredibly stressful circumstances. Without them, the children are at risk of lasting mental and physical damage, and they are suffering these wounds at our hands.

Now, months and months later, approximately 500 children who were separated from their families remain in HHS custody. For most of these children, their parents were deported, and HHS has been unable to reunify these families, and unfathomably, may never be able to reunify them.

The administration has tried to pass off responsibility of reunifying these families to third parties like nonprofits. It is unconscionable. In the House bill, Democrats advanced the first congressional action to address this manufactured crisis. The full committee, I might add, on a bipartisan basis, adopted 12 amendments. These amendments must be retained in the final conference report.

These amendments, to discuss them very briefly, did a number of things. They expressed the sense of Congress that families should not be separated and that families should be reunited immediately. They required HHS to provide Congress a plan for swift reunification, to provide regular reporting, and to ensure the agency and its partners are upholding the highest standards with regards to care and privacy.