

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote for this important legislation and for the Senate to quickly bring it to the floor to help stop Iran, the world's number one state sponsor of terror, from spreading its violent hate.

And that is just the way it is, Madam Speaker.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Madam Speaker, it seems like we are playing revolving or musical chairs, but it is so good, because I get to see all my friends from different angles.

Madam Speaker, Iraq is at a crossroads. And as someone who wants to see Iraq succeed in promoting pluralism and tolerance, I support this legislation because it will help Iraqis build a better future.

This bill makes it clear that the United States will not side with those who continue to foment sectarian strife. No matter where you are from, if you undermine the democratic process in Iraq, if you threaten peace and stability there, if you prevent the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people, you will be penalized. That is why this bill is so important.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to pass H.R. 4591 and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues for their bipartisan work on this important legislation. This measure will send a clear message to the Iraqi people that the U.S. supports them in their quest for peace and stability and democracy.

Still recovering from the atrocities and desolation left by ISIS, the Iraqi people deserve a chance to establish a stable democracy free of Iranian meddling.

To be clear, these Iranian-backed militias are not just a threat to the Iraqi people. These same militias have launched mortars at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad and continue to threaten Israel. It is well past the time that these militias face justice and accountability for their war crimes.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4591, 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.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO DEMOCRACY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2018

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and

pass the bill (H.R. 6207) to support democracy and accountability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6207

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 “Democratic Republic of the Congo Democracy and Accountability Act of 2018”.

SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Democratic Republic of Congo has historically faced election-related political instability, endemic corruption, armed conflict, gross human rights abuses, and humanitarian crises, which destabilizes the region and causes massive human suffering;

(2) the United States has provided billions of dollars to help stabilize the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including through humanitarian aid, development assistance, and support for peacekeeping operations, since the end of the civil and regional war in 2003;

(3) the stability of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a strategic priority for the United States on the African continent and it is in the national security interest of the United States to support accountable governance in the Democratic Republic of Congo;

(4) United States policy with respect to the Democratic Republic of Congo should focus on helping the country become more stable and democratic, including through supporting legitimate state authority, such that the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo is better able to respond to and provide for the basic needs of its citizens and live in peaceful coexistence with its neighbors;

(5) the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo should comply with all obligations under its Constitution, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ratified on November 1, 1976, and the December 2016 Saint Sylvestre agreement brokered by the Congolese Conference of Catholic Bishops, by—

(A) immediately lifting restrictions on the freedoms of assembly, expression, and association;

(B) releasing all political prisoners, including those detained for peacefully exercising their rights;

(C) ensuring that state security forces protect the rights of peaceful demonstrators;

(D) bringing to justice security force personnel accused of serious abuses against citizens, including against protesters or opposition supporters; and

(E) allowing private media outlets to operate freely;

(6) the United States should continue to support efforts to hold free, fair, and democratic elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including by supporting the completion of an inclusive, transparent voter registration process and civic education, preventing or mitigating violence, and facilitating credible election observation by the African Union, the Southern African Development Community, and other appropriate civil society entities.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of State, in coordination with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, should continue to

provide humanitarian and development assistance to the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo through credible and independent nongovernmental organizations, including local partners, human rights organizations, women-led organizations, and faith-based or non-faith-based organizations. In providing such assistance, the Secretary and Administrator should prioritize—

(1) promoting partnerships with organizations that have had a long-term presence in the country and have achieved measurable impact, including by building the capacity of local partners, human rights organizations, women-led organizations, or faith-based or non-faith-based organizations to address local needs;

(A) placing the country on a trajectory toward ending the need for foreign assistance; and

(2) evaluating the comparative merits of grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, and other methods for providing foreign assistance.

(c) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND CONFLICT MITIGATION MECHANISMS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development should—

(1) continue to—

(A) support long-term peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by strengthening democratic institutions and promoting respect for the rule of law at the national, provincial, and local levels;

(B) support the capacity of civil society actors to promote transparency, accountability, freedom of expression, and anti-corruption efforts;

(C) support conflict prevention and mitigation activities where appropriate, particularly in the Kasai region, the Tanganyika Province, the North and South Kivu Provinces, and the Ituri Province; and

(D) work to address the root causes of chronic violence and fragility, with a focus on youth empowerment, education, and the promotion of justice and accountability mechanisms; and

(2) seek to work directly with and through credible, independent, nongovernmental organizations, including local partners, human rights organizations, women-led organizations, and faith-based or non-faith-based organizations, to—

(A) defend internationally recognized democratic rights;

(B) support freedom of expression, including through media broadcasting;

(C) combat public corruption; and

(D) improve the transparency and accountability of governing institutions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

SEC. 3. SUPPORT FOR EFFORTS AT THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO.

The President should instruct the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations to use the voice, vote, and influence of the United States at the United Nations to—

(1) emphasize the importance of implementing the December 2016 Saint Sylvestre agreement to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the need to lift restrictions on the freedoms of assembly, expression, and association, and the need to conduct free, fair, and democratic elections;

(2) keep the humanitarian and political crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the regular agenda of the United Nations Security Council until the completion of a peaceful transfer of power through free, fair, and democratic elections;

(3) ensure that the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has an appropriately focused mandate tailored to security and governance conditions on the ground with a particular focus on civilian protection, and that the mission has sufficient means, including specialized personnel and effective leadership, to execute its mandate; and

(4) improve Member states' implementation of United Nations Security Council-imposed sanctions on individuals and entities violating the United Nations arms embargo, threatening the peace and security of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, engaging in human or resource trafficking, or perpetrating gross human rights violations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

SEC. 4. CODIFICATION OF SANCTIONS RELATING TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO.

(a) IN GENERAL.—United States sanctions provided for in Executive Order 13671 (79 Fed. Reg. 39947; relating to taking additional steps to address the national emergency with respect to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) and Executive Order 13413 (71 Fed. Reg. 64103; relating to blocking property of certain persons contributing to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), as amended by Executive Order 13671 (79 Fed. Reg. 39947; relating to taking additional steps to address the national emergency with respect to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act, shall remain in effect for the 5-year period beginning on such date of enactment unless the President determines and certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo—

(1) is making significant progress towards holding free and fair elections and respecting the freedoms of press, expression, and assembly, as described in the December 2016 Saint Sylvestre agreement and in United Nations Security Council Resolution 2348 (2017); or

(2) has held free and fair presidential elections in accordance with the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and a democratically elected President has been sworn in and taken office.

(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section may be construed to limit the authorities of the President under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) or any other provision of law.

(c) LIST OF SENIOR POLITICAL FIGURES.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a list of each senior foreign political figure, as such term is defined in section 1010.605 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act), of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

(d) ADDITIONAL SANCTIONS DETERMINATION REQUIRED.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report listing each person included in the list required by subsection (c) that the President determines meets the criteria to be sanctionable pursuant to one or more of the following:

(1) Executive Order 13671 (79 Fed. Reg. 39947; relating to taking additional steps to address the national emergency with respect to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo).

(2) Executive Order 13413 (71 Fed. Reg. 64103; relating to blocking property of certain persons contributing to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo).

(3) Executive Order 13818 (82 Fed. Reg. 60839; relating to blocking the property of persons involved in serious human rights abuse or corruption).

(4) Paragraph (3) or (4) of section 1263(a) of the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2016 (22 U.S.C. 2656 note).

(e) REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AND CORRUPTION IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report describing each of the following:

(1) The extent to which government officials in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including members of the military and security services, are responsible for or complicit in human rights abuses against civilians, including by deliberately impeding humanitarian access to civilians.

(2) The methods used to transfer and conceal financial assets of senior officials of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo that are acquired through acts of corruption.

(3) United States actions to combat such corruption, which could include the issuance of a FinCEN Advisory by the Department of the Treasury or the imposition of targeted sanctions.

(4) To what extent and in what manner such corruption threatens the security of the surrounding region or United States national security interests.

(5) Any assistance provided by the United States to facilitate oversight, transparency, and adherence to due diligence and accountability measures within the Democratic Republic of the Congo's minerals, forestry, and agribusiness sectors.

(f) FORM; PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—

(1) FORM.—The list required by subsection (c) and the reports required by subsections (d) and (e) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may contain a classified annex.

(2) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The unclassified portion of the report required by subsection (e) shall be published on a publicly available website of the Department of State.

(g) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—In this section, the term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on Financial Services, and the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Appropriations, and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on this bill.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill. This is the Democratic Republic of

the Congo Democracy and Accountability Act.

Mr. Speaker, I would begin by thanking Congressman SMITH and Congresswoman KAREN BASS, they are the chairman and ranking member of the Africa Subcommittee, and I thank the ranking member of this committee, Mr. ENGEL, for their work on this bipartisan legislation.

Long overdue elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are scheduled now for December 23, 2018. But we all know that simply holding elections is not enough.

President Kabila already has remained in power 2 years past his constitutional mandate. And while I am pleased that he will reportedly step aside, the corruption of the Kabila government runs much deeper than just the presidency. Government officials and security forces continue to use their positions of power to undermine the election and to stoke instability in the country.

Peaceful protests have been met with violence, with mass arrests. They have even been met with torture. New reports of abuse and intimidation against journalists and against activists by government forces emerge now every day.

Meanwhile, arbitrary legal impediments have barred prominent opposition candidates from running. The government insists on using untested and confusing voting machines, leaving the election vulnerable to vote manipulation and to rigging.

Throughout all of this, the government continues to boycott international efforts to support election preparations and to increase humanitarian assistance, and continues to deny, in the face of serious and mounting evidence, that there is a problem.

I have been on three trips to the Congo over this issue over the years. The people of the Congo are suffering and the humanitarian situation is dire. Over 4 million Congolese are internally displaced. More than 13 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, including 7 million facing acute food insecurity. And another Ebola outbreak is threatening the lives of thousands.

We know that government security forces are responsible for horrific human rights abuses and for provoking instability across the DRC. Just last year, two researchers were killed investigating human rights abuses in the country. One of these researchers was an American. The government continues to block efforts to fully investigate and hold individuals accountable. This cannot stand.

The U.S. must be fully engaged in support of the Congolese people and their struggle to freely choose their next leader. This legislation we are considering today is a call to action. It requires a determination on individuals responsible for undermining peace and security, impeding the democratic process, committing human rights violations, and engaging in corruption so

that they can be sanctioned. It calls for a focus on those that are blocking the democratic process.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen this sad situation before in the DRC. We have seen instability and conflict spill into neighboring countries and undermine the entire region. We cannot let this cycle continue. A failed election in December would surely inflame the violence. This is why we must take decisive action to hold individuals accountable and ensure free and fair elections this December.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), and I ask unanimous consent that he may control that time.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS), the lead Democrat on this bill and the ranking member of the Africa Subcommittee.

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to strongly support H.R. 6207, the Democratic Republic of the Congo Democracy and Accountability Act of 2018.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of this important piece of legislation that seeks to promote free and fair elections in the DRC by imposing sanctions on high level individuals who are undermining democratic processes and institutions in the country as well as those who are responsible for extrajudicial killings and have engaged in public corruption.

The DRC has the potential to be one of the richest countries on Earth. It has abundant deposits of copper, gold, diamonds, cobalt, and many other minerals. The Congo River is the second largest river in the world and the most powerful river in Africa, making way for enormous potential to generate hydroelectric power, and some scientists say it could provide enough power for all of sub-Saharan Africa's electricity needs. DRC also has great agricultural potential, with its 80 million hectares of arable land, climate conditions, and water resources.

This country has all the conditions to thrive and flourish, but it has not. Instead, continued delays in holding elections have increased tensions and unrest. Ongoing conflict in many parts of the country has resulted in hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons and refugees. The country is in a human rights crisis, and on top of all of this, the DRC is suffering from an Ebola outbreak. The humanitarian crisis in the DRC has been exacerbated by the political crisis over elections.

With respect to the ongoing political situation, the current crisis in the DRC started in 2015 when President Kabila, who is constitutionally barred from re-election, deliberately stalled planned elections. President Kabila remained in post, although his second constitutional term ended in 2016.

Since then, the political situation has steadily declined. The Congolese government and security forces have cracked down on anti-government mobilization through excessive use of force on peaceful protesters, shut down media outlets, and targeted arrests of activists.

In August 2018, President Kabila finally said he would uphold the constitution and not stand for a third term. Even with this announcement, the pre-electoral environment remains tense and unsafe for activists, journalists, political opposition, and religious leaders.

Additionally, according to Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, just this month the government made a new round of arrests of pro-democracy activists ahead of presidential elections scheduled for December 23. This heavy-handed display of police and government security forces ahead of the long-awaited presidential election undermines and threatens people's ability to freely participate in the electoral process.

The government must immediately release all people arbitrarily detained for peacefully protesting, including the numerous pro-democracy activists, political opposition leaders, and journalists.

Finally, the government must investigate and hold to account those responsible for human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests and detention, torture, and other serious abuses.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS).

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, this legislation is extremely important for addressing conditions in the DRC, but it is also important for sending a message to the world that the United States has not retreated from its commitment to protect human rights and advance democracy around the world.

The late former U.N. Secretary General, Kofi Annan, and nine former African presidents said Congo's future "is in grave danger."

"We are deeply concerned about the political situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo [DRC], which represents a threat to the stability, prosperity and peace of the Great Lakes region. . . ."

Mr. Speaker, the situation in the DRC is deteriorating as we speak. It is time we act.

Following a call from the region, please join my colleagues CHRIS SMITH, Chairman ED ROYCE, and Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL, and I, and support this bill that supports human

rights, democracy, and accountability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I urge my colleagues to support the Democratic Republic of the Congo Democracy and Accountability Act of 2018.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for their very strong support of this legislation and for their strong statements today.

I think this is, again, another example of bipartisan legislation and the House uniting over a very egregious situation that is occurring in the DRC.

I would point out to my colleagues that I have visited the DRC myself, been to Kinshasa, the capital, raised a number of human rights issues when I was there.

But I also traveled to Goma, where there was terrible acts of bloodshed committed by both the government troops. As well as those that were combating the government, and even terrible acts by the peacekeepers, the U.N. peacekeepers, some years ago, where they were complicit in human trafficking, particularly of little children.

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In my subcommittee, I chaired four hearings on this horrible practice of the peacekeepers themselves causing such violence against kids. There is now a much better situation, but it is still awful, and, again, we are now facing another serious crisis.

I would also point out to my colleagues that KAREN BASS and I had a trip planned to Kinshasa for August 24 and 25. We made part of that trip where we went to Ethiopia, but we were denied visas. We could not get visas to go to the DRC. We wanted to raise issues with Kabila, himself, with regards to the election and human rights abuse. We were denied that by not getting a visa.

This bill could not be more timely. Indeed, there is an urgent need to focus attention on the DRC, a strategically located, resource-rich country, which has been misgoverned for much of its history and again is in crisis today.

The wonderful people of the DRC deserve better, far better than they have gotten from the Kabila regime. Next month, just before Christmas, the country is scheduled to vote to replace Joseph Kabila, who has retained power in defiance of constitutional term limits for some 2 years beyond his mandate.

Right now, there is talk of further postponement of the election, which would accord with Kabila's desire to postpone a transfer of power for as long as possible. If such a delay occurs, it would be attributable to the obstacles placed by the Kabila government to holding a free and fair election.

This bill before us today shows congressional resolve that there be accountability and codifies three executive orders by three Presidents: President Bush, President Obama, and President Trump.

It points out that there needs to be significant progress towards holding free and fair elections or else they will not be lifted, and it does so for 7 years. We are talking about respecting fundamental freedoms of the press, expression, and assembly, as described in the December 2016 Saint Sylvestre agreement and in U.N. Security Council Resolution 2348.

It also points out that there needs to be, in the legislation, a free and fair Presidential election in accordance with the constitution of the DRC and that a democratically elected President has been sworn in and taken office.

It also supports the humanitarian and accountability efforts of civil society groups pushing back against civil strife and political repression. In particular, it acknowledges the role of the faith community and the Catholic Church, which educates and heals the Congolese people through its schools and hospitals, while upholding the need for the rule of law and respect for constitutional principles in the DRC.

Indeed, the Congolese Conference of Catholic Bishops, known as CENCO, has played a singular role in promoting restoration of democracy and respect for fundamental civil and political rights, including brokering the December 2016 Saint Sylvestre agreement.

Mr. Speaker, this is a critical time for the DRC. We have an emerging Ebola crisis in the eastern part of the country. I note that, over the weekend, our Embassy in Kinshasa was forced to close due to “credible and specific” terror threats. The Embassy will remain closed at least until tomorrow because of those threats and perhaps even beyond that date. We are hurtling towards a political inflection point within the next month, which will either mark a turn towards proper constitutional governance or a downward spiral towards growing chaos and bloodshed.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank our staff members who made this bill possible, particularly Lesley Warner of my staff. We traveled to the Congo in 2016 with Chairman ROYCE and had very important meetings there, frustrating but important meetings.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this measure.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, or DRC, borders nine other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and positive or negative events there often impact the entire region. This is why stability in the DRC is a priority not

for that country's people, but for many other countries, including the United States. That is why Chairman ROYCE and I led a colod there and why so many of our other members on the Foreign Affairs Committee—Mr. SMITH and Ms. BASS—have been there and have really cared about the region.

For years, the DRC has been on the brink of crisis. More than 13 million people need humanitarian support, including 7.8 million children. Across the country, violent conflicts have intensified, including near the city of Beni, where health workers are battling a deadly Ebola outbreak.

The current government, as my colleagues mentioned before, has shown a concerning disregard for democracy and the country's constitution, with troubling restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly and disturbing reports of Congolese security forces violating the human rights of peaceful protesters.

Next month, the DRC will hold elections, as my colleagues have mentioned, that were supposed to be held back in December of 2016. It is a critical time for the United States to show that we are committed to the DRC having a peaceful political transition and moving toward accountable, democratic governance.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo Democracy and Accountability Act, this bill, asks the administration to continue providing robust humanitarian and development assistance to the people of the DRC. It also requires the President to submit a report to Congress detailing the extent to which Congolese Government officials are involved in human rights abuses against civilians and codifies previous executive orders that target the property and interests of any persons responsible for actions that threaten the stability of the DRC.

It is important that we continue leading the international community to address the many challenges in the DRC. That is why this bill asks the administration to keep the DRC on the U.N. Security Council agenda and work to ensure the U.N. peacekeeping mission there has sufficient means to operate effectively.

After decades of conflict and instability, the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo deserve a peaceful democratic transition. By passing this bill today, we show that the House is committed to supporting that process.

Mr. Speaker, it is in the national security interest of the United States to support a peaceful political transition and accountable governance in the DRC. With elections scheduled for next month, this bill comes at a critical time.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to join me in supporting this important legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from

New York for his comments and for his strong support.

Mr. Speaker, this is a true bipartisan bill. Our fingers are crossed for the people of the DRC. They deserve a free and fair election. Whoever emerges as the winner hopefully will take them on a new course.

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 California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6207, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. 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.

IRAQ AND SYRIA GENOCIDE RELIEF AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2017

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill (H.R. 390) to provide emergency relief for victims of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes in Iraq and Syria, for accountability for perpetrators of these crimes, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the Senate amendments is as follows:

Senate amendments:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Iraq and Syria Genocide Relief and Accountability Act of 2018”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) *The Secretary of State declared on March 17, 2016, and on August 15, 2017, that Daesh (also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria or ISIS) is responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and other atrocity crimes against religious and ethnic minority groups in Iraq and Syria, including Christians, Yazidis, and Shia, among other religious and ethnic groups.*

(2) *According to the Department of State's annual reports on international religious freedom—*

(A) the number of Christians living in Iraq has dropped from an estimated 800,000 to 1,400,000 in 2002 to fewer than 250,000 in 2017; and

(B) the number of Yazidis living in Iraq has fluctuated from 500,000 in 2013, to between 350,000 and 400,000 in 2016, and between 600,000 and 750,000 in 2017.

(3) *The annual reports on international religious freedom further suggest that—*

(A) Christian communities living in Syria, which had accounted for between 8 and 10 percent of Syria's total population in 2010, are now “considerably” smaller as a result of the civil war, and