

This is a common sense reform that would send a loud and clear message of support to those who have served our country so faithfully and protect them against any effort to rob them of their hard earned benefits.

Finally, I want to thank the gentleman from Florida, TED DEUTCH, who is the lead Democratic cosponsor, for his leadership on this important measure.

I support this bill and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 450, 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.

Ms. BASS. 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.

#### PUT TRAFFICKING VICTIMS FIRST ACT OF 2019

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 507) to direct the Attorney General to study issues relating to human trafficking, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 507

*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 “Put Trafficking Victims First Act of 2019”.

#### SEC. 2. TRAINING FOR PROSECUTIONS OF TRAFFICKERS AND SUPPORT FOR STATE SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING.

It is the sense of Congress that a portion of the funds available for training and technical assistance under section 107(b)(2)(B)(ii) of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7105(b)(2)(B)(ii)) should be devoted to advancing the following goals:

(1) Increasing the personal safety of victim service providers, who may face intimidation or retaliation for their activities.

(2) Promoting a trauma-informed, evidence-based, and victim-centered approach to the provision of services for victims of trafficking.

(3) Ensuring that law enforcement officers and prosecutors make every attempt to determine whether an individual is a victim of human trafficking before arresting the individual for, or charging the individual with, an offense that is a direct result of the victimization of the individual.

(4) Effectively prosecuting traffickers and individuals who patronize or solicit children for sex, and facilitating access for child victims of commercial sex trafficking to the services and protections afforded to other victims of sexual violence.

(5) Encouraging States to improve efforts to identify and meet the needs of human trafficking victims, including through internet outreach and other methods that are responsive to the needs of victims in their communities.

(6) Ensure victims of trafficking, including United States citizens, lawful permanent residents, and foreign nationals are eligible for services.

#### SEC. 3. WORKING TO DEVELOP METHODOLOGIES TO ASSESS PREVALENCE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

##### (a) WORKING GROUP.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General, in consultation with other Federal entities engaged in efforts to combat human trafficking, shall establish an expert working group, which shall include survivors of human trafficking, experts on sex and labor trafficking, representatives from organizations collecting data on human trafficking, and law enforcement officers. The working group shall, utilizing, to the extent practicable, existing efforts of agencies, task forces, States, localities, tribes, research institutions, and organizations—

(A) identify barriers to the collection of data on the incidence of sex and labor trafficking; and

(B) recommend practices to promote better data collection and analysis.

(2) PILOT TESTING.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall implement a pilot project to test promising methodologies studied under paragraph (1).

##### (b) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the Director of the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center, shall submit to Congress a report on—

(A) Federal efforts to estimate the prevalence of human trafficking at the national and regional levels;

(B) the effectiveness of current policies and procedures to address the needs of victims of trafficking; and

(C) an analysis of demographic characteristics of victims of trafficking in different regions of the United States and recommendations for how to address the unique vulnerabilities of different victims.

(2) INPUT FROM RELEVANT PARTIES.—In developing the report under paragraph (1), the Attorney General shall seek input from the United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, victims of trafficking, human trafficking survivor advocates, service providers for victims of sex and labor trafficking, and the President’s Interagency Task Force on Human Trafficking.

(3) SURVEY.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General, in coordination with Federal, State, local, and Tribal governments, and private organizations, including victim service providers and expert researchers, shall develop and execute a survey of survivors seeking and receiving victim assistance services for the purpose of improving the provision of services to human trafficking victims and victim identification in the United States. Survey results shall be made publicly available on the website of the Department of Justice.

(d) NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS.—No additional funds are authorized to carry out this section.

#### SEC. 4. REPORT ON PROSECUTORS SEEKING RESTITUTION IN TRAFFICKING CASES.

Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General, in consultation with the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, shall submit to Congress a report on efforts to increase restitution to victims of human trafficking.

#### SEC. 5. SENSE OF CONGRESS ENCOURAGING STATES TO ADOPT PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING.

Congress recognizes and applauds the State legislative bodies that have taken tremendous steps to adopt protections and services for victims of trafficking. Congress encourages States to—

(1) uphold the dignity of human trafficking survivors;

(2) ensure the safety, confidentiality, and well-being of victims of trafficking, while recognizing symptoms of trauma and coping mechanisms that may impact victims’ interactions with law enforcement, the justice system, and service providers;

(3) implement screening mechanisms to identify and extend appropriate services to children in the custody of child protective services agencies, the juvenile justice system, or the criminal justice system who are victims of trafficking;

(4) promote greater access to child welfare services for, rather than criminalization of, child victims of sex trafficking;

(5) develop a 24-hour emergency response plan by which victims of human trafficking may receive immediate protection, shelter, and support from a victim assistance coordinator when those victims are first identified;

(6) adopt protections for adult victims of trafficking, such as protection if the victim’s safety is at risk, comprehensive trauma-informed, long-term, culturally competent care and healing services, mental health services to relieve traumatic stress, housing, education (including, where appropriate, vocational training and employment assistance), mentoring, language assistance, drug and substance abuse services, and legal services;

(7) ensure that child sex trafficking victims are treated as children in need of child protective services and receive appropriate care in the child welfare, rather than juvenile justice, system;

(8) encourage the adoption of procedures for human trafficking victims that are consistent with those afforded to victims of sexual assault, rape, child sexual abuse, or incest to allow human trafficking victim to clear records, expunge convictions, and vacate adjudications related to prostitution and nonviolent offenses that arose as a direct result of being trafficked, including protections for foreign nationals who are being removed and those who are losing or determined to be inadmissible for immigration benefits as a result of the aforementioned human trafficking victim related conviction or arrest; and

(9) ensure victims of trafficking, including United States citizens, lawful permanent residents, and foreign nationals are eligible for services.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I introduced H.R. 507, the Put Trafficking Victims First Act, with my colleague, the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER).

I thank Mrs. WAGNER for her hard work over the years on this important legislation. We are here today because of her dedication and willingness to work in a bipartisan manner to address the problems faced by victims of trafficking. We both recognize that Congress must do more to combat this heinous crime.

H.R. 507 is designed to ensure that survivors of human trafficking do not go unnoticed. First, it expresses the sense of Congress that law enforcement set aside a portion of the funds they receive for combating human trafficking to ensure that victims receive support that is trauma informed and victim centered. This will provide victims with a better chance of recovering from their experiences.

Second, this legislation addresses the tremendous need for expanded victim services, improved data gathering on the prevalence and trends in human trafficking, and effective mechanisms to identify and work with victims in an effective and respectful manner.

It directs the Attorney General to form a broadly representative working group to assess the status of the collection of data on human trafficking and recommend best practices, conduct a survey of providers regarding the provision of services to them, as well as prepare a report to Congress on Federal efforts to estimate the prevalence of human trafficking, the effectiveness of current policies addressing victims' needs, and analyzing the demographic characteristics of trafficking victims, and recommendations on how to address their unique vulnerabilities.

The bill also directs the Attorney General to implement a pilot project testing the methodologies identified by the working group and requires the Attorney General to report on efforts to increase restitution to victims of human trafficking.

With this type of information in hand, Congress can provide appropriate oversight of efforts to combat human trafficking; and researchers, advocates, and law enforcement agencies will all have a shared resource as they continue to develop innovative approaches to stop traffickers.

Finally, the bill expresses the sense of Congress that States should implement trauma-informed, victim-centered care for all trafficking victims.

Forced labor and human trafficking are among the world's fastest growing enterprises. Globally, these inhumane practices generate an estimated \$150 billion a year in profit. That is three times the amount that the top Fortune 500 companies made in 2016.

Criminals are profiting from the systematic abuse of vulnerable people around the globe. Sadly, women and girls represent approximately 71 percent of these victims.

The U.S. State Department estimates that between 14,000 and 17,000 people

are trafficked into our country from other nations every year. These victims are part of the estimated hundreds of thousands of victims of trafficking currently living within our communities.

My home State of California has the ninth largest economy in the world. It is also one of the Nation's top four destinations for human traffickers, especially for child sex trafficking.

In 2018, of the 5,000 reports to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, 760 of them were from California. As the founder of the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth, I am very aware of the risks to vulnerable youth. Foster youth, along with runaways and homeless youth, are at the highest risk of being sex-trafficked.

Experts agree that the foster care system is yielding a disproportionate number of human trafficking victims. Nearly 60 percent of all child sex trafficking victims have histories in the child welfare system. We cannot allow this to continue.

Washington, D.C., is home to the most powerful government in the world, yet even in D.C., women and girls are being trafficked.

Organizations like Courtney's House are working to improve the outcome of trafficking survivors.

H.R. 507 will improve the implementation of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015.

Trafficking victims face many challenges, even after they are freed from trafficking rings, ranging from access to social services and utilizing assistance programs. Survivors face difficulties navigating social services and assistance programs.

A component of H.R. 507 encourages law enforcement and prosecuting agencies to make every attempt to determine whether an individual has been a victim of human trafficking before charging them with offenses that are the result of their victimization. This is of particular concern to communities of color.

Mr. Speaker, Congress' intent is clear. Protecting victims from the heinous crime of human trafficking is of the utmost concern. I am proud to have worked across the aisle with Congresswoman WAGNER on this important legislation, and I urge our colleagues to support it.

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

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 507, the Put Trafficking Victims First Act of 2019.

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery, which has taken its toll on communities across our Nation. It is a multibillion-dollar criminal industry that denies freedom to nearly 25 million people around the globe.

Traffickers use violence, threats, deception, debt bondage, and other horrendous tactics to force people to engage in commercial sex or to provide labor or services against their will.

This creates an enormous need for expanded victims services, improved data on the prevalence and trends of human trafficking, and effective mechanisms to identify and rescue trafficking victims.

H.R. 507 expresses the sense of Congress that a portion of the funds available under the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 should be devoted to increasing the safety of victim service providers, many of whom are threatened because of their positions. It also promotes a trauma-informed, evidence-based, and victim-centered approach for providing services to the victims of trafficking.

Additionally, H.R. 507 promotes the effective prosecution of human traffickers and individuals who patronize or solicit children for sex. It encourages States to improve efforts to identify and meet the needs of human trafficking victims.

The bill also establishes a working group to identify barriers to the collection of data on the incidence of sex and labor trafficking and recommended practices to promote better data collection and analysis.

Finally, H.R. 507 will provide assistance to trafficking victims seeking restitution, many of whom still face many obstacles in Federal court. The bill directs the Attorney General to report on efforts to increase mandatory restitution for victims by providing Congress with the relevant data.

Mr. Speaker, this has been an issue in my home State of Georgia. It is one that I am very proud to know that, under Governor Deal, our previous Governor, and continuing under Governor Kemp, that around, especially, the city of Atlanta, a very international city, it has also, unfortunately, become an area in which sexual exploitation and human trafficking was something that became a scar and is still affecting our city. We saw that around the Super Bowl and the several arrests that took place.

This is something that needs to be erased from our vocabulary. This is something that does not need to be talked about. Again, human trafficking anywhere in the world is wrong and, hopefully, will be relegated to the annals of the history books at some point.

I want to commend the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS) and also my friend, the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER), for their tireless devotion to continuing this path and bringing this forward each Congress.

I am looking forward to this actually becoming law during this session, and I would urge all of my colleagues to support this.

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

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas, (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman very much, and I acknowledge the words of the

ranking member of the full committee and acknowledge the work of the chairman, Mr. NADLER, of the committee.

I am glad that these bills that we have just debated and one coming up that I know is Mr. COLLINS' bill dealing with the fees to provide resources to those who file lawsuits, justified lawsuits, and have no recourse, these bills are coming out of the Judiciary Committee in a bipartisan manner.

This is a very important statement that we are making with the new majority and working with the minority on very important issues.

This is an issue that has claimed our attention for decades, the fact that we are working every day to improve and, as Mr. COLLINS has just indicated, to never to have to talk about sex trafficking, human trafficking again. If we can eliminate this scourge, I think all of us will find peace.

Just a few years ago, as the ranking member on the Homeland Security Committee, we did the first human trafficking hearing with then-Chairman McCaul and Ranking Member THOMPSON in Houston, Texas, to listen to many who claimed and documented that Houston, Texas, was the epicenter of human trafficking in that region, in the Nation.

It is not something that we are proud of, but we are proud of the advocates who work without ceasing with law enforcement to put, again, a red stop sign in front of this travesty.

So I acknowledge the work that has been done by many of my colleagues, the work that has been done by Congresswoman WAGNER and many others who gathered.

That hearing was the first in history in that community, and the first field hearing that was addressing that question. It was quite a few years ago.

But I want to acknowledge from my hometown Jackie Aluotto, who has found and saved lives of victims of human trafficking in our own community; Kathryn Griffin, who, likewise, has been at the forefront of stopping human trafficking, and particularly of young children sex trafficking, and has been a refuge for many who have suffered; Constable Alan Rosen; Constable May Walker; Sheriff Gonzalez; Mayor Sylvester Turner, who has an outstanding program in the city of Houston.

So I rise to support H.R. 507 for several reasons, not the least of which being how much it will impact the local community and the work that is being done. This measure will strengthen the effectiveness of the 2017 act in various ways, which I am very proud to have supported.

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The 2017 act directed the Attorney General to study issues related to human trafficking in response to trafficking concerning services and benefits for victims, criminal justice, domestic sex trafficking of children, and interagency coordination and training.

For example, H.R. 507 increases the personal safety of victim service providers who may face intimidation or retaliation for their activities. While many of us may not realize, sometimes these providers within the context of the law, may have one or two of these individuals at their own homes, or have secreted them somewhere, so they are in the eye of the storm.

As I indicated, we had the first human trafficking hearing of any committee in Houston, Texas, several years ago under the auspices of the Homeland Security Committee.

I am proud of the facts that came out, giving the local people the opportunity to talk about the difficulties and challenges that they face trying to stop the scourge of human trafficking, particularly with young people.

Our committee determined this very point, that the safety of these victims should be our number one concern. Innocent people who have been turned into human trafficking products by the heinous traffickers deserve our protection. As such, this training and funding is critical to ensure that human trafficking victims are treated as victims and afforded justice, respect, and dignity.

Second, H.R. 507 ensures that law enforcement officers and prosecutors make every attempt to determine whether an individual is a victim of human trafficking before arresting the individual for or charging the individual with an offense that is a direct result of victimization of that individual.

This will ensure that law enforcement officers do not add trauma and pain to the victims that have already endured an enormous amount of suffering.

Let me remind my colleagues, that human trafficking, even beyond the scourge of drugs, is a product that can be used or is used over and over again. How devastating, how deadly, how heinous it is that these individuals can be used in human trafficking, sex trafficking, and the acts that they may be called upon to do over and over again.

As a result, H.R. 507 will ensure that most effective practices are standardized so that sex trafficking victims are ultimately protected and treated with respect at all times.

Lastly, the legislation ensures the effective prosecution of traffickers and individuals. For these reasons, I would say that this would be a bill that all of us support. Let's put up more than a stop sign and fight human trafficking and sex trafficking.

Support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 507, which directs the Attorney General to study issues relating to human trafficking, and for other purposes.

Madam Speaker, it is of the upmost importance that we pass this important legislation and uphold the ideals of this country by protecting human trafficking victims.

This bill is intended to improve the implementation of the Putting Trafficking Victims First Act of 2017.

The 2017 act directed the Attorney General to study issues relating to human trafficking in response to trafficking concerning services and benefits for victims, criminal justice, domestic sex trafficking of children, and interagency coordination and training.

I support H.R. 507 for several reasons. This measure will strengthen the effectiveness of the 2017 act in various ways, which I was proud to support.

For example, H.R. 507 increases the personal safety of victim service providers, who may face intimidation or retaliation for their activities.

We had the first human trafficking hearing of any committee in Houston, Texas, several years ago under the auspices of the Homeland Security Committee.

Our committee determined this very point: that the safety of these victims should be our number one concern.

Innocent people who have been turned into human traffic products by the heinous traffickers deserve our protection.

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Second, H.R. 507 ensures that law enforcement officers and prosecutors make every attempt to determine whether an individual is a victim of human trafficking before arresting the individual for, or charging the individual with, an offense that is a direct result of the victimization of the individual.

This will ensure that law enforcement officers do not add trauma and pain to the victims that have already endured an enormous amount of suffering.

As a result, H.R. 507 will help ensure the most effective practices are standardized so that sex trafficking victims are ultimately protected and treated with respect at all times.

Lastly, the legislation ensures the effective prosecution of traffickers and individuals who patronize or solicit children for sex and facilitate access for child victims of commercial sex trafficking to the services and protections afforded to other victims of sexual violence.

H.R. 507 identifies a broad range of important initiatives that States should undertake that would provide meaningful assistance to these victims: increasing victims' personal safety, ensuring the correct treatment of human trafficking victims by law enforcement and, ensuring the effective prosecution of all traffickers.

Each of these initiatives should help ensure that these victims are not revictimized and help enable them to be guided back to a normalized life.

Mr. Speaker, for all of these reasons, I am pleased to support this bill.

This legislation is all about pointing out, finding, saving the victims, making sure they get treatment, and making sure that human trafficking is identified.

I am also pleased that this measure, maintains the commitment to maintaining a report on State safe harbor laws.

As we all know, safe harbors play a critical role in preventing youth, forced into the sex trade, from being revictimized again and stigmatized a second time by the criminal justice system, almost similar to the little girl who was looking for love.

Instead, she got victimized and turned into a human trafficking product.

H.R. 507 also fosters better collaboration among the Federal, State, and local law enforcement in the fight against sex trafficking and encourages States to adopt protections for trafficking victims by providing rehabilitation and recovery services for victims of human trafficking.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to support this measure and, as well, to be reminded of all those children who will be helped and saved.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER). She is someone to whom this has been a tireless call. She has been a sponsor of this, and outspoken on this, a fighter on this, along with the other folks who have talked about this.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member very much for his voice on this issue and so many others, and I thank my dear friend from California, KAREN BASS, for her leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support the Put Trafficking Victims First Act, which I wrote and introduced in the last Congress with Congresswoman KAREN BASS.

The bill passed unanimously in May of 2017, and I hope that the House will again stand with the victims of human trafficking. Too often, trafficking victims are overlooked and underserved.

In my home State of Missouri, I have met with many survivors and listened to their painful stories. They need help to rebuild their lives and that is exactly what this legislation will do.

America's courtrooms need to adopt victim-centered practices oriented towards justice and recovery. While victims technically have access to mandatory restitution in Federal courts, the sad reality is that according to one estimate, sex trafficking victims get restitution in only 14 percent of Federal sex trafficking cases. This is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

This legislation will direct the Attorney General to work on increasing restitution and to adopt victim-friendly procedures in criminal cases. We believe the trauma-informed care helps victims recover and cooperate with law enforcement so we may put pimps and buyers behind bars.

Lack of help for victims in the justice system can lead to revictimization, or even result in victims being criminalized for offenses that they were forced to commit.

The Putting Trafficking Victims First Act of 2019 encourages training for agencies, law enforcement, and prosecutors across the country to implement victim-centered approaches to investigating and preventing trafficking.

We also encourage law enforcement to make every attempt to determine whether an individual's participation in trafficking is free from force, fraud, and coercion before arresting or charging them.

The lack of good data on how to find and rescue victims of trafficking is an-

other major challenge in the United States. We don't really know how best to identify and locate victims; what proportion are coming from foster care; or their ages; ethnicity; or other characteristics. We can't help victims if we can't find them, and we desperately need to improve victim outreach.

The Putting Trafficking Victims First Act of 2019 establishes a national working group to develop a public survey of survivors and robust methodologies to estimate the prevalence of trafficking. This will help us understand how and where victims are accessing help to improve service provision.

Finally, victims of trafficking are mostly served at the State level. So it is critical that States improve how they respond to victims. We need to make sure that all child trafficking victims receive the same level of care that any other child abuse survivor would receive. The bill encourages States to improve outreach, screen children entering child welfare services and the justice system, screen foreign nationals who will be labor trafficked, create safe harbor laws, and develop emergency response plans.

Together, we can get victims of trafficking out of dangerous and abusive situations and make trauma-informed services more accessible.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to put trafficking victims first and join Congresswoman BASS and myself in voting for this legislation.

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN).

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. BASS for yielding. I just wanted to stand on this bill because this is an important area and I want to commend Representative BASS for bringing it.

I am happy to be a cosponsor, but I particularly thank Congresswoman ANN WAGNER. When we had a bill last year, the SOAR Act, Stop, Observe, Act and Respond, to Health and Wellness Act, a pilot program to train healthcare workers who come into contact with people who have been sexually trafficked, they oftentimes do see healthcare workers because they have either been beaten up by their pimps or they have gotten a venereal disease.

They might have to go in for birth control or for some other reason sexually related, oftentimes health related, so that we need to train health workers to observe and to know when they were seeing somebody trafficked to stop, to observe, to see if that person might be in that situation, and then to ask them, and then to send them to an agency that can help them.

This was an important bill that we were able to pass in the Senate and make law.

Representative KINZINGER helped, Representative CÁRDENAS helped, but Representative WAGNER was my star, and I want to thank her so much for working with us and helping on the Senate side, particularly, to get it passed.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of this bill. I also want to mention that Representative BURCHETT is a strong sponsor and supporter of this type of legislation, and a great American.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, much has been said about this bill. I think all of it is very timely, and I think, again, as we look at this, this is a time in which we all come together and make a very strong statement in support of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Organizations like Courtney's House are working to improve the outcomes for sex trafficking survivors. Tina Frundt, the director of Courtney's House right here in D.C., asserts that African American and Latino communities are not immune to human trafficking. Her organization provides trauma-informed services to sex trafficking survivors between the ages of 12 and 19.

Tina is also a child sex trafficking survivor. As a 9-year-old girl in foster care, she was sex trafficked. By the time Tina was 14, she became one of 2 million children who run away from home each year. Nearly 200,000 of them will be sex trafficked.

In Tina's case, her adult abuser was more than twice her age, and forced her to become a child sex worker. It took her years to escape. Now Tina helps children like her recent client, a 12-year-old girl whose 25-year-old abuser called himself her boyfriend rather than her trafficker.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 507 supports efforts to stop human trafficking. We are making progress in protecting those who have been caught up in this horrific criminal activity, and this bill is a great example of what we can accomplish when we focus on helping the most vulnerable among us.

We have an obligation not only to end human trafficking, but to support people who undergo horrific experiences like these. This bill is yet another step in the right direction.

Once again, I would like to thank Congresswoman WAGNER and Congresswoman JACKSON LEE for all of their efforts in this regard. I was very pleased to team up with Congresswoman WAGNER again on this legislation, and hope that we can continue to work on these issues in the future.

Mr. Speaker, for these reasons, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill today, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 507.

The question was taken.

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

Ms. BASS. 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.

#### OPEN BOOK ON EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE ACT

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 752) to amend titles 5 and 28, United States Code, to require the maintenance of databases on awards of fees and other expenses to prevailing parties in certain administrative proceedings and court cases to which the United States is a party, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 752

*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 "Open Book on Equal Access to Justice Act".

#### SEC. 2. MODIFICATION OF EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE PROVISIONS.

(a) AGENCY PROCEEDINGS.—Section 504 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)(1), by striking “, United States Code”;

(2) by redesignating subsection (f) as subsection (h); and

(3) by striking subsection (e) and inserting the following:

“(e) The Chairman of the Administrative Conference of the United States shall create and maintain online a searchable database containing the following information with respect to each award of fees and other expenses under this section:

“(1) The case name and number of the adversary adjudication, if available;

“(2) The name of the agency involved in the adversary adjudication;

“(3) A description of the claims in the adversary adjudication;

“(4) The name of each party to whom the award was made, as such party is identified in the order or other agency document making the award;

“(5) The amount of the award;

“(6) The basis for the finding that the position of the agency concerned was not substantially justified.

“(f) The online searchable database described in subsection (f) may not reveal any information the disclosure of which is prohibited by law or court order.

“(g) The head of each agency shall provide to the Chairman of the Administrative Conference of the United States all information requested by the Chairman to comply with the requirements of subsections (e) and (f) not later than 60 days after the date on which the request is made.”.

(b) COURT CASES.—Section 2412(d) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(5) The Chairman of the Administrative Conference shall create and maintain online a searchable database containing the following information with respect to each award of fees and other expenses under this section:

“(A) The case name and number;

“(B) The name of the agency involved in the case;

“(C) The name of each party to whom the award was made, as such party is identified

in the order or other court document making the award.

“(D) A description of the claims in the case.

“(E) The amount of the award.

“(F) The basis for the finding that the position of the agency concerned was not substantially justified.

“(6) The online searchable database described in paragraph (5) may not reveal any information the disclosure of which is prohibited by law or court order.

“(7) The head of each agency (including the Attorney General of the United States) shall provide to the Chairman of the Administrative Conference of the United States all information requested by the Chairman to comply with the requirements of paragraphs (5) and (6) not later than 60 days after the date on which the request is made.”.

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—Section 2412 of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (d)(3), by striking “United States Code,”; and

(2) in subsection (e)—

(A) by striking “of section 2412 of title 28, United States Code,” and inserting “of this section”; and

(B) by striking “of such title” and inserting “of this title”.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) shall first apply with respect to awards of fees and other expenses that are made on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) ONLINE DATABASES.—The online databases required by section 504(e) of title 5, United States Code, and section 2412(d)(5) of title 28, United States Code, shall be established as soon as practicable after the date of the enactment of this Act, but in no case later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have up to 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 752, the Open Book on Equal Access to Justice Act, a bill House Judiciary Committee Ranking Member COLLINS and I have worked on together for several years.

The Equal Access to Justice Act was enacted to allow Americans to recover attorneys' fees and costs associated with lawsuits against the Federal Government. This has enabled ordinary citizens, such as veterans, seniors, small business owners, advocates for clean air and clean water, and any other type of citizen to fight unfair or illegal government actions without fear of court costs.

The law has been a success. In 1995, however, an important reporting re-

quirement was removed from it, which made it harder for the public to know how much money the government has awarded. Our bill, the Open Book on Equal Access to Justice Act reinstates the Equal Access to Justice Act's tracking and reporting requirements with respect to payments awarded so that American people can have access to this important information.

It would do this by requiring ACUS, an acronym for the Administrative Conference of the United States, a highly respected, nonpartisan agency, to prepare an annual report for Congress on the fees and costs awarded in these cases. The reports would also include the number and nature of the claims involved.

In summary, H.R. 752 would promote greater transparency and accountability. Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to join me and Mr. COLLINS in voting for this measure today, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many times on this floor that we come down here and we talk about things that divide us, but I have to say, Mr. COHEN and I, we have had so many things that sometimes we don't see eye to eye on, but we are still friends, and this is one of those times where we have been pursuing this one for a long time. This is a bill that I have been very privileged to have him be a part of and sponsor.

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H.R. 752, the Open Book on Equal Access to Justice Act, is to provide transparency and oversight for taxpayer dollars awarded under the Equal Access to Justice Act.

Of all the folks who have been co-sponsors on this, Mr. COHEN has stood out among all. He has been such a great supporter of this, and it is good to have him with us managing this bill.

I also thank Representatives CHENEY and PETERSON for being original co-sponsors and their continued leadership on this.

Also, Mr. Speaker, because this is, I believe, something we should have passed last Congress, we went ahead and worked it, and, today, we are also excited to have identical legislation that has been introduced in the Senate by Senators BARRASSO and COONS.

This bill has previously passed the House unanimously. It is common sense and restores needed congressional and public oversight.

Congress originally passed the Equal Access to Justice Act in 1980 to remove a barrier to justice for those with limited access to the resources it takes to sue the Federal Government and to recover attorney's fees and costs that go along with such suits. The law was meant to give citizens the ability to challenge or defend against unreasonable government actions where they might otherwise be deterred or unable to do so because of large legal expenses.