

SHEILA JACKSON LEE,
Member of Congress.

□ 1600

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Are you kidding me? We couldn't wait a week?

Look, vote for this bill. This bill is a good bill. But this shows the dedication of the majority to Police Week right here. It is about what my chairman of the committee did. It is about what we say and what we do. This is what we did.

On the first part of Police Week, we sent to the Attorney General a discussion about people who are shot by police, many of which in no context here of how the accidents occurred or how it occurred or what was actually happening; it is just that we need to go investigate, a 4-, 5-page letter.

Vote for the bill. The bill is a good bill.

This letter is embarrassing.

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, how much time is remaining for both sides?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) has 6½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) has 6½ minutes remaining.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am ready to close, and I yield myself the balance of my time.

Again, I will come back to the issue. This bulletproof vest bill is a great bill. It needs to be permanent. In fact, if we can do better, it would be great. We need to do more.

I made my point about this letter, and, unfortunately, this is a stain on Police Week, and hopefully we can do better, and I know we will.

I trust my friend from Georgia. I trust my friend from New Jersey. We can do this, and we can do this better. I am sorry that this is the way it has had to start, but actions do speak louder than anything else, than words, like I said, and this is an action on Police Week that, frankly, is unbelievable.

Support this underlying bill. Support this bill for bulletproof vests. Support our officers not just with words, but with actions as well, and I know the Members here on this floor are doing that. It is just a shame that this had to come out with that.

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

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

The top law enforcement individual in the country is the Attorney General, and our Attorney General has declared war on the FBI by ordering a third investigation into the origins of the Mueller investigation. This is nothing more than an attack on our own premier law enforcement agency. It is politics reduced to its lowest level at the same time as Police Week is occurring.

What does it say to those down the line, to those aspiring boys and girls who aspire to be FBI agents?

What does it say to the men and women who are currently in law enforcement and looking to move into Federal law enforcement?

Well, it doesn't tell them to not aspire to that height. I think most look beyond the politics of the day, and when they consider the legislation that is at hand, they support it without regard to political persuasion. They support the fact that H.R. 2379, introduced by my friend BILL PASCRELL, is a testament to the important role that Congress plays in promoting officer safety today and for decades to come.

In passing this bill during Police Week, we acknowledge the many contributions that law enforcement officers make to public safety, and we thank them for their service. We also recognize that there are challenges within law enforcement that we must weed out and that are an affront to the ideals that law enforcement officers are taught to adhere to, and we must do that, as well.

But today it is not about that. Today it is about bulletproof vests for our law enforcement officers on the State and local level. We will make sure that our Federal officers are always protected, but today it is about State and local law enforcement agents and agencies, particularly those that cannot afford to purchase these bulletproof vests or to keep current in terms of these vests when they wear out.

They do wear out, and they have to be replaced, and they have to have money to do that. This bill will enable \$30 million per year to be permanently authorized. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

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 Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2379, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. 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.

FIRST RESPONDER ACCESS TO INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES ACT

Ms. TORRES SMALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1594) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish a process to review applications for certain grants to purchase equipment or systems that do not meet or exceed any applicable national voluntary consensus standards, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1594

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 "First Responder Access to Innovative Technologies Act".

SEC. 2. APPROVAL OF CERTAIN EQUIPMENT.

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

(1) in subsection (f)—

(A) by striking "If an applicant" and inserting the following:

"(1) APPLICATION REQUIREMENT.—If an applicant"; and

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

"(2) REVIEW PROCESS.—The Administrator shall implement a uniform process for reviewing applications that, in accordance with paragraph (1), contain explanations to use grants provided under section 2003 or 2004 to purchase equipment or systems that do not meet or exceed any applicable national voluntary consensus standards developed under section 647 of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006 (6 U.S.C. 747).

"(3) FACTORS.—In carrying out the review process under paragraph (2), the Administrator shall consider the following:

"(A) Current or past use of proposed equipment or systems by Federal agencies or the Armed Forces.

"(B) The absence of a national voluntary consensus standard for such equipment or systems.

"(C) The existence of an international consensus standard for such equipment or systems, and whether such equipment or systems meets such standard.

"(D) The nature of the capability gap identified by the applicant and how such equipment or systems will address such gap.

"(E) The degree to which such equipment or systems will serve the needs of the applicant better than equipment or systems that meet or exceed existing consensus standards.

"(F) Any other factor determined appropriate by the Administrator."; and

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

"(g) REVIEW PROCESS.—The Administrator shall implement a uniform process for reviewing applications to use grants provided under section 2003 or 2004 to purchase equipment or systems not included on the Authorized Equipment List maintained by the Administrator."

(b) INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT.—Not later than three years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report assessing the implementation of the review process established under paragraph (2) of subsection (f) of section 2008 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (as added by subsection (a) of this section), including information on the following:

(1) The number of requests to purchase equipment or systems that do not meet or exceed any applicable consensus standard evaluated under such review process.

(2) The capability gaps identified by applicants and the number of such requests granted or denied.

(3) The processing time for the review of such requests.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from

New Mexico (Ms. TORRES SMALL) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. JOYCE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Mexico.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. TORRES SMALL of New Mexico. 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 measure.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. TORRES SMALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1594, the First Responder Access to Innovative Technologies Act.

Our Nation's first responders put their lives on the line to ensure all of us are safe. These brave women and men should have access to the equipment they need to protect lives and property around the country.

One of the Department of Homeland Security's most important missions is to help ensure the effectiveness of our Nation's emergency services sector. Key avenues for such support are the Department's counterterrorism grant programs: the Urban Area Security Initiative and the State Homeland Security Grant Program.

Unfortunately, the grant guidance for these grant programs sometimes hinders first responders' ability to acquire innovative counterterrorism equipment. Today, each piece of equipment must meet or exceed national voluntary consensus standards.

Although FEMA will review requests to purchase equipment that does not meet consensus standards, the Committee on Homeland Security has learned from stakeholders that the process lacks uniformity, predictability, and transparency. The process for developing voluntary consensus standards for first responder equipment has not kept pace with the evolution of technology or the demands of first responders.

H.R. 1594 would direct FEMA to implement a standard process for reviewing applications to purchase equipment that do not meet consensus standards or for equipment not included on FEMA's authorized equipment list. H.R. 1594 seeks to ensure that the safety of our first responders remains a top priority.

As today's threats faced by first responders are constantly evolving, it is important that our technology evolve, too. Enactment of H.R. 1594 will help ensure first responders can do their job more safely and effectively.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1594, the First Responder Access to Innovative Technologies Act.

With threats to our communities constantly evolving, it is reassuring to see the emergence of new technologies ready to meet the new challenges. However, emerging technology is frequently developed faster than voluntary consensus standards can be implemented.

Recipients of grants under FEMA's State Homeland Security Grant Program and Urban Area Security Initiative must procure equipment that meets these standards. This can be problematic when first responders seek to use grant funds to acquire new and innovative technology that does not meet or exceed any applicable national voluntary consensus standard.

Unfortunately, if a grant recipient would like to use grant funds to purchase such equipment, FEMA does not maintain a uniform process for reviewing these applications. H.R. 1594 requires FEMA to develop such a process for reviewing these requests.

This legislation also directs FEMA to implement a uniform process for reviewing applications to purchase equipment not included on the authorized equipment list maintained by FEMA.

It is imperative that we listen to those in the emergency services sector and help enable them to acquire the tools that they need to save American lives and keep us safe. We must empower them to acquire the equipment they need for their jobs and provide them with a uniform process to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I support this bill and I support our first responders. These brave men and women run into danger as everyone else runs away from it. We owe it to them to create processes that make their jobs and their lives easier. They have our backs on our worst days. We should have their backs on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. TORRES SMALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, by passing this bill today, we can ensure first responders have a reliable and uniform process for acquiring technologies and equipment that will keep them and our communities safe. The House unanimously passed previous versions of this bill in the prior two Congresses.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support me in passing this legislation today. As the gentleman from Pennsylvania said, they have our backs, we should have their backs.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. TORRES SMALL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1594.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1615

TRANSIT SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY ACT

Ms. TORRES SMALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1313) to amend the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 to clarify certain allowable uses of funds for public transportation security assistance grants and establish periods of performance for such grants, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1313

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 "Transit Security Grant Program Flexibility Act".

SEC. 2. ALLOWABLE USES OF FUNDS FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ASSISTANCE GRANTS.

Subparagraph (A) of section 1406(b)(2) of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (6 U.S.C. 1135(b)(2); Public Law 110-53) is amended by inserting "and associated backfill" after "security training".

SEC. 3. PERIODS OF PERFORMANCE FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ASSISTANCE GRANTS.

Section 1406 of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (6 U.S.C. 1135; Public Law 110-53) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (m) as subsection (n); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (l) the following new subsection:

“(m) PERIODS OF PERFORMANCE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), funds provided pursuant to a grant awarded under this section for a use specified in subsection (b) shall remain available for use by a grant recipient for a period of not fewer than 36 months.

“(2) EXCEPTION.—Funds provided pursuant to a grant awarded under this section for a use specified in subparagraph (M) or (N) of subsection (b)(1) shall remain available for use by a grant recipient for a period of not fewer than 55 months.”.

SEC. 4. GAO REVIEW.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a review of the public transportation security assistance grant program under section 1406 of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (6 U.S.C. 1135; Public Law 110-53).

(b) SCOPE.—The review required under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(1) An assessment of the type of projects funded under the public transportation security grant program referred to in such paragraph.

(2) An assessment of the manner in which such projects address threats to public transportation infrastructure.

(3) An assessment of the impact, if any, of this Act (including the amendments made by this Act) on types of projects funded under the public transportation security assistance grant program.

(4) An assessment of the management and administration of public transportation security assistance grant program funds by grantees.

(5) Recommendations to improve the manner in which public transportation security