

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

assistance grant program funds address vulnerabilities in public transportation infrastructure.

(6) Recommendations to improve the management and administration of the public transportation security assistance grant program.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act and again not later than five years after such date of enactment, the Comptroller General shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report on the review required under this section.

SEC. 5. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the House of Representatives, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

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. 1313, the Transit Security Grant Program Flexibility Act.

Securing our Nation's transit systems is critical to keeping our country safe. Transportation systems are vital to the economic and social lives of everyday people all around the country. The emergence of so-called “lone wolf” domestic terrorists pose a threat to these critical systems and the people that use them.

In response to this and other threats to our surface transportation systems, Congress established the Transportation Security Grant Program to help State and local authorities enhance the security of their systems. By all accounts, the Transportation Security Grant Program is making a difference.

However, increasingly, we have heard that some of the aspects of this program need refinement for it to live up to its full potential. Specifically, the Committee on Homeland Security has received testimony from grant recipients that the period of performance is too short, especially when they are trying to undertake long-term security projects.

H.R. 1313 addresses these concerns and makes the program more flexible

by lengthening the period of performance for these grants. With flexibility in mind, the bill also allows for the funding in this program to be used for backfilling officers to allow for security training.

Finally, it mandates a report by the Government Accountability Office on the Transportation Security Grant Program, including recommendations to improve the grant program. These commonsense fixes will increase the efficacy of the Transportation Security Grant Program to help bolster preparedness and response within our transportation systems.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1313, the Transit Security Grant Program Flexibility Act.

The Transit Security Grant Program directly supports transportation infrastructure security activities by providing funds to owners and operators of transit systems. Whether they be bus systems, ferries, or passenger rail, this grant program aims to protect and increase the resilience of critical surface transportation infrastructure and the traveling public from acts of terrorism.

H.R. 1313 codifies the performance period for use of grant funds and allows additional time for large-scale capital security projects. This bill also allows grant recipients to use their awards to pay for the cost of backfilling personnel attending necessary security training.

This important legislation, introduced by my colleague on the Homeland Security Committee, Congressman PETE KING, will further assist in keeping our communities safe against the threat of terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to join me in doing so.

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

Ms. TORRES SMALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I have no more speakers, and I am prepared to close after the gentleman from Pennsylvania closes.

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

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING).

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. JOYCE for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of my legislation, H.R. 1313, the Transit Security Grant Program Flexibility Act.

The Transit Security Grant Program provides needed funds to transit agencies to protect critical surface transportation infrastructure and the traveling public from acts of terrorism. With billions of riders using surface transportation annually, and limited security screening, it should come as no surprise that surface transportation

has been, and continues to be, a terror target.

We have witnessed multiple attacks overseas: the bombings of commuter trains in Madrid, the metro station bombing in Brussels, the bombing of the tube in London.

In New York, we saw, in 2019, there was an attempted liquid explosive attack, which, if successful, would have killed many, many hundreds.

And then, soon after that, there was a planned attack against the Long Island Railroad, in my own district, carried out by Bryant Neal Vinas, who was then in Afghanistan plotting the attack.

And more recently and much closer to home, we witnessed the 2017 New York Port Authority bombing, which the Speaker is well aware of, involving our city.

With the continual calls from ISIS and other extremist groups for lone-wolf attacks to target crowded areas, we must ensure the first responders and transit agencies have the tools needed to secure our transit systems.

Based on previous work done by the subcommittee under the leadership of my good friend Congressman Dan Donovan, we learned of the challenges associated with the fluctuating period of performance for Transit Security Grant Program projects, especially for completing vital large-scale capital security projects.

The Transit Security Grant Program Flexibility Act addresses this challenge by codifying the period of performance for this grant program at 36 months for the majority of eligible projects. It also extends the period of performance for large-scale projects to 55 months. This ensures that these major projects can be successfully completed in the allotted time.

Transit security grant program awards can be used to provide personnel with essential security training. However, recipients of these awards are not currently permitted to use the grant program funds to pay for backfilling personnel attending such training, which may, in turn, inhibit some transit agencies from sending their staff to vital security training.

H.R. 1313 will permit Transit Security Grant Program funds to be used for this purpose, consistent with other homeland security grant programs.

Given the evolving threat landscape, it is imperative that the Transit Security Grant Program provide flexible solutions for grant recipients. It is of the utmost importance that transit agencies have the ability to enhance the protection of these soft targets and crowded places to keep everyday commuters safe.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my staff, particularly, Diana Bergwin, for their hard work.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to join in supporting H.R. 1313.

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. TORRES SMALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, today, the Transportation Security Grant Program is a meaningful tool to help communities improve the safety of our surface infrastructure, but, as discussed, there are areas where it could be improved. H.R. 1313 seeks to do just that.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman KING for his bipartisan work on this legislation.

Before I yield back, I would like to note that this legislation is identical to a measure that the House approved last Congress by a voice vote on January 31, 2017.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1313, and 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. 1313, 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.

SECURING DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FIREARMS ACT OF 2019

Ms. TORRES SMALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1437) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to achieve security of sensitive assets among the components of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1437

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 “Securing Department of Homeland Security Firearms Act of 2019” or the “Securing DHS Firearms Act of 2019”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) DEPARTMENT.—The term “Department” means the Department of Homeland Security.

(2) LOST.—The term “lost” includes loss by theft.

(3) SENSITIVE ASSETS.—The term “sensitive assets” means any asset, regardless of value—

(A) that the Department of Homeland Security issues to a Department employee; and
(B) that either the Under Secretary for Management of the Department or a component head determines requires special control and accounting.

(4) UNDER SECRETARY FOR MANAGEMENT.—The term “Under Secretary for Management” means the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security.

SEC. 3. INCLUSION OF SECURING FIREARMS AND OTHER SENSITIVE ASSETS IN RESPONSIBILITIES OF UNDER SECRETARY FOR MANAGEMENT.

Section 701 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 341) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(6), by inserting “(including firearms and other sensitive assets)” after “equipment”;

(2) by redesignating the second subsection (e) (relating to the definition of interoperable communications) as subsection (f); and

(3) by amending such redesignated subsection (f) to read as follows:

“(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS.—The term ‘interoperable communications’ has the meaning given such term in section 7303(g) of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (6 U.S.C. 194(g)).

“(2) SENSITIVE ASSETS.—The term ‘sensitive assets’ means any asset, regardless of value—

“(A) that the Department issues to a Department employee; and

“(B) that either the Under Secretary for Management of the Department or a component head determines requires special control and accounting.”.

SEC. 4. MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVE.

(a) SAFEGUARDING FIREARMS AND SENSITIVE ASSETS DIRECTIVE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Under Secretary for Management shall develop and disseminate a Department-wide directive for achieving adequate security over firearms and other sensitive assets across the Department.

(2) CONTENTS.—The directive required under subsection (a) shall, at a minimum, include the following:

(A) Descriptions of what equipment, in addition to firearms, is classified as a sensitive asset for the purpose of carrying out this Act.

(B) Requirements for securing Department-issued firearms and other sensitive assets.

(C) A classification system for all categories of Department-issued badges and corresponding requirements for safeguarding such assets.

(D) Reporting requirements for lost firearms and other sensitive assets, including timelines for such reporting, to supervisors, local law enforcement, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Crime Information Center, and Department headquarters.

(E) Recordkeeping requirements for lost firearms and other sensitive assets in inventory systems, including a timeline for recording such losses.

(3) REVIEW AND UPDATE OF DIRECTIVE.—Not later than one year after the issuance of the directive required under subsection (a), the Under Secretary for Management shall review and update, as necessary, such directive, including adding a requirement relating to recording in the inventory systems maintained by each component of the Department the acceptance or transfer of a firearm or other sensitive asset by such component.

(b) PERSONAL PROPERTY ASSET MANAGEMENT PROGRAM MANUAL.—Together with the issuance of the directive pursuant to subsection (a), the Under Secretary for Management shall disseminate a revised version of the Personal Property Asset Management Program Manual that includes the following:

(1) Requirements for component heads to develop procedures to safeguard firearms and other sensitive assets during on and off-duty time.

(2) Requirements for the issuance of safety locking devices and policies on the use of such assets, as applicable.

(3) Requirements for initial, recurrent, and remedial training on safeguarding such assets.

(4) Examples, with detail, of how to report and record lost sensitive assets across components of the Department, and an enforcement mechanism to ensure supervisors maintain such records.

(5) A requirement that the file maintained on a lost firearm or other sensitive asset contains both the corresponding police report and the Department report detailing the circumstances surrounding such loss, including information on adherence to safeguarding procedures.

SEC. 5. COMPONENT RESPONSIBILITIES.

Department component heads shall—

(1) comply with Federal law, Federal regulations, executive branch guidance, and Department policy, including directives required by this Act, relating to the management and oversight of securing firearms and other sensitive assets;

(2) review the need for non-law enforcement badges;

(3) require component personnel to safeguard firearms and other sensitive assets in accordance with the directive issued by the Under Secretary for Management under section 4;

(4) require that component personnel adhere to the procedures and timelines for properly reporting to supervisors lost firearms and other sensitive assets;

(5) require that lost firearms and other sensitive assets are reported to local law enforcement, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Crime Information Center, and Department headquarters in the timeframe established in such directive; and

(6) require that lost firearms and other sensitive assets are recorded in inventory systems in the timeframe established by such directive.

SEC. 6. INSPECTOR GENERAL REVIEW.

The Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security shall, on an ongoing basis, review implementation of this Act and, not later than 180 days after issuance of the directive under section 4, 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 review of the progress and effectiveness of such directive, including an assessment of the adequacy of such directive, as well as the level of compliance among the components of the Department to achieve adequate security of sensitive assets across Department components.

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 in support of H.R. 1437, the Securing DHS Firearms Act of 2019.