

this Congress. This time, I hope that the Senate acts on this small but important measure that will promote best practices in election administration worldwide.

This bill authorizes the Secretary of State to establish an exchange program for election officials like poll workers, judges, ballot designers, and civil society to promote best practices in election administration around the world.

We would send U.S.-based election administrators and officials abroad or bring foreign administrators and officials to the United States in order to train and exchange best practices when it comes to election administration.

This bill is a good idea and is needed now more than ever. Election irregularities, voter fraud, election manipulation, discriminatory registration, access to polls, intimidation and harassment while voting, and violence at polling stations are problems that have plagued countries around the world. This bill brings people together to tackle some of these problems and to ensure that best practices are promoted worldwide.

Credible, transparent, and peaceful elections are the cornerstones of a stable and robust democracy. This bill furthers that principle.

Madam Speaker, I strongly support the passage of H.R. 753, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the Global Electoral Exchange Act authored by my friend and fellow Texan, Mr. CASTRO.

Authoritarian regimes are a threat to personal liberty, international security, and economic progress all around the world. Countries like China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, and Venezuela present major roadblocks to global peace and prosperity, but there is nothing that dictators fear more than free markets and free people. This is why tyrants use repressive tactics to stifle dissent and crack down on public protests.

The world is a safer, more prosperous place when individuals are governed as citizens, not subjects. This is why promoting democracy abroad has always been a bipartisan cause.

The United States must maintain its leadership in keeping the flame of freedom burning. This legislation gives us another opportunity to be that leader.

The Global Electoral Exchange Act would facilitate the international exchange of election monitors, poll workers, and civil society leaders who participate in the administration of elections. By promoting best practices and empowering foreign societies to conduct elections that truly recognize the will of the people, these exchanges will strengthen democratic institutions in other countries.

Let's pass this bill and demonstrate that America remains a beacon of hope

and freedom to the world by empowering free and fair elections.

Madam Speaker, I do want to thank my colleague from Texas (Mr. CASTRO) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MEADOWS) for their hard work on this bill. Friends of democracy have an interest in free and fair elections that are credible and protected from manipulation. This bill promotes that and deserves our unanimous support.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this measure. Once again, I thank my colleague MARK MEADOWS from North Carolina for his support and hard work on this bill.

The exchanges under this bill would be administered by the State Department and by USAID and would promote best practices and strengthen electoral institutions around the world.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 753.

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.

□ 1645

DENOUNCING FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION/CUTTING AS VIOLATING HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 106) denouncing female genital mutilation/cutting as a violation of the human rights of women and girls and urging the international community and the Federal Government to increase efforts to eliminate the harmful practice.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 106

Whereas female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights of women and girls;

Whereas FGM/C comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for nonmedical reasons;

Whereas an estimated 200 million girls and women alive today have been victims of FGM/C, with girls 14 and younger representing 44 million of those who have been cut;

Whereas more than 3 million girls are estimated to be at risk of FGM/C annually;

Whereas the practice is mostly carried out on young girls between infancy and age 15;

Whereas the practice is rooted in gender inequality and is often linked to other elements of gender-based violence and discrimination, such as child marriage;

Whereas the World Health Organization asserts that FGM/C has no health benefits for women and girls, and can have long-term impacts on their physical, psychological, sexual, and reproductive health;

Whereas the impacts of FGM/C on the physical health of women and girls can include bleeding, infection, obstetric fistula, complications during childbirth, and death;

Whereas, according to UNICEF, FGM/C is reported to occur in all parts of the world, but is most prevalent in parts of Africa, the Middle East, and Asia;

Whereas, although the practice of FGM/C is highly concentrated in specific regions and associated with several cultural traditions, it is not tied to any one religion;

Whereas, in 2016, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published a report estimating that 513,000 women and girls in the United States were at risk or may have been subjected to FGM/C;

Whereas, in 2015, the United Nations adopted a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 that includes a target to eliminate FGM/C, having previously recognized in 2010 that “the abandonment of this harmful practice can be achieved as a result of a comprehensive movement that involves all public and private stakeholders in society”;

Whereas the elimination of FGM/C has been called for by numerous intergovernmental organizations, including the African Union, the European Union, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, as well as in 3 resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly;

Whereas the Department of State reports on FGM/C in its Annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, including information on whether FGM/C is prevalent, the type and category of genital cutting that is most common, as well as international and governmental efforts being taken to address the practice;

Whereas the Federal Government recognized FGM/C as a form of gender-based violence in the United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally, released in August 2012 and updated in June 2016, and the United States Global Strategy to Empower Adolescent Girls, released in March 2016;

Whereas a Government Accountability Office report released in 2016 concluded that “State and USAID currently have limited international assistance efforts to address FGM/C.”; and

Whereas, in 2012, the United Nations General Assembly designated February 6 as the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation to enhance awareness of and encourage concrete actions by states and individuals against the practice: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) denounces female genital mutilation/cutting as a violation of the human rights of women and girls;

(2) affirms the importance of ending the practice of female genital mutilation/cutting globally for the safety and security of women;

(3) calls upon the international community to increase efforts to accelerate the elimination of female genital mutilation/cutting; and

(4) urges the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development in their gender programming to incorporate coordinated efforts to eliminate female genital mutilation/cutting.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO) and the gentleman

from Texas (Mr. WRIGHT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 106, denouncing female genital mutilation, or cutting.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of this resolution.

First, I want to thank my colleagues, Ms. FRANKEL and Mr. PERRY, for introducing this important bipartisan measure.

Every year, 3 million girls around the world are at risk of facing female genital mutilation, or cutting, also known as FGMC. It is a horrific practice that mutilates girls without their consent and can lead to chronic, long-term health problems, and it can even be fatal.

Madam Speaker, the United States rightly considers female genital mutilation, or cutting, a violation of women's rights. Here in the United States, it is a Federal crime to perform this procedure on girls under the age of 18, and many other countries have similar laws banning the practice.

But despite a rising global awareness about the egregious nature of FGMC, it is still a reality for millions of women around the world. It is estimated that over 200 million women and girls today have been subjected to this heinous mistreatment.

We need to speak out against this injustice. That is why I am pleased to support H. Res. 106, a resolution that denounces female genital mutilation, cutting, as a violation of the human rights of women and girls and urges the international community and the Federal Government to ramp up our efforts to eliminate this harmful practice.

We need to do everything we can to combat the systemic mistreatment and injustice women face around the world. So I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution to denounce FGMC.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution to denounce female genital mutilation as a violation of the human rights of women and girls.

I want to thank my committee colleagues, Congresswoman LOIS FRANKEL and Congressman SCOTT PERRY, for introducing the resolution and for their sustained engagement on the issue.

An estimated 200 million women and girls have been victims of FGM, which

has dangerous and lasting health implications. The United States and many other countries and international organizations have called for an end to this highly invasive practice.

Every year, the Department of State reports on the prevalence of FGM as part of the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, and this is an important tool for raising awareness of where this abuse persists.

This resolution urges the Department of State and USAID to go further and to incorporate anti-FGM efforts into their existing programming around the world. U.S. leadership is important to putting an end to this human rights violation.

Speaking as the father of a daughter and a grandfather of five granddaughters, I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. FRANKEL), the author of this resolution.

Ms. FRANKEL. Madam Speaker, let me start by first of all thanking my colleague, Mr. CASTRO, for yielding time, and Chairman ENGEL and Ranking Member McCaul for their bipartisan leadership.

I am rising in support of a bipartisan resolution brought by myself and Representative SCOTT PERRY of Pennsylvania denouncing female genital mutilation and cutting, known as FGM.

Every girl, no matter where she is born, has a right to be free of violence, and FGM is a barbaric violation of girls' and women's human rights. It is defined by the World Health Organization as any procedure that involves partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for nonmedical reasons.

Madam Speaker, there is no developmental, religious, or health-related justification for this harmful practice. FGM poses immediate risks to girls' health, including severe pain and bleeding, difficulty in passing urine, infections, and even death due to hemorrhage or shock.

The practice often leaves girls with long-term scars as well: post-traumatic stress disorder, chronic pain, HIV infection, cysts, abscess, genital ulcers. I could go on.

Girls who have undergone FGM also face an increased risk of complications affecting their menstrual cycles, sometimes resulting in infertility. And as my colleagues pointed out, more than 200 million women and girls living today around the world, including women right here in the United States of America, have been cut.

And now here is a horrible statistic: UNICEF predicts that, if there is no reduction in this practice within the next 30 years, the number of girls being mutilated each year is going to grow from 3.6 million a year to 6.6 million a year.

Madam Speaker, I want you to know that, with resources and advocacy, we

can stop this horrific practice. Just look at Jaha, a very, very courageous young woman from Gambia who was a week old when she was mutilated and forced into marriage at age 15. Now, she escaped that marriage. She could easily have fallen into despair. Instead, she spoke out because she never wanted her daughter or any other child to go through the suffering of FGM. Because of her hard-fought efforts, FGM is now banned in her home country.

Like Jaha, we must all do more. So, today, I am asking the United States Congress to pass this bipartisan resolution denouncing female genital mutilation, recognizing it as a violation of the human rights of women and girls, affirming the importance of ending its practice for the safety and security of women, calling upon the international community to increase its efforts to accelerate the elimination, and urging our State Department of the United States, in their gender programming, to incorporate coordinated efforts to eliminate FGM.

Today, we are going to send a clear message that this practice must stop; and the United States, as one of the largest donors in the global health programs, can help end this cruel practice.

There are things that we can do, like allocating resources annually to continue our efforts to eliminate FGM, codifying the U.S. strategies to prevent and respond to gender-based violence; and we must—I want to say this emphatically—we must restore funding to the U.N. Population Fund, the world's largest program to end FGM, that works with 17 countries and more than 3 million survivors.

Madam Speaker, ending FGM will help millions of girls have a better life. And when they have a better life, that means that their communities will be more prosperous and more peaceful, because when women succeed, the world succeeds.

It is imperative that we end female genital mutilation now. And I thank my colleagues for joining me in support of this critical resolution.

Mr. WRIGHT. In closing, I again want to thank Representative FRANKEL and Representative PERRY for their persistence in this fight.

Every case of female genital mutilation is one too many. This resolution calls on the nations of the world to do more to stop this awful violation of the dignity and safety of women and girls. It deserves our unanimous support.

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

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

We all agree that female genital mutilation, or cutting, is a horrific form of child abuse and a violation of women's rights.

The resolution before us today is a signal to the rest of the world that the United States Congress is paying attention to this issue; we stand with the millions of women who are still being

subjected to this practice; and we will not stop fighting for their right to dignity and respect.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H. Res. 106, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 106.

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. CASTRO of Texas. Madam 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.

STRONGER CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT ACT

Ms. SCHRIER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2480) to reauthorize the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2480

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 “Stronger Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act”.

SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title.

Sec. 2. Table of contents.

TITLE I—GENERAL PROGRAM

Sec. 101. Repeal of findings.

Sec. 102. Repeal of Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect.

Sec. 103. National clearinghouse for information relating to child abuse.

Sec. 104. Research and assistance activities.

Sec. 105. Grants to States, Indian Tribes or tribal organizations, and public or private agencies and organizations.

Sec. 106. Grants to States for child abuse or neglect prevention and treatment programs.

Sec. 107. Miscellaneous requirements.

Sec. 108. Reports.

Sec. 109. Authorization of appropriations.

Sec. 110. Monitoring and oversight.

Sec. 111. Electronic interstate data exchange system.

Sec. 112. Technical and conforming amendments.

TITLE II—COMMUNITY-BASED GRANTS FOR THE PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Sec. 201. Purpose and authority.

Sec. 202. Eligibility.

Sec. 203. Amount of grant.

Sec. 204. Application.

Sec. 205. Local program requirements.

Sec. 206. Performance measures.

Sec. 207. National network for community-based family resource programs.

Sec. 208. Definitions.

Sec. 209. Rule of construction.

Sec. 210. Authorization of appropriations.

Sec. 211. Study and report.

TITLE III—ADOPTION OPPORTUNITIES

Sec. 301. Purpose.

Sec. 302. Report and guidance on unregulated custody transfers.

Sec. 303. Information and services.

Sec. 304. Study and report on successful adoptions.

Sec. 305. Authorization of appropriations.

TITLE IV—AMENDMENTS TO OTHER LAWS

Sec. 401. Technical and conforming amendments to other laws.

TITLE I—GENERAL PROGRAM

SEC. 101. REPEAL OF FINDINGS.

Section 2 of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5101 note) is repealed.

SEC. 102. REPEAL OF ADVISORY BOARD ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT.

Section 102 of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5102) is repealed.

SEC. 103. NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE FOR INFORMATION RELATING TO CHILD ABUSE.

Section 103 of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5104) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(1), by inserting “early learning programs and” after “including”;

(2) in subsection (c)(1)(C)—

(A) in clause (iii), by striking “and” at the end;

(B) in clause (iv), by adding “and” at the end; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(v) the number of child fatalities and near fatalities due to maltreatment, as reported by States in accordance with the uniform standards established pursuant to subsection (d), and any other relevant information related to such fatalities;”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(d) UNIFORM STANDARDS FOR TRACKING AND REPORTING OF CHILD FATALITIES RESULTING FROM MALTREATMENT.

“(1) REGULATIONS REQUIRED.—Not later than 24 months after the date of the enactment of the Stronger Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, the Secretary shall develop and issue final regulations establishing uniform standards for the tracking and reporting of child fatalities and near-fatalities resulting from maltreatment. As a condition on eligibility for receipt of funds under section 106, the standards established under this paragraph shall be used by States for the tracking and reporting of such fatalities under subsection (d) of such section.

“(2) MAINTENANCE OF STATE LAW.—Notwithstanding the uniform standards developed under paragraph (1), a State that defines or describes such fatalities for any purpose other than tracking and reporting under this subsection may continue to use that definition or description for such purpose.

“(3) NEGOTIATED RULEMAKING.—In developing regulations under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit such regulations to a negotiated rulemaking process, which shall include the participants described in paragraph (4).

“(4) PARTICIPANTS DESCRIBED.—The participants described in this paragraph are—

“(A) State and county officials responsible for administering the State plans under this Act and parts B and E of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 621 et seq., 670 et seq.);

“(B) child welfare professionals with field experience;

“(C) child welfare researchers;

“(D) domestic violence researchers;

“(E) domestic violence professionals;

“(F) child development professionals;

“(G) mental health professionals;

“(H) pediatric emergency medicine physicians;

“(I) child abuse pediatricians, as certified by the American Board of Pediatrics, who specialize in treating victims of child abuse;

“(J) forensic pathologists;

“(K) public health administrators;

“(L) public health researchers;

“(M) law enforcement;

“(N) family court judges;

“(O) prosecutors;

“(P) medical examiners and coroners;

“(Q) a representative from the National Center for Fatality Review and Prevention; and

“(R) such other individuals and entities as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.”.

SEC. 104. RESEARCH AND ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES.

Section 104 of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5105) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by amending paragraph (1) to read as follows:

“(1) TOPICS.—The Secretary shall, in consultation with other Federal agencies and recognized experts in the field, carry out a continuing interdisciplinary program of research, including longitudinal research, that is designed to provide information needed to improve primary prevention of child abuse and neglect, better protect children from child abuse or neglect, and improve the well-being of victims of child abuse or neglect, with at least a portion of such research being field initiated. Such research program may focus on—

“(A) disseminating evidence-based treatment directed to individuals and families experiencing trauma due to child abuse and neglect, including efforts to improve the scalability of the treatments and programs being researched;

“(B) developing a set of evidence-based approaches to support child and family well-being and developing ways to identify, relieve, and mitigate stressors affecting families in rural, urban, and suburban communities;

“(C) establishing methods to promote racial equity in the child welfare system, including a focus on how neglect is defined, how services are provided, and the unique impact on Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities;

“(D) improving service delivery or outcomes for child welfare service agencies engaged with families experiencing domestic violence, substance use disorder, or other complex needs;

“(E) the extent to which the number of unsubstantiated, unfounded, and false reported cases of child abuse or neglect have contributed to the inability of a State to respond effectively to serious cases of child abuse or neglect;

“(F) the extent to which the lack of adequate resources and the lack of adequate professional development of individuals required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect have contributed to the inability of a State to respond effectively to serious cases of child abuse and neglect;

“(G) the extent to which unsubstantiated reports return as more serious cases of child abuse or neglect;

“(H) the incidence and outcomes of child abuse and neglect allegations reported within the context of divorce, custody, or other