

PTSD, members of our various law enforcement agencies who work to protect us also experience post-traumatic stress disorder.

This program to enhance the grants that departments can secure will be able to fill in the gap and work with families and also deal with the question of those experiencing mental illness. Post-traumatic stress disorder can come in the form of depression, burnout, and other mental-health related issues and anxiety.

We know that over the years, suicides have increased, but in 2017, an estimated 140 officers died from suicide, which exceeds the 129 that were killed in the line of duty.

Mental illness is a silent, but lethal killer. We are working in the Judiciary Committee on the Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act which will emphasize some of the protocols for improving, policing, working on professionalism, and working with the 18,000 police departments across America. I can't imagine waiting to pass this legislation to reignite the grant program to be able to help those who are now presently suffering.

I am glad that this is a bicameral initiative. I hope that this will move quickly to the President's desk to sign, and I hope those funds will get to the Houston Police Department, the Harris County Sheriff's Department, constables' offices, and various police departments across America.

A healthy police officer, physically and mentally, is the best community relations that you could ever have. A healthy officer who works with children, who works with communities, who works with families, and shows up when the civic club asks them to come and speak about safety and security in the neighborhood, that is who we hope will be the kind of officer who will come to work every day.

These grant programs will ensure that. Most of all, I would like to close by saying: for those law enforcement officers who are, many times, former military personnel and committed to the idea of service, go and get help. We are standing ready to help. These grant programs will allow police departments, cities, counties, and States to put out an effective and strong response to the needs of our law enforcement, and to thank them for their service.

Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Committee on the Judiciary, and on Homeland Security, I rise in strong support of S. 998, the "Supporting and Treating Officers in Crisis Act of 2019," known for short as the "STOIC Act".

The STOIC Act would reintroduce and revitalize the DOJ's grant program for Law Enforcement Family Services, in addition to allocating funds to establish, suicide prevention, stress management, and mental health programs.

Mr. Speaker, as late as 2017, there were more than 600,000 law enforcement officers employed in the United States, charged with protecting their communities.

Daily, the nation's law enforcement officers witness and experience all manner of trauma in the line of duty.

As these brave members of our nation's various law enforcement agencies work to protect the individuals of their communities, the difficulties they experience often leave them with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, burnout and other mental health conditions related to anxiety.

These anxiety-related illnesses can even result in suicide.

In 2017, an estimated 140 officers died from suicide, which exceeds the 129 that were killed in the line of duty, making mental illness the silent killer and most lethal threat to law enforcement professionals.

There is no doubt that these men and women suffering from mental health issues that occurred as a result of their efforts to protect and serve their communities, deserve our support throughout their recovery and treatment.

By passing S. 998, officers combating anxiety related mental health conditions, and their families, will receive improved support and care.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting S. 998 to ensure that the nation's law enforcement officers, and their families, receive the mental health care and rehabilitation they deserve.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am ready to close.

Again, it is a great bill. You have heard the accolades of the gentleman and gentlewoman from Pennsylvania. They have made that case clear, along with my friends from Texas and California.

This is a good bill, I urge everybody 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.

Mr. Speaker, the tragically high number of law enforcement professionals who take their own lives each year is a serious problem that must be addressed.

According to Blue H.E.L.P., an advocacy organization that works to reduce mental health stigma in the law enforcement community, 167 law enforcement officers committed suicide in 2018. By comparison, in the same year, 144 law enforcement officers died in the line of duty.

S. 998 will help provide critical mental health and suicide prevention assistance to law enforcement officers in need. I therefore urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important measure, 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, S. 998.

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.

EFFECTIVE PROSECUTION OF POSSESSION OF BIOLOGICAL TOXINS AND AGENTS ACT OF 2019

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 744) to amend section 175b of title 18, United States Code, to correct a scrivener's error.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 744

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 "Effective Prosecution of Possession of Biological Toxins and Agents Act of 2019".

SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON THE POSSESSION OF BIOLOGICAL TOXINS AND AGENTS.

Section 175b of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking "(a)(1) No restricted" and all that follows through the end of paragraph (1) and inserting the following:

"(a) OFFENSE.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—It shall be unlawful for a restricted person to—

"(A) ship, transport, or possess in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce any biological agent or toxin described in paragraph (2); or

"(B) receive any biological agent or toxin described in paragraph (2) that has been shipped or transported in interstate or foreign commerce.

"(2) AGENTS AND TOXINS COVERED.—A biological agent or toxin described in this paragraph is a biological agent or toxin that—

"(A) is listed as a non-overlap or overlap select biological agent or toxin under part 73 of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations, pursuant to section 351A of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 262a); and

"(B) is not excluded or exempted under part 73 of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations; and

(B) by striking "(2) Whoever" and inserting "(3) PENALTY.—Whoever" and adjusting the margin accordingly; and

(2) in subsection (d), in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting "DEFINITIONS.—" before "In this section:."

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 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 rise in support of S. 744, the Effective Prosecution of Possession of Biological Toxins and Agents Act of 2019, a bill that would correct an error that has unintentionally resulted in an incomplete list of biological toxins and agents prohibited under current law.

This legislation will help ensure the safety of our citizens and the security of our Nation. S. 744, which the Senate passed by unanimous consent earlier this year, is identical to H.R. 1986, which the House Committee on the Judiciary recently approved by voice vote last month.

In 1990, Congress imposed criminal penalties with respect to the development, production, stockpiling, transfer, acquisition, retention, or possession of any biological agents, toxins, or delivery systems intended for use as a weapon.

Thereafter, Congress in 2001, added section 175b to title 18 of the U.S. Code, criminalizing the possession by unregistered individuals or restricted persons of certain biological agents, termed “select agents,” as determined by the Secretary of Health and Human Services. A person found guilty under section 175b can be imprisoned for up to 10 years.

As originally enacted and thereafter in subsequent amendments thereto, section 175b referred to specific sections of the Code of Federal Regulations that listed various biological agents and toxins.

That provision was last amended in 2004, but subsequently, the Department of Health and Human Services reformatted some sections of the Code of Federal Regulations and inadvertently rendered the references in section 175b incomplete.

For example, one of the select agents inadvertently eliminated from the list of prohibited substances is ricin, a poison found in castor beans. Ricin is inexpensive, easy to make, and highly toxic.

This result, the consequence of a drafting error, is clearly not what Congress intended. Unfortunately, there have already been real-life consequences for this error.

Last September, for instance, the District Court for the Northern District of Georgia, dismissed the indictment of William Christopher Gibbs, a self-avowed white supremacist who was charged with the unregistered possession of ricin. In dismissing the Gibbs indictment, the court stated it:

Appreciates the potential dangers associated with individuals possessing potentially hazardous agents and toxins without permission to do so. Equally, though, the Court takes very seriously the principle that citizens ought to have fair and clear warning of the conduct for which they can be held criminal responsible. It falls to Congress to write criminal laws, or to amend them if they yield unfair or unwanted results. The role of the courts, on the other hand, is limited to fairly reading and applying the laws Congress writes; not to change them.

As we consider S. 744 today, it is important to recognize and commend the sponsor of the House companion bill, the gentleman from Texas and our Judiciary Committee colleague, Representative JOHN RATCLIFFE; and Judiciary Ranking Member DOUG COLLINS; as well as the gentlewoman from New York, Representative KATHLEEN RICE;

and the gentleman from Texas, Representative WILL HURD, for their bipartisan efforts to address this critical problem.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation, 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, I also rise in support of H.R. 1986 because it fixes a technical, but very important, error that occurred in the Code, and the gentlewoman from California, again, has done a wonderful job of explaining this.

She brought up an interesting case. She brought up the case out of the Northern Circuit of Georgia which is actually my circuit, and the judge in that case is actually a judge named Rick Story. And Rick Story is one of the best jurists we have in this country. His comment here is really, I think, telling for us that many times in Congress we need to take heed of when he says: “It falls to Congress to write criminal laws or to amend them if they yield unfair or unwanted results.” And that is exactly what we are doing here today.

This needs to be added. It was a scrivener’s error and a mistake that it was not there, and it needs to be corrected.

And with that, again, the gentlewoman from California has been a great help on this, and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RATCLIFFE), and others for their work on this legislation.

As we go forward, I think this has been a good process. I am glad to see it coming to fruition, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, without question, Congress should do everything within its power to ensure the safety of all Americans. Clearly, the possession and distribution of ricin is dangerous and should be included among the various biological toxins prohibited under current law, as Congress had intended.

S. 744 corrects this technical error and addresses the serious consequences presented by this oversight. For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting S. 744, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Committees on the Judiciary and on Homeland Security, I rise in strong support of S. 744 the “Effective Prosecution of Biological Toxins and Agents,” which amends 18 U.S.C. 175b to prohibit the possession, transport, or sale of biological agents and toxins by individuals.

S. 744 also prohibits the transport, possession, or shipment of any biological agent or toxin in interstate or foreign commerce.

Biological agents and toxins disseminate disease-causing organisms or toxins to harm or kill humans, animals or plants.

In addition to strategic or tactical military applications, biological weapons can be used to infect livestock or agricultural produce to cause food shortages and economic loss, cre-

ate environmental catastrophes, and introduce pandemics.

Biological agents can also be deployed in missiles, bombs, hand grenades, and rockets to deliver death and destruction.

Mr. Speaker, there have also been documented efforts to develop delivery devices for assassinations or sabotage operations, including a variety of sprays, brushes, and injection systems as well as means for contaminating food and clothing.

It should concern us all that recent technological advances increase the likelihood that these weapons could be acquired or produced by non-state actors, including terrorist organizations and mentally unstable individuals.

This is a major threat to our national security as well as the safety of all American citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting S. 744.

In doing so we provide an added measure of security for our homeland by prohibiting the creation and proliferation of biological weapons as well as the sale of such weapons.

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, S. 744.

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.

21ST CENTURY PRESIDENT ACT

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 677) to amend gendered terms in Federal law relating to the President and the President’s spouse.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 677

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 “21st Century President Act”.

SEC. 2. MODERNIZATION OF TERMS RELATING TO THE PRESIDENT AND THE SPOUSE OF A PRESIDENT.

Section 879(b)(1)(A) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by striking “the wife of a former President during his lifetime, the widow of a former President until her death or remarriage” and inserting “the spouse of a former President during a former President’s lifetime, the surviving spouse of a former President until the surviving spouse’s death or remarriage”.

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 material on the bill under consideration.

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