

Unfortunately, when the Senate failed to get the 60 votes they needed to bring cloture so that they could get to final consideration of the bill, the Treasury Department decided to go forward.

It is crucial that the Congress, however, make clear that the allies of Vladimir Putin, no matter how wealthy or how powerful they are, face appropriate consequences for their actions against America's security and democratic institutions. That is what this is about.

As Mr. HIMES said, it is not a partisan vote. As a matter of fact, in my view, if Barack Obama were President of the United States today, this resolution would receive unanimous support from my Republican colleagues and overwhelming, if not unanimous, support from my Democratic colleagues.

Now, I understand the Treasury Department's goal in this instance. It is trying to remove Mr. Deripaska from control of these companies. That is a good objective. I am also sensitive to the economic concerns of our European partners who are dependent on aluminum manufactured by RUSAL, which is the Russian aluminum company, one of the largest in the world and almost, maybe not a monopoly, but an overwhelming share of the aluminum market internationally.

However, I do not have confidence that this specific deal accomplishes that objective. I believe many of the Members of this House on both sides of the aisle share this lack of confidence. There are way too many remaining questions for Congress not to act on this resolution.

For example, I am not convinced that Mr. Deripaska would fully relinquish his control of RUSAL under this deal—as a matter of fact, I think it is doubtful that he would do so—or that the Treasury Department used its full leverage in this negotiation.

I am also concerned, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Deripaska would receive massive financial benefit from this deal—this is supposed to be a sanction—massive financial benefit, nearly unprecedented for a sanctioned entity.

Mr. Speaker, I hope our action today will force the Treasury Department to engage more thoroughly with Congress on explaining its actions on this deal and to seek a better one. I think their intent was an honest intent. I am doubtful they achieved it. I therefore urge my colleagues to join me and, hopefully, in a bipartisan way supporting this resolution and I call on the Senate to reconsider its position.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, might I inquire of the gentleman from Texas if he is prepared to close.

Mr. MCCUAUL. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers, and, yes, I am prepared to close.

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

Mr. Speaker, I was in the October 2016 classified briefings on the interference by the Russians in our Federal

elections and in our Presidential elections. I condemned it at that time, and I continue to condemn it. I supported sanctions then, and I support those sanctions today.

For that reason, Mr. Speaker, until we have been fully satisfied by the Treasury Department, I support this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the remainder of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, let me first say to Mr. MCCUAUL that I am very happy to hear those words come out of his mouth. As you know, we have had a tradition of bipartisanship on the Foreign Affairs Committee with Chairman Royce and myself, and now with me as chairman and Mr. MCCUAUL. So I want to thank the gentleman from Texas for speaking out forcefully and saying the right thing.

That is why Congress overwhelmingly passed sanctions on Russia in 2017, because Members of both parties understand the threat that Russia and Putin pose. From the illegal annexation of Crimea to the war in eastern Ukraine to the support to Bashar al-Assad to the attack on our own democracy in 2016, Russia is clearly a major adversary that needs to be dealt with strongly.

So when we see the administration—and I would say this about any administration, Democrat or Republican—when the administration appears to go easy on one of Putin's closest pals, we understandably have serious questions. We need to see the whole picture, and right now we are not.

Congress cannot be left out of decisions this important. That is something I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle understand, and I hope we can send the administration a strong bipartisan message to that effect. This resolution represents Congress doing our job, exercising oversight and using checks and balances provided in the Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today the House voted on a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.J. Res. 30, disapproving the President's proposal to take an action relating to the application of certain sanctions with respect to the Russian Federation (Roll Call no. 42).

I strongly support this legislation that prevents the Trump administration from terminating certain sanctions on three companies, including aluminum giant Rusal, controlled by Oleg Deripaska, a Russian oligarch and close ally of Vladimir Putin. These sanctions were imposed under a comprehensive sanctions law passed by Congress in response to Russian interference in the 2016 election.

There are far too many unanswered questions about this decision by the Trump administration. Congress must fully vet whether these companies are no longer owned and operated by Deripaska or his compatriots. Russia must be held accountable for their actions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, H.J. Res. 30.

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. ENGEL. 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.

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CHEMICAL FACILITY ANTI-TERRORISM STANDARDS PROGRAM EXTENSION ACT

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill (H.R. 251) to extend by two years the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards Program of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the Senate amendments is as follows:

Senate amendments:

On page 2, line 10, striking “[“6 years”] and insert “5 years and 3 months”.

Amend the title so as to read: “An Act to extend by 15 months the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards Program of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RATCLIFFE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. 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 gentleman from Mississippi?

There was no objection.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, last week, I came to the floor with Democratic and Republican leaders of the Homeland Security and Energy and Commerce Committees to urge the House to take urgent action to prevent termination of the Department of Homeland Security's Chemical Facilities Anti-Terrorism Standards program.

The House answered the call by passing H.R. 251 by an overwhelming margin of 414–3. Now, the Senate has acted on this critical legislation and sent H.R. 251 back with an amendment. It falls to the House to get it to the President's desk.

Although 414 Members of the House sent a strong message to the Senate

that the program should be reauthorized for 2 years, which would have provided sufficient opportunity for meaningful engagement with DHS, stakeholders, and the Comptroller General, the Senate amendment authorizes the program for a shortened period of 15 months.

I am concerned this abbreviated authorization period provides less stability for DHS and more uncertainty for the regulated community, but unless we act, the CFATS program will expire at midnight tonight.

Allowing this program to lapse will be disruptive, irresponsible, and would sacrifice the important security gains that DHS and the regulated community have achieved.

In short, allowing the program to sunset would make our communities less safe. After all, this program is designed to prevent the next West, Texas, where a dozen first responders lost their lives after a bad actor caused an explosion at a fertilizer plant, creating a blast that leveled an entire community.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Senate amendments to H.R. 251, the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards Program Extension Act. This bill reauthorizes the Chemical Facilities Anti-Terrorism Standards program, more commonly known as CFATS, for a period of 15 months.

CFATS is a vital national security program that makes Americans safer by helping chemical facilities secure dangerous substances. Under CFATS, security and industry stakeholders must work together to identify high-risk facilities and ensure appropriate security measures are in place to mitigate these risks.

I look forward to working with my colleagues across the aisle and in the Senate to develop a long-term reauthorization to protect our Nation and provide certainty to industry.

I thank my colleagues in the Senate for taking up this urgent matter to prevent this program from expiring, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I have no speakers, and I am prepared to close after the gentleman from Texas closes.

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

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS).

(Mr. SHIMKUS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for yielding me

this time, and I rise in support of H.R. 251, as amended by the other body.

This amendment is far from ideal, but we have no other choice but to accept it. The most compelling reason not to oppose this amendment from the other body to a bill we passed last week by 414 votes is that it expires at midnight tonight, and that means the ability to check our facilities goes away. It is very problematic.

Let me repeat that. By law, the authority to conduct inspections, protect security vulnerability information from terrorists, and help facilities with technical help to make them secure, it all disappears unless this bill is amended and passes the House and goes to the President.

We must, as 414 of us did last week, keep the existing CFATS program authority going. I am glad we have a chance to do that here.

The Chemical Facilities Anti-Terrorism Standards program was launched to surgically and directly address gaps in Federal law regarding terrorism and other intentional acts against high-risk facilities due to their use or possession of chemicals of concern and at levels of concern—most importantly, to ensure that antiterrorism was the focus and not a contentious regulatory arrangement.

CFATS was designed to foster collaboration between the government and regulated parties. This program and its operations have not been perfect, but CFATS appears to have vastly improved in the last 4 years due to committed leadership and a vision for continued success.

What troubles me, though, about the other body's amendment is it doesn't give CFATS much room to make more improvement. One of the major lessons to come out of the hearings we had in my committee on the CFATS program was that, from 2009 to 2014, 1-year authority extensions did not offer program stability and stagnated the program's improvement.

It is no surprise to me that CFATS made its largest program improvements when it had 4 years of authority and not just 1 year. Moreover, 1-year authority extensions froze private-sector compliance investments as plant security managers couldn't convince their companies that the program would exist in the next year—this, even as many regulated entities had their own trade association programs that were supposed to supplement the CFATS program.

I would have hoped the changes that we are making to this program would not stilt the hefty investments made by U.S. taxpayers to stand up this program or potentially strand the investment the private sector absorbs when Congress makes unexpected and rash decisions.

All that said, the CFATS program and its authority have earned the right to continue. I had hoped a full 2 years would be what the law would be and would also provide the Department of

Homeland Security the ability to demonstrate that its improvement is not a mirage and that additional progress in its work can be achieved. But we cannot allow this program to expire.

Mr. Speaker, 83 percent of my House colleagues and more than 70 percent of the Senate were not Members of Congress on September 11, 2001—the chairman was and I was.

Antiterrorism efforts don't get the kind of attention they once did, and the fact that we have had no chemical terrorist incidents since CFATS' inception is not proof that terrorists aren't interested in targeting these facilities.

I want to thank my colleagues for their support of the program and the collaborative way we have worked together to keep this security program going.

I look forward to efforts to extend the CFATS program in this Congress. We need to ensure that these chemicals are kept secure, terrorists are kept at bay, and that freedoms are kept protected.

I urge all my colleagues to support H.R. 251.

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support this bill to allow this program, which protects and secures our chemical facilities, to continue, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, if the House does not act today, an important national security program would terminate in a matter of hours. I cannot overstate the threat that would pose.

As DHS Secretary Nielsen put it in a letter last November: “ . . . if the program were to lapse as a result of the current sunsetting provision, it would increase the risk to our country and create uncertainty across the chemical industry.”

Before I close, I want to thank my partners in this month-long effort. My fellow committee members, Representatives RICHMOND, ROGERS, and RATCLIFFE; my colleagues on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Representatives, PALLONE, WALDEN, TONKO, and SHIMKUS; our new partner in the Senate, Ranking Member PETERS; majority and minority leadership staff, most notably Shuwanza Goff and Luke Murry; and Alicia Smith on my staff, as well as Jackie Cohen, Jerry Couri, and Julie Klein.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill, H.R. 251.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendments were concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

