

will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

FIRST RESPONDERS PASSPORT ACT OF 2019

Mr. LEVIN of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2229) to waive the passport fees for first responders proceeding abroad to aid a foreign country suffering from a natural disaster, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2229

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 Responders Passport Act of 2019”.

SEC. 2. PASSPORTS FOR FIRST RESPONDERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) of section 1 of the Act of June 4, 1920 (22 U.S.C. 214; 41 Stat. 750; commonly referred to as the “Passport Act of 1920”), is amended, in the third sentence, by inserting after “to attend a funeral or memorial service for such member;” the following: “at the discretion of the Secretary, from an individual, including a volunteer, who is operating under a contract, grant, or cooperative agreement with the United States Government to proceed abroad within the first seven days after a natural disaster to aid a foreign country suffering from such natural disaster;”.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the end of the first full fiscal year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report on the number of waivers of fees for the execution and issuance of passports to first responders under section 1 of the Act of June 4, 1920, as amended by subsection (a) of this section, for such fiscal year.

SEC. 3. 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 House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. McCaul) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEVIN of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include in the RECORD extraneous material on H.R. 2229.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. LEVIN of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me start by thanking the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) for his hard work on this legislation. This is a good bill that passed the House in the 114th Congress, and I am glad we are considering an updated version of it now.

USAID-supported search and rescue teams have played an essential role in the aftermath of many overseas natural disasters, including earthquakes in Nepal, Haiti, Japan, and New Zealand. Just this past month, search and rescue units from Virginia were deployed to the Bahamas to assist the victims of Hurricane Dorian.

These first responders provide specialized capabilities and demonstrate our commitment to international partners during their times of need. They put their lives on the line to help people around the world who are in need, and by doing so, they demonstrate the compassion of the American people.

This bill would authorize the Secretary of State, at their discretion, to waive passport fees for the brave Americans who mobilize quickly as part of a U.S. Government-supported team to help other countries when a natural disaster strikes.

This is a commonsense fix to help ensure the rapid deployment of Americans who risk life and limb to help other countries in their times of need. It is a good bill that I am proud to support.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in doing so, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the First Responders Passport Act, and I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) for introducing this bill.

Americans who answer the call to service in response to disasters abroad are some of the best that America has to offer. Often first on the scene when calamity strikes, our fire and rescue teams are the embodiment of the generosity of the American people. Their commitment and sacrifice earn immense goodwill toward our Nation.

This bill will help our first responders obtain the overseas travel documentation that they need in a quick and cost-effective way.

For these reasons, it deserves our unanimous support, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEVIN of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McCaul. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), a senior member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the author of the First Responders Passport Act.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. McCaul) for yielding, and I rise today

in support of H.R. 2229, the First Responders Passport Act, legislation I introduced along with Congressman BOYLE to exempt first responders operating on behalf of the U.S. Government from passport fees. This legislation is especially timely as we just witnessed Hurricane Dorian’s destruction in the Bahamas.

Currently, USAID contracts with first responders to deploy them abroad for natural disasters, like Hurricane Dorian. For example, every 5 years, USAID awards contracts to local fire departments that have highly trained, internationally certified urban search and rescue teams, allowing USAID to have these specialists on call. A team of these first responders deployed to the Bahamas as part of our recent relief efforts there.

To arrive at disaster zones in time, these teams are required to be able to deploy the day a disaster strikes. Consequently, they must maintain an active passport while they are under contract.

Unfortunately, volunteers or other members of these teams that are not deployed by a local or State government have to do so at their own expense, even though they could potentially be traveling on government business. My legislation allows the Secretary of State to waive passport fees for them and other similarly situated individuals.

Brave first responders sacrifice time away from their families to go to disaster zones on behalf of the U.S. Government and represent our Nation to people who have lost everything. As part of an official U.S. response, the Federal Government ought to cover the first responders’ costs.

That is why I am pleased that we have been able to work in a bipartisan manner, Democrats and Republicans working together to bring this legislation to the House floor, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the BURMA Act, legislation that Chairman ENGEL and I introduced to sanction the Burmese military for its gross human rights violations against the Rohingya.

This legislation has already passed the House twice as part of this year’s and last year’s NDAA, the National Defense Authorization Act. I am pleased that we can consider it by itself today.

Mr. Speaker, 2 years ago, the Burmese military drove over 700,000 Rohingya, many of them children, out of Rakhine State and into Bangladesh. This brutal, systematic, premeditated campaign inflicted unspeakable horrors on the Rohingya, including barbaric killings, gang rapes, and the burning of hundreds and hundreds of villages.

As a clearer picture emerged over time, the mounting evidence led the

House to pass legislation that I authored to call these atrocities what they were—genocide.

It is extremely frustrating that, after 2 years, the Burmese military has faced very few consequences for these crimes.

That is why we must pass the BURMA Act today. It would provide needed tools to ensure greater accountability on the Burmese military for these atrocities.

Lastly, I would like to address any concern that if we, the United States, stand up for human rights in Asia, dictators will go scurrying, go running to China. This entirely misses the point.

Our competition with China is over whose values will shape the world. If we have to look the other way on genocide, China has already won.

It is well past time that the BURMA Act became law, either this version or the version that this House passed under the NDAA. Either version is very good.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support them, and we hope that it is done in a very timely manner. I support passage of this legislation.

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

Mr. MCCUAUL. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, America's first responders represent to the world the humanity at the heart of our Nation.

I, again, thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) for his expression of support for their overseas activities, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LEVIN of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for purposes of closing.

Mr. Speaker, the First Responders Passport Act is a good measure that passed the House in the 114th Congress. I am glad we are considering it again today.

This is a straightforward and commonsense measure to make sure we can rapidly deploy American search and rescue teams to other countries when disaster strikes.

I urge all Members to join me in supporting this 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 Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2229, 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.

SOUTHEAST ASIA STRATEGY ACT

Mr. LEVIN of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1632) to require a strategy for engagement with Southeast Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1632

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 "Southeast Asia Strategy Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Southeast Asia is the fulcrum of the Indo-Pacific region, providing both a geographic and maritime link between East and South Asia.

(2) The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), a regional intergovernmental organization, remains central to the Indo-Pacific region's institutional architecture and to United States foreign policy toward the region.

(3) The United States has reaffirmed that the security and sovereignty of its Southeast Asian allies and partners, including a strong, independent ASEAN, remain vital to the security, prosperity, and stability of the Indo-Pacific region.

(4) The United States has committed to continuing to deepen longstanding alliances and partnerships with a range of Southeast Asian nations, including by promoting our shared values, democracy, human rights, and civil society.

(5) Since the end of the Second World War, United States investments in strengthening alliances and partnerships with Southeast Asian nations have yielded tremendous returns for United States interests, as working with and through these alliances and partnerships have increased the region's capacity and capability to address common challenges.

(6) ASEAN member states are critical United States security partners in preventing violent extremism and protecting the freedom and openness of the maritime domain and in preventing the trafficking of weapons of mass destruction.

(7) ASEAN member states have contributed significantly to regional disaster monitoring and management and emergency response through initiatives such as the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management, an inter-governmental organization that facilitates coordination and cooperation among ASEAN member states and international organizations in times of emergency.

(8) According to the 2018 ASEAN Business Outlook Survey, ASEAN member states are vital to the prosperity of the United States economy and exports to ASEAN economies support more than 500,000 jobs in the United States.

(9) The United States and ASEAN have recently celebrated the 40th anniversary of their ties and established a new strategic partnership that will enhance cooperation across the economic, political-security, and people-to-people pillars of the relationship.

SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States to—

(1) deepen cooperation with ASEAN and ASEAN member states in the interest of promoting peace, security, and stability in the Indo-Pacific region;

(2) affirm the importance of ASEAN centrality and ASEAN-led mechanisms in the evolving institutional architecture of the Indo-Pacific region; and

(3) establish and communicate a comprehensive strategy toward the Indo-Pacific region that articulates—

(A) the role and importance of Southeast Asia to the United States;

(B) the value of the United States-ASEAN relationship;

(C) the mutual interests of all parties;

(D) the concrete and material benefits all nations derive from strong United States engagement and leadership in Southeast Asia; and

(E) efforts to forge and maintain ASEAN consensus, especially on key issues of political and security concern to the region, such as the South China Sea.

SEC. 4. STRATEGY FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH SOUTHEAST ASIA AND ASEAN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the heads of other Federal departments and agencies as appropriate, shall develop and submit to the appropriate congressional committees a comprehensive strategy for engagement with Southeast Asia and ASEAN.

(b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The strategy required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) A statement of enduring United States interests in Southeast Asia and a description of efforts to bolster the effectiveness of ASEAN.

(2) A description of efforts to—

(A) deepen and expand Southeast Asian alliances, partnerships, and multilateral engagements, including efforts to expand broad based and inclusive economic growth, security ties, security cooperation and interoperability, economic connectivity, and expand opportunities for ASEAN to work with other like-minded partners in the region; and

(B) encourage like-minded partners outside of the Indo-Pacific region to engage with ASEAN.

(3) A summary of initiatives across the whole of the United States Government to strengthen the United States partnership with Southeast Asian nations and ASEAN, including to promote broad based and inclusive economic growth, trade, investment, energy and efforts to combat climate change, public-private partnerships, physical and digital infrastructure development, education, disaster management, public health and economic and political diplomacy in Southeast Asia.

(4) A summary of initiatives across the whole of the United States Government to enhance the capacity of Southeast Asian nations with respect to enforcing international law and multilateral sanctions, and initiatives to cooperate with ASEAN as an institution in these areas.

(5) A summary of initiatives across the whole of the United States Government to promote human rights and democracy, to strengthen the rule of law, civil society, and transparent governance, and to protect the integrity of elections from outside influence.

(6) A summary of initiatives to promote security cooperation and security assistance within Southeast Asian nations, including—

(A) maritime security and maritime domain awareness initiatives for protecting the maritime commons and supporting international law and freedom of navigation in the South China Sea; and

(B) efforts to combat terrorism, human trafficking, piracy, and illegal fishing, and promote more open, reliable routes for sea lines of communication.

(c) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate.