

“(3) The Northern Division comprises the counties of Clay, Craighead, Cross, Fulton, Greene, Independence, Izard, Jackson, Lawrence, Mississippi, Poinsett, Randolph, Sharp, and Woodruff. Court for the Northern Division shall be held at Jonesboro.”.

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act and the amendment made by this Act shall take effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. RESCHENTHALER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 1123, which would amend current law to reduce the number of operating divisions in the Eastern District of Arkansas from five to three.

This legislation, introduced by Congressman RICK CRAWFORD from Arkansas, has the support of every member of the Arkansas congressional delegation.

The bill was prompted by the closure in 2017 of the only Federal courthouses in two of the divisions. The three new divisions created by H.R. 1123 would align with the three remaining courthouses in that district. The new divisional lines are based on caseload history and travel times to the remaining courthouses.

As chairman of the Judiciary Committee's subcommittee with jurisdiction over the courts, it is a priority of mine to ensure that people across this Nation have ready access to the Federal judiciary.

In the context of a bill such as that under consideration here today, I mean that in a very literal sense, ensuring that jurisdictional lines are appropriately drawn so that those residing in their bounds are not unduly burdened by travel time to a courthouse. But this must be balanced against closing courthouses where resources are not being used efficiently.

I am satisfied that such a balance has been achieved here, given the support this bill has gotten from the Judicial Conference, the Judicial Council of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, and the chief judge of the Eastern District of Arkansas.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support this legislation and urge my colleagues to support it as well, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1123, the Divisional Realignment for the Eastern District of Arkansas Act of 2019, introduced by my Republican colleague from Arkansas, Representative RICK CRAWFORD.

H.R. 1123 reduces the existing divisions in the Eastern District of Arkansas from five to three, limiting the burden caused by two courthouse closures. It allows the Eastern District of Arkansas to better balance its caseload, account for geographical differences, and align with the judicial work generated by correctional facilities.

H.R. 1123 is supported by the Judicial Conference, the Judicial Council of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, the chief judge of the Eastern District of Arkansas, and all the members of the Arkansas delegation.

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

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

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. CRAWFORD), my good friend and the sponsor of this measure.

□ 1700

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you it won't take 2 minutes to say what I have to say.

I certainly want to thank each side of the aisle for supporting H.R. 1123, the Divisional Realignment for Eastern District of Arkansas Act of 2019.

I want to thank Chairman NADLER and Ranking Member COLLINS for marking up this important legislation.

Following the Federal Judiciary's efforts to reduce space, the Federal courthouses in Batesville and Pine Bluff, Arkansas, were closed. However, the Eastern District of Arkansas has been required to maintain the organizational divisions mandated by the statute.

This bill simply corrects that disparity and reduces divisions in the Eastern District from five to three, aligning divisions with remaining courthouses.

The new districts have been carefully designed to maximize access to justice, considering highway access, geography, and case load history. I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time so that I can close.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

I would just like to say that, again, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on H.R. 1123, the Divisional Realignment for the Eastern District of Arkansas Act of 2019.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1123 is a straightforward bill that better aligns the divisions of the Eastern District of Arkansas with the

current operations of that district, and so I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1123.

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.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4617, STOPPING HARMFUL INTERFERENCE IN ELECTIONS FOR A LASTING DEMOCRACY ACT

Mr. HASTINGS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 116-253) on the resolution (H. Res. 650) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4617) to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to clarify the obligation to report acts of foreign election influence and require implementation of compliance and reporting systems by Federal campaigns to detect and report such acts, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO BOARD OF VISITORS TO THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD ACADEMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 14 U.S.C. 1903(b), and the order of the House of January 3, 2019, of the following Member on the part of the House to the Board of Visitors to the United States Coast Guard Academy:

Mr. CUNNINGHAM, South Carolina.

GEORGIA SUPPORT ACT

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 598) to support the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Georgia, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 598

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the “Georgia Support Act”.

(b) **TABLE OF CONTENTS.**—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title and table of contents.
Sec. 2. United States policy.

TITLE I—ASSISTANCE PROVISIONS

Sec. 101. United States-Georgia security assistance.
Sec. 102. United States cybersecurity cooperation with Georgia.
Sec. 103. Enhanced assistance to combat Russian disinformation and propaganda.
Sec. 104. Sense of Congress on free trade agreement with Georgia.

TITLE II—SANCTIONS PROVISIONS

Sec. 201. Imposition of sanctions on persons complicit in or responsible for serious human rights abuses, including right to life in Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia occupied by Russia.

TITLE III—DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS

Sec. 301. Determination of budgetary effects.

SEC. 2. UNITED STATES POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States to—

- (1) support continued development of democratic values in Georgia, including free and fair elections, public sector transparency and accountability, the rule of law, and anticorruption efforts;
- (2) support Georgia's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders;
- (3) support the right of the people of Georgia to freely determine their future and make independent and sovereign choices on foreign and security policy, including regarding their country's relationship with other nations and international organizations, without interference, intimidation, or coercion by other countries;
- (4) support Georgia's Euro-Atlantic and European integration;
- (5) not recognize territorial changes effected by force, including the illegal invasions and occupations of Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia by the Russian Federation;
- (6) condemn ongoing detentions, kidnappings, and other human rights violations committed in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia forcibly occupied by the Russian Federation, including the recent killings of Georgian citizens Archil Tatanashvili, Giga Otkhozoria, and Davit Basharuli; and
- (7) support peaceful conflict resolution in Georgia, including by urging the Russian Federation to fully implement the European Union-mediated ceasefire agreement of August 12, 2008, and supporting the establishment of international security mechanisms in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia and the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, all of which are important for lasting peace and security on the ground.

TITLE I—ASSISTANCE PROVISIONS

SEC. 101. UNITED STATES-GEORGIA SECURITY ASSISTANCE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) In fiscal year 2018, the United States provided Georgia with \$2,200,000 in assistance under chapter 5 of part II of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2347 et seq.; relating to international military education and training) and \$35,000,000 in assistance under section 23 of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2763; relating to the Foreign Military Financing Program).

(2) Georgia has been a longstanding NATO-aspirant country.

(3) Georgia has contributed substantially to Euro-Atlantic peace and security through

participation in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Resolute Support Missions in Afghanistan as one of the largest troop contributors.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that United States assistance to Georgia under chapter 5 of part II of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and section 23 of the Arms Export Control Act should be increased.

(c) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It shall be the policy of the United States, in consultation with Georgia, to enhance Georgia's deterrence, resilience, and self-defense, including through appropriate assistance to improve the capabilities of Georgia's armed forces.

(d) REVIEW OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO GEORGIA.

(1) 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 appropriate United States departments and agencies, shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report reviewing United States security assistance to Georgia.

(2) COMPONENTS.—The report required under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) A detailed review of all United States security assistance to Georgia from fiscal year 2008 to the date of the submission of such report.

(B) An assessment of threats to Georgian independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

(C) An assessment of Georgia's capabilities to defend itself, including a five-year strategy to enhance Georgia's deterrence, resilience, and self-defense capabilities.

(3) FORM.—The report required under paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may contain a classified annex.

SEC. 102. UNITED STATES CYBERSECURITY CO-OPERATION WITH GEORGIA.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of State should take the following actions, commensurate with United States interests, to assist Georgia to improve its cybersecurity:

(1) Provide Georgia such support as may be necessary to secure government computer networks from malicious cyber intrusions, particularly such networks that defend the critical infrastructure of Georgia.

(2) Provide Georgia support in reducing reliance on Russian information and communications technology.

(3) Assist Georgia to build its capacity, expand cybersecurity information sharing, and cooperate on international cyberspace efforts.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days 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 United States cybersecurity cooperation with Georgia. Such report shall also include information relating to the following:

(1) United States efforts to strengthen Georgia's ability to prevent, mitigate, and respond to cyber incidents, including through training, education, technical assistance, capacity building, and cybersecurity risk management strategies.

(2) The potential for new areas of collaboration and mutual assistance between the United States and Georgia to address shared cyber challenges, including cybercrime, critical infrastructure protection, and resilience against automated, distributed threats.

(3) NATO's efforts to help Georgia develop technical capabilities to counter cyber threats.

SEC. 103. ENHANCED ASSISTANCE TO COMBAT RUSSIAN DISINFORMATION AND PROPAGANDA.

(a) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It shall be the policy of the United States to enhance the capabilities of Georgia to combat Russian disinformation and propaganda campaigns intended to undermine the sovereignty and democratic institutions of Georgia, while promoting the freedom of the press.

(b) REQUIRED STRATEGY.

(1) 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 appropriate United States departments and agencies, shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report outlining a strategy to implement the policy described in subsection (a).

(2) COMPONENTS.—The report required under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) A detailed assessment of Russian disinformation and propaganda efforts across all media platforms targeting Georgia.

(B) An assessment of Georgia's capabilities to deter and combat such Russian efforts and to support the freedom of the press.

(C) A detailed strategy coordinated across all relevant United States departments and agencies to enhance Georgia's capabilities to deter and combat such Russian efforts.

(3) FORM.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may contain a classified annex.

SEC. 104. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON FREE TRADE AGREEMENT WITH GEORGIA.

It is the sense of Congress that the United States Trade Representative should make progress toward negotiations with Georgia to enter a bilateral free trade agreement with Georgia.

TITLE II—SANCTIONS PROVISIONS

SEC. 201. IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS ON PERSONS COMPLICIT IN OR RESPONSIBLE FOR SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, INCLUDING RIGHT TO LIFE IN GEORGIAN REGIONS OF ABKHAZIA AND TSKHINVALI REGION/SOUTH OSSETIA OCCUPIED BY RUSSIA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President shall impose the sanctions described in subsection (b) with respect to a foreign person if the President determines, based on credible information, that such foreign person, on or after the date of the enactment of this Act—

(1) is responsible for, complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing the commission of any serious abuse of human rights in Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia forcibly occupied by the Russian Federation;

(2) is knowingly materially assisting, sponsoring, or providing significant financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to, a foreign person described in paragraph (1); or

(3) is owned or controlled by a foreign person, or is acting on behalf of a foreign person, described in paragraph (1).

(b) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—The sanctions to be imposed with respect to a foreign person described in subsection (a) are the following:

(1) ASSET BLOCKING.—The President shall exercise all of the powers granted by the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) to the extent necessary to block and prohibit all transactions in all property and interests in property of the person if such property and interests in property are in the United States, come within the United States, or are or come within the possession or control of a United States person.

(2) EXCLUSION FROM THE UNITED STATES AND REVOCATION OF VISA OR OTHER DOCUMENTATION.—

(A) INADMISSIBILITY TO THE UNITED STATES.—In the case of a person described in subsection (a) who is an individual, such person shall be—

- (i) inadmissible to the United States;
- (ii) ineligible to receive a visa or other documentation to enter the United States; and
- (iii) otherwise ineligible to be admitted or paroled into the United States or to receive any other benefit under the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

(B) CURRENT VISAS REVOKED.—A person described in subsection (a) who is an individual shall be subject to the revocation of any visa or other entry documentation issued to such person regardless of when the visa or other entry documentation is or was issued. A revocation under this subparagraph shall take effect immediately and shall automatically cancel any other valid visa or entry documentation that is in the person's possession.

(C) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT AND LAW ENFORCEMENT OBJECTIVES.—Sanctions under subparagraph (A) shall not apply to an individual if admitting such individual into the United States would further important law enforcement objectives or is necessary to permit the United States to comply with the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force November 21, 1947, between the United Nations and the United States, or other applicable international obligations of the United States.

(c) WAIVER.—The President may waive the application of sanctions under subsection (b) with respect to a person if the President determines that such a waiver is important to the national interests of the United States.

(d) IMPLEMENTATION; PENALTIES.—

(1) IMPLEMENTATION.—The President may exercise all authorities provided to the President under sections 203 and 205 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1702 and 1704) to carry out subsection (b)(1).

(2) PENALTIES.—A person that violates, attempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a violation of subsection (b)(1) or any regulation, license, or order issued to carry out such subsection shall be subject to the penalties specified in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) to the same extent as a person that commits an unlawful act described in subsection (a) of such section.

(e) EXCEPTION RELATING TO IMPORTATION OF GOODS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The authorities and requirements to impose sanctions authorized under this Act shall not include the authority or requirement to impose sanctions on the importation of goods.

(2) GOOD DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term "good" means any article, natural or man-made substance, material, supply or manufactured product, including inspection and test equipment, and excluding technical data.

(f) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act and at least once every 180 days thereafter for a period not to exceed two years, the President, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, shall transmit to Congress a detailed report with respect to persons that have been determined to have engaged in activities described in subsection (a).

TITLE III—DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS

SEC. 301. 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 gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KINZINGER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. 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.R. 598.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by thanking Mr. CONNOLLY and Mr. KINZINGER for authoring this excellent bill.

This measure comes before us at a crucial time. As President Trump takes a sledgehammer to our country's standing in the world, it falls to the Congress to uphold our relationships with our friends and partners. Strong alliances and partnerships make a stronger, safer America, and it is important for our national security to make sure that our friends can defend themselves against hostile adversaries. That is especially true for a country like Georgia, who is fighting President Putin's aggression every single day.

In 2008, Russia invaded and occupied parts of Georgia, flagrantly breaking international law and violating Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. And now, over a decade later, Russia hasn't let up the assault on Georgia. Cyber attacks, disinformation campaigns, human rights violations—this is what the people of Georgia endure from Putin's regime all the time. So we must support Georgia's efforts to protect itself.

The Georgia Support Act calls on the U.S. to continue to support Georgia's democratic institutions, territorial integrity, and sovereignty. It also provides critical assistance for Georgia's struggle against Russian aggression, supporting efforts to boost cybersecurity and counter Russian disinformation. And it slaps sanctions on those responsible for human rights violations in the Russian-occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

We should be strengthening our relationship with Georgia and bringing it

into the fold of the EU and NATO. This is a good bill that moves us in the right direction, showing that Congress stands with Georgia. I strongly support this measure, and I urge all Members to join me in doing so.

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, October 21, 2019.

Hon. RICHARD E. NEAL,
Committee on Ways and Means,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN NEAL: I am writing to you concerning H.R. 598, the Georgia Support Act. I appreciate your willingness to work cooperatively on this legislation.

I acknowledge that provisions of the bill fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means under House Rule X, and that your Committee will forgo action on H.R. 598 to expedite floor consideration. I further acknowledge that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any future jurisdictional claim over the matters contained in the bill that fall within your jurisdiction. I will also support the appointment of Committee on Ways and Means conferees during any House-Senate conference convened on this legislation.

Lastly, I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. Thank you again for your cooperation regarding the legislation. I look forward to continuing to work with you as the measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

ELIOT L. ENGEL,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC, October 21, 2019.

Hon. ELIOT L. ENGEL,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ENGEL: In recognition of the desire to expedite consideration of H.R. 598, the Georgia Support Act, the Committee on Ways and Means agrees to waive formal consideration of the bill as to provisions that fall within the rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means.

The Committee on Ways and Means takes this action with the mutual understanding that we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and the Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as the bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues within our jurisdiction. The Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation.

Finally, I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letter on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of H.R. 598.

Sincerely,

RICHARD E. NEAL,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, October 21, 2019.

Hon. JERROLD NADLER,
Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN NADLER: I am writing to you concerning H.R. 598, the Georgia Support

Act. I appreciate your willingness to work cooperatively on this legislation.

I acknowledge that provisions of the bill fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary under House Rule X, and that your Committee will forgo action on H.R. 598 to expedite floor consideration. I further acknowledge that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any future jurisdictional claim over the matters contained in the bill that fall within your jurisdiction. I will also support the appointment of Committee on the Judiciary conferees during any House-Senate conference convened on this legislation.

Lastly, I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. Thank you again for your cooperation regarding the legislation. I look forward to continuing to work with you as the measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

ELIOT L. ENGEL,
Chairman.

—
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, October 21, 2019.

Hon. ELIOT L. ENGEL,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ENGEL: This is to advise you that the Committee on the Judiciary has now had an opportunity to review the provisions in H.R. 598, the “Georgia Support Act” that fall within our Rule X jurisdiction. I appreciate your consulting with us on those provisions. The Judiciary Committee has no objection to your including them in the bill for consideration on the House floor, and to expedite that consideration is willing to forgo action on H.R. 598, with the understanding that we do not thereby waive any future jurisdictional claim over those provisions or their subject matters.

In the event a House-Senate conference on this or similar legislation is convened, the Judiciary Committee reserves the right to request an appropriate number of conferees to address any concerns with these or similar provisions that may arise in conference.

Please place this letter into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor. Thank you for the cooperative spirit in which you have worked regarding this matter and others between our committees.

Sincerely,

JERROLD NADLER,
Chairman.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 598, the Georgia Support Act. It is legislation I introduced with my colleague, Mr. CONNOLLY.

Georgia has been a strong ally to the United States, and ensuring their territorial sovereignty is essential to European security and American interests.

Since the Russian invasion in 2008, Georgia has been embroiled in a battle for its very right to exist due to Putin’s flagrant aggression. For over a decade, Russia has illegally occupied the Georgian parts of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which constitutes 20 percent of Georgia’s territory.

Putin has constructed military bases, erected border fences across civilian farms, and restricted transit between the occupied regions and Georgia. The subsequent occupation has displaced thousands of ethnic Georgians. Those

who refuse to leave their homes now face extreme human rights abuses. Furthermore, Russia continues to meddle in Georgia’s political processes and seeks to sow discord and chaos among the population.

Our legislation reaffirms U.S. support for Georgia’s independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, as well as the continued development of democratic values in Georgia. It also pushes for an increase in security assistance to Georgia, greater cybersecurity cooperation between our nations, and an enhancement of Georgia’s ability to combat Russian disinformation campaigns.

Most importantly, this bill authorizes the President to impose sanctions on those individuals responsible for human rights abuses in those regions.

Passage of this legislation is an opportunity to show support for an ally that has been one of the greatest contributors to the U.S. mission in Afghanistan and one that has endured Putin’s belligerence for over a decade.

By deepening U.S.-Georgia security cooperation, we send a strong message to Putin to think twice before interfering in Georgia again.

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY), the author of this important bill.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I want to start by saluting our distinguished chairman. Thank you so much to our chairman for bringing this bill to the floor and for managing it today.

He has just returned from an arduous trip. I have been on that trip. I know how tiring it can be and, frankly, even the personal danger one puts oneself in on that trip. I salute the chairman for his stamina and his commitment to American foreign policy, being here on the floor today. So I thank him and salute him and his able staff.

I also, of course, want to thank my co-chair of the Georgia Caucus and co-author of H.R. 598, the Georgia Support Act, Mr. KINZINGER, who has been a wonderful partner and always willing to look at an issue thoughtfully and put himself sometimes at political risk in showing intestinal fortitude. I salute Mr. KINZINGER, too.

This legislation asserts the United States’ continued support for the independence and sovereignty of Georgia. It supports Georgia’s continued democratic development, including free and fair elections, and affirms U.S. opposition to Russian aggression in the region, which is not, as has been noted, theoretical.

Russian troops occupy Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia. Russia has fomented unrest, aided separatist movements, and committed serious human rights violations, including ongoing detentions and killings.

Russian forces continue to harass civilian communities along the adminis-

trative boundary line and impede the right of the return of internally displaced persons, even moving that administrative boundary line arbitrarily.

Just a few weeks ago, tensions flared over a reported buildup of military equipment and personnel near the ABL, the administrative boundary line, in Russian-occupied South Ossetia.

H.R. 598 bolsters Georgia’s territorial integrity by authorizing sanctions against those responsible for or complicit in human rights violations in these occupied territories.

As chairman of the U.S. delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, I am very pleased that the Georgia Support Act recognizes that Georgia has been a longstanding NATO-aspirant country and a contributor to NATO’s troop levels.

I have traveled to Georgia three times in the last 3 years, including for the spring meeting of NATO’s Parliamentary Assembly, and I believe that Georgia is a key partner for NATO’s security. This act builds on previous efforts that Congress has undertaken to support Georgia’s territorial integrity.

In the Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, CAATSA, P.L. 115-44, we enshrined a nonrecognition policy for Russia’s illegal occupation of Georgian territory.

In the 114th Congress, the House passed H.R. 660, which Judge Poe and I introduced, to express support for Georgia’s full territorial integrity. The resolution was a clear and unequivocal statement in support of the sovereign territory of Georgia and reiterated the longstanding policy of the United States not to recognize territorial changes affected by force, as dictated by the Stimson Doctrine, going back to 1932, authored by then-Secretary of State Henry Stimson.

Just as the House of Representatives passed the Crimea Annexation Non-recognition Act, H.R. 596, earlier this year, the Georgia Support Act is another clear and unequivocal statement by this Congress on the issue of territorial sovereignty. This act expresses Congress’ support for the vital U.S.-Georgia partnership, which is a strategically important relationship in a very critical part of the world.

I urge my colleagues to adopt this legislation.

Again, I thank the chairman for his distinguished leadership on this issue, and my partner, Mr. KINZINGER.

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KEATING), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, Energy, and the Environment.

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and chairman for yielding.

Georgia has a long and rich history as an important U.S. partner and a key player in the region. Unfortunately, Georgia most dramatically came onto

the world stage with news in 2008 that Russia had invaded and occupied regions within its territory. Since that time, Russia has continued to illegally occupy the regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Today, Georgia stands on the front lines of Russian aggression, along with Ukraine, and it is imperative that the United States assist Georgia in its effort to stand up against Russia—to address the humanitarian concerns in those areas, to fight against Russian disinformation, and to keep moving Georgia towards its goal of a strong and sovereign democracy.

I am proud that we are here today to continue to support the development of democratic values as well as the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia.

□ 1715

Georgia is a strong partner and friend to the United States, and I am proud that we are showing our support by moving this legislation forward today. I urge my colleagues to support the Georgia Support Act.

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

In closing, again, I want to thank Mr. CONNOLLY for his great work on this. I want to thank the chairman for bringing it to the floor and for his friendship and for the committees in this Congress that have steadfast support for our Georgian allies.

This was mentioned earlier, and it is worth re-noting, Georgia pound for pound has the strongest commitment to NATO and Afghanistan, and they are not even full NATO members. So that tells you the kind of people they are. They are a key strategic and democratic partner in a tumultuous region, and increased U.S. support is a significant step toward countering the global threat posed by Russia every day.

This bill passed in the 115th Congress in a bipartisan margin overwhelmingly, so I urge my colleagues to support this legislation yet again.

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for the purpose of closing. This is a good, strong, bipartisan bill to support Georgia as it fends off Russian aggression. I thank my Foreign Affairs Committee colleagues, Mr. CONNOLLY and Mr. KINZINGER, for their work on this measure.

If you look back at history when the Soviet Union existed, Georgia was part of the Soviet Union and really felt the yoke of Russian aggression on their necks. When the Soviet Union broke up and Russia tried to influence all the surrounding countries, Georgia resisted with good cause, because Georgia does not want to be part of a country that makes them subservient.

So it really to me is so important for the United States to support Georgia. It is in a difficult neighborhood, right near Russia. It faces constant threats

every day. As I and my colleagues have said, Russia is now occupying a large part of their territory, and it really should not be left to stand.

Personally, I have said this many times, I think that the West made a mistake back in 2008 when Georgia tried to become part of NATO and was turned down. I believe that both Georgia and Ukraine should be part of NATO. I think that is very important. And I think that is part of the reason why we see such Russian aggression in both Ukraine and Georgia.

So I hope all Members will join us in supporting the passage of this bill. The people of Georgia need to know that the United States Congress stands with them against Putin's aggression.

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

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 bill, H.R. 598, 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.

CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO PROVIDE EVIDENCE OF WRONGDOING OR TO RELEASE UNITED STATES CITIZEN PAUL WHELAN

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 552) calling on the Government of the Russian Federation to provide evidence of wrongdoing or to release United States citizen Paul Whelan.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 552

Whereas United States citizen Paul Whelan is a resident of Novi, Michigan, and a United States Marine Corps veteran;

Whereas Paul Whelan traveled to Moscow for the wedding of a personal friend on December 22, 2018;

Whereas Russia's Federal Security Service arrested Paul Whelan at the Metropol Hotel in Moscow on December 28, 2018, and charged him with espionage;

Whereas Paul Whelan was imprisoned in Lefortovo Prison and continues to be held there more than eight months after his arrest;

Whereas the Federal Security Service has not provided any evidence of supposed wrongdoing;

Whereas a Moscow court has extended Paul Whelan's pre-trial detention multiple times without publicly presenting justification or evidence of wrongdoing;

Whereas officials from the United States Embassy in Moscow have routinely had their topics of discussion with Paul Whelan severely limited by the Federal Security Service;

Whereas even Paul Whelan's Federal Security Service-appointed lawyer, Vladimir

Zherebenkov, said on May 24, 2019, "[The Federal Security Service] always roll[s] out what they have, but in this case, we've seen nothing concrete against Whelan in five months. That means there is nothing.";

Whereas the United States Ambassador to Russia, Jon Huntsman, responded on April 12, 2019, to a question about the detention of Paul Whelan, "If the Russians have evidence, they should bring it forward. We have seen nothing. If there was a case, I think the evidence would have been brought forward by now."; and

Whereas Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on May 14, 2019, and urged him to ensure United States citizens are not unjustly held abroad: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) urges the Government of the Russian Federation to present credible evidence on the allegations against Paul Whelan or immediately release him from detention;

(2) urges the Government of the Russian Federation to provide unrestricted consular access to Paul Whelan while he remains in detention;

(3) urges the Government of the Russian Federation to ensure Paul Whelan is afforded due process and universally recognized human rights;

(4) encourages the President and the Secretary of State to continue to press the Government of the Russian Federation at every opportunity and urge the Russian Government to guarantee a fair and transparent judicial process without undue delay in accordance with its international legal obligation; and

(5) expresses sympathy to the family of Paul Whelan and expresses hope that their ordeal can soon be brought to an end.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KINZINGER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. 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. 552.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, as we stand here on the House floor, an American citizen is being wrongfully held in a Russian prison without trial, without any evidence of his supposed crime, denied his rights, suffering, deprived of the medical attention he so desperately needs.

This is how Vladimir Putin is treating Paul Whelan, a U.S. citizen who has been unjustly imprisoned in Russia for almost a year. There has been no evidence offered to show that Mr. Whelan has done anything wrong or anything to deserve this horrific imprisonment with no end in sight.

Paul's family in Michigan wants to see him returned home safely, and Congress must stand with them and demand justice.

H. Res. 552 sends a strong message from Congress. It calls on Russia to either offer up some legitimate evidence