

letter on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of H.R. 4739.

Sincerely,

RICHARD E. NEAL,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC, November 21, 2019.

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

DEAR CHAIRMAN NEAL: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 4739, the "Synthetic Opioid Exposure Prevention and Training Act." The Committee on Homeland Security recognizes that the Committee on Ways and Means has a jurisdictional interest in H.R. 4739, and I appreciate your effort to allow this bill to be considered on the House floor.

I concur with you that forgoing action on the bill does not in any way prejudice the Committee on Ways and Means with respect to its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future, and I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this legislation.

I will include our letters on H.R. 4739 in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of this bill. I look forward to working with you on this legislation and other matters of great importance to this nation.

Sincerely,

BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
Chairman.

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 4739 because of the valuable impact it will have on Customs and Border Protection officer safety.

The opioid epidemic continues to wreak havoc on communities across the Nation. It touches people from every age group, race, class, gender, and background. Parents are losing their children; children are losing their parents. It is devastating.

Illegally manufactured opioids from China and Mexico are pouring into the United States through our mail system and across our borders. The first line of defense against these illicit substances is the brave men and women of Customs and Border Protection. They work tirelessly every day to protect us, and we must make sure they have the equipment and training they need to do it safely.

The safe handling of opioids by CBP law enforcement officers is crucial, as just 2 milligrams can be lethal. H.R. 4739 requires the Commissioner of CBP to establish and regularly update a policy for the safe handling of synthetic opioids by officers, agents, canines, and other personnel.

The bill also requires that protective equipment and opioid receptor antagonists be made available for all relevant CBP employees and canines. When it comes to officer safety, we should never consider ourselves too careful.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make the Congresswoman aware that I have no further speakers on this bill, and I am prepared to close.

I urge the adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, transnational criminal organizations are constantly developing new forms of synthetic opioids and new methods for smuggling these drugs into our country. To combat such activity, Congress must ensure that CBP officers serving on the front lines are protected from accidental exposure.

This bill is one step of many that must be taken to slow the opioid crisis and end the devastation brought to our communities by this epidemic. By protecting the CBP officers and agents who operate as our frontline defenders against the importation of synthetics, this bill ensures that they will remain safe and equipped to respond to the constantly changing threat posed by synthetic opioids.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4739, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. CLARKE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4739.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Ms. CLARKE of New York. 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.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY MENTOR-PROTEGE PROGRAM ACT OF 2019

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4727) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish a mentor-protége program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4727

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 "Department of Homeland Security Mentor-Protégé Program Act of 2019".

SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY MENTOR-PROTÉGÉ PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle H of title VIII of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 451 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"SEC. 890B. MENTOR-PROTÉGÉ PROGRAM.

"(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Department a mentor-protégé program (in this section referred to as the 'Program') under which a mentor firm enters into an agreement with a protégé firm for the purpose of assisting the protégé firm to compete for prime contracts and subcontracts of the Department.

"(b) ELIGIBILITY.—The Secretary shall establish criteria for mentor firms and protégé firms to be eligible to participate in the Program, including a requirement that a firm is not included on any list maintained by the Federal Government of contractors that have been suspended or debarred.

"(c) PROGRAM APPLICATION AND APPROVAL.—

"(1) APPLICATION.—The Secretary, acting through the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization of the Department, shall establish a process for submission of an application jointly by a mentor firm and the protégé firm selected by the mentor firm. The application shall include each of the following:

"(A) A description of the assistance to be provided by the mentor firm, including, to the extent available, the number and a brief description of each anticipated subcontract to be awarded to the protégé firm.

"(B) A schedule with milestones for achieving the assistance to be provided over the period of participation in the Program.

"(C) An estimate of the costs to be incurred by the mentor firm for providing assistance under the Program.

"(D) Attestation that Program participants will submit to the Secretary reports at times specified by the Secretary to assist the Secretary in evaluating the protégé firm's developmental progress.

"(E) Attestations that Program participants will inform the Secretary in the event of change in eligibility or voluntary withdrawal from the Program.

"(2) APPROVAL.—Not later than 60 days after receipt of an application pursuant to paragraph (1), the head of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization shall notify applicants of approval or, in the case of disapproval, the process for resubmitting an application for reconsideration.

"(3) RESCISSION.—The head of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization may rescind the approval of an application under this subsection if it determines that such action is in the best interest of the Department.

"(d) PROGRAM DURATION.—A mentor firm and protégé firm approved under subsection (c) shall enter into an agreement to participate in the Program for a period of not less than 36 months.

"(e) PROGRAM BENEFITS.—A mentor firm and protégé firm that enter into an agreement under subsection (d) may receive the following Program benefits:

"(1) With respect to an award of a contract that requires a subcontracting plan, a mentor firm may receive evaluation credit for participating in the Program.

"(2) With respect to an award of a contract that requires a subcontracting plan, a mentor firm may receive credit for a protégé firm performing as a first tier subcontractor or a subcontractor at any tier in an amount equal to the total dollar value of any subcontracts awarded to such protégé firm.

"(3) A protégé firm may receive technical, managerial, financial, or any other mutually agreed upon benefit from a mentor firm, including a subcontract award.

"(4) Any other benefits identified by the Secretary.

"(f) REPORTING.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the head of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization shall submit to the Committees on Homeland Security and Small Business of the House of Representatives a report that—

"(1) identifies each agreement between a mentor firm and a protégé firm entered into under this section, including number of protégé firm participants that are—

"(A) small business concerns;

“(B) small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans;

“(C) small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans;

“(D) qualified HUBZone small business concerns;

“(E) small business concerns owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals;

“(F) women-owned small business concerns;

“(G) historically Black colleges and universities; and

“(H) minority institutions of higher education;

“(2) describes the type of assistance provided by mentor firms to protégé firms;

“(3) identifies contracts within the Department in which a mentor firm serving as the prime contractor provided subcontracts to a protégé firm under the Program; and

“(4) assesses the degree to which there has been—

“(A) an increase in the technical capabilities of protégé firms; and

“(B) an increase in the quantity and estimated value of prime contract and subcontract awards to protégé firms for the period covered by the report.

“(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY.—The term ‘historically Black college or university’ means any of the historically Black colleges and universities referred to in section 2323 of title 10, United States Code, as in effect on March 1, 2018.

“(2) MENTOR FIRM.—The term ‘mentor firm’ means a for-profit business concern that is not a small business concern that—

“(A) has the ability to assist and commits to assisting a protégé to compete for Federal prime contracts and subcontracts; and

“(B) satisfies any other requirements imposed by the Secretary.

“(3) MINORITY INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term ‘minority institution of higher education’ means an institution of higher education with a student body that reflects the composition specified in section 312(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1058(b)).

“(4) PROTÉGÉ FIRM.—The term ‘protégé firm’ means a small business concern, a historically Black college or university, or a minority institution of higher education that—

“(A) is eligible to enter into a prime contract or subcontract with the Department; and

“(B) satisfies any other requirements imposed by the Secretary.

“(5) SMALL BUSINESS ACT DEFINITIONS.—The terms ‘small business concern’, ‘small business concern owned and controlled by veterans’, ‘small business concern owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans’, ‘qualified HUBZone small business concern’, and ‘small business concern owned and controlled by women’ have the meaning given such terms, respectively, under section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632). The term ‘small business concern owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals’ has the meaning given such term in section 8(d)(3)(C) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(d)(3)(C)).”

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 890A the following new item:

“Sec. 890B. Mentor-protégé program.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN) and the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. HIGGINS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. SLOTKIN. 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 gentlewoman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4727, the Department of Homeland Security Mentor-Protege Program Act of 2019.

Since the very earliest days of the Department of Homeland Security, it has operated a mentor-protege program to encourage large businesses to help small businesses build their capacity to compete for government contracts. However, this important program was never codified into law. H.R. 4727 not only authorizes the existing program but improves it.

Small businesses, including women-, veteran-, and minority-owned firms, are the backbone of our economy, but far too often, complex Federal contracting requirements shut them out of the Federal marketplace.

Building and sustaining a reliable pool of small business vendors is critical to ensuring that DHS and its ever-evolving contracting needs are met and that America’s security is enhanced. H.R. 4727 seeks to build and sustain this pool by incentivizing large businesses to provide technical, managerial, financial assistance, and subcontracting opportunities to small businesses. This bill requires participating businesses to commit to a mentor-protege relationship for 3 years to help establish long-term relationships between large and small contractors.

Additionally, to ensure that Congress can monitor the effectiveness of the program in an ongoing way, it requires DHS to annually report on program participation and the benefits conferred upon small businesses.

Enactment of H.R. 4727 will ensure the continued and lasting success of the mentor-protege program, a vital small business program.

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

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4727, the Department of Homeland Security Mentor-Protege Program Act of 2019.

The Department of Homeland Security has an important mission to protect this Nation, but they cannot do it on their own. For many functions, DHS relies on contractors to get the job done.

H.R. 4727 would expand the contractor pool that DHS relies on by cre-

ating a mentor-protege program to help small businesses grow their technical capabilities.

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I support the legislation and the creation of this program at DHS, modeled after a similar one at the Department of Defense. Under the program, larger contractors would develop agreements with smaller firms to provide assistance and to potentially involve the smaller firm in DHS contracts at a subcontractor level.

To provide transparency into this program, the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization will report annually to Congress. This will allow us to evaluate the benefit of this program and its progress in developing the contractor base.

I would like to thank Representative MCEACHIN for introducing H.R. 4727 and for his work to grow the capability of small businesses that contract for the DHS.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I do urge the adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. Speaker, formally authorizing the Department of Homeland Security’s mentor-protege program will ensure the continued success of this important small business program.

DHS is to be commended in its earliest days for setting this program up.

I thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MCEACHIN) for introducing this bill to help grow partnerships between small businesses and DHS.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4727, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4727.

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.

EMERGING TRANSPORTATION SECURITY THREATS ACT OF 2019

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3318) to require the Transportation Security Administration to establish a task force to conduct an analysis of emerging and potential future threats to transportation security, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3318

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 “Emerging Transportation Security Threats Act of 2019”.