

RECOGNIZING A WINNING WEEK-END IN SOUTH CAROLINA BASKETBALL

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, this was a winning weekend for basketball in South Carolina.

On Saturday, both the boys and girls Cardinal Newman High School basketball teams won their State titles, and this past Sunday, the University of South Carolina women's basketball team won the Southeastern Conference Championship. Both Cardinal Newman teams fought until the end to accomplish these impressive wins.

Congratulations to girls' coach Molly Moore and boys coach Philip Deter on their successful leadership. The Cardinal Newman girls won over Northwood, and the boys won against Trinity-Byrnes.

Congratulations to the University of South Carolina Women's Basketball Head Coach of the Year, Dawn Staley, on leading number one South Carolina to its program-record 23rd straight win. USC women have a perfect record of 16-0 in the Southeastern Conference this season.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

Mark Levin is correct. Senator SCHUMER should be reprimanded for threatening bodily harm to Supreme Court Justices.

CONGRESS MUST LIFT UP LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIALS

(Mr. STANTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STANTON. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House fulfilled a critical duty. We passed an emergency funding bill to address the coronavirus to make sure that we give public health officials across America the tools to help keep Americans healthy.

My State, Arizona, had the fifth confirmed case of COVID-19 and recently has another presumptive positive case.

Since the first U.S. case was identified, State and local public health officials have had to carry the heavy burden of responding to this outbreak and preventing it from getting worse.

Our local communities should not take this on alone. The spread of the deadly coronavirus demands a coordinated, comprehensive, government-wide response. In our emergency funding package, we specifically allocated almost \$1 billion to go directly to State and local communities.

In Arizona, our public health officials and our Governor have indicated a need for upwards of \$13 million to effectively meet the demand that the coronavirus outbreak merits. It is time we get our State and local agencies the support they need.

Congress must always do all that we can to lift up our local health officials, and our funding bill does exactly that.

CONGRESS MUST HONOR THEIR COMMITMENT TO VETERANS

(Mr. COX of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COX of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Brain Injury Awareness Month.

Since 2014, over 470,000 veterans have been diagnosed with a TBI, a traumatic brain injury.

Last year, through appropriations, I submitted an amendment requesting a \$10 million increase to the Defense Health Program to fund research for all servicepersons returning home with a TBI. I am happy to report this amendment was passed into law.

In February of this year, the GAO released a report entitled "Veterans' Use of Long-Term Care is Increasing, and VA Faces Challenges in Meeting the Demand."

The brave people who serve this country should never find difficulty in locating a facility or a program that fits their needs.

This year, I ask my colleagues to support my request for further investment into research so the VA can develop TBI long-term care programs, so we can honor our commitment to those who have sacrificed so much for our country.

HONORING THE WOMEN OF THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

(Ms. ADAMS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the women of the United States House of Representatives for Women's History Month.

This Women's History Month marks the 100th year of women's suffrage in the United States.

While the first Congresswoman joined the House in 1917, the first woman of color didn't join our Chamber until Hawaii sent Patsy Mink to Washington in 1965. And the first African American Congresswoman didn't arrive until the unbossed and unbought Shirley Chisholm joined us in 1969.

Our colleague, NANCY PELOSI, became the first and only woman Speaker of the House in 2007.

In 2014, I will never forget, I was honored to be elected by the people of North Carolina's 12th District to serve as the 100th woman in the 113th Congress.

In 2018, a record 127 women were elected to Congress, with over 100 women in the House alone.

However, there is still work to be done. 127 out of 535 is just 24 percent, and that is not what our country looks like.

We need more women Members because, despite the fact that women have had the vote for 100 years, we still don't have equal justice under the law.

To this day, we are still paid less for our work, face workplace harassment, and are discriminated against simply because of being who we are. Women work full time, year-round still only making 82 cents on the dollar for the earnings men make.

Fighting against these disparities and ensuring our Federal Government and policies are reflective of the whole country is why having women in Congress is so important.

So, as we honor women's history, let's remember that all of us have not only the ability, but also the obligation to make history.

RECOGNIZING BARRIO STATION'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

(Mr. VARGAS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Barrio Station in recognition of the 50th anniversary of their creation.

Barrio Station is a community-based organization in the Barrio Logan community of San Diego, California. It was established in 1970 by Ms. Rachael Ortiz to provide underserved youths and their families with resources that they need to succeed.

This organization has continuously provided youth with access to individual counseling, referrals to vocational and higher education, and exposure to scholarships.

Barrio Station has worked toward revitalizing the community by pushing for the development of low-income housing and opportunities there.

Families and senior citizens are assisted with completing forms which give them access to the benefits that they have earned.

For over 50 years, Barrio Station has provided resources to approximately 3,500 youths, families, and seniors every year.

I thank Barrio Station and, especially, Director Rachael Ortiz, for their exceptional dedication to the youth and families of the 51st Congressional District and all of California.

RIGHTS FOR TRANSPORTATION SECURITY OFFICERS ACT OF 2020

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 877 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 1140.

Will the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BROWN) kindly take the chair.

□ 0915

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the

further consideration of the bill (H.R. 1140) to enhance the security operations of the Transportation Security Administration and stability of the transportation security workforce by applying the personnel system under title 5, United States Code, to employees of the Transportation Security Administration who provide screening of all passengers and property, and for other purposes, with Mr. BROWN of Maryland (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Wednesday, March 4, 2020, all time for general debate had expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

The amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Homeland Security, printed in the bill, shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as an original bill for purpose of further amendment under the 5-minute rule and shall be considered as read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 1140

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 “Rights for Transportation Security Officers Act of 2020”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

For purposes of this Act—

(1) the term “adjusted basic pay” means—

(A) the rate of pay fixed by law or administrative action for the position held by a covered employee before any deductions; and

(B) any regular, fixed supplemental payment for non-overtime hours of work creditable as basic pay for retirement purposes, including any applicable locality payment and any special rate supplement;

(2) the term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration;

(3) the term “covered employee” means an employee who holds a covered position;

(4) the term “covered position” means a position within the Transportation Security Administration;

(5) the term “conversion date” means the date as of which paragraphs (1) through (4) of section 3(c) take effect;

(6) the term “2019 Determination” means the publication, entitled “Determination on Transportation Security Officers and Collective Bargaining”, issued on July 13, 2019, by Administrator David P. Pekoske;

(7) the term “employee” has the meaning given such term by section 2105 of title 5, United States Code;

(8) the term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Homeland Security; and

(9) the term “TSA personnel management system” means any personnel management system established or modified under—

(A) section 111(d) of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (49 U.S.C. 44935 note); or

(B) section 114(n) of title 49, United States Code.

SEC. 3. CONVERSION OF TSA PERSONNEL.

(a) RESTRICTIONS ON CERTAIN PERSONNEL AUTHORITIES.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, effective as of the date of the enactment of this Act—

(1) any TSA personnel management system in use for covered employees and covered positions

on the day before such date of enactment, and any TSA personnel management policy, letters, guideline, or directive in effect on such day may not be modified;

(2) no TSA personnel management policy, letter, guideline, or directive that was not established before such date issued pursuant to section 111(d) of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (49 U.S.C. 44935 note) or section 114(n) of title 49, United States Code, may be established; and

(3) any authority to establish or adjust a human resources management system under chapter 97 of title 5, United States Code, shall terminate with respect to covered employees and covered positions.

(b) PERSONNEL AUTHORITIES DURING TRANSITION PERIOD.—Any TSA personnel management system in use for covered employees and covered positions on the day before the date of enactment of this Act and any TSA personnel management policy, letter, guideline, or directive in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act shall remain in effect until the effective date under subsection (c).

(c) TRANSITION TO GENERAL PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM APPLICABLE TO CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEES.—Effective as of the date determined by the Secretary, but in no event later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act—

(1) each provision of law cited in section 2(9) is repealed;

(2) any TSA personnel management policy, letter, guideline, and directive, including the 2019 Determination, shall cease to be effective;

(3) any human resources management system established or adjusted under chapter 97 of title 5, United States Code, with respect to covered employees or covered positions shall cease to be effective; and

(4) covered employees and covered positions shall be subject to the provisions of title 5, United States Code.

(d) SAFEGUARDS ON GRIEVANCES.—In carrying out this Act, the Secretary shall take such actions as are necessary to provide an opportunity to each covered employee with a grievance or disciplinary action (including an adverse action) pending within TSA on the date of enactment of this Act or at any time during the transition period described in subsection (c) to have such grievance removed to proceedings pursuant to title 5, United States Code, or continued within TSA.

SEC. 4. TRANSITION RULES.

(a) NONREDUCTION IN PAY AND COMPENSATION.—Under pay conversion rules as the Secretary may prescribe to carry out this Act, a covered employee converted from a TSA personnel management system to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, pursuant to section 2(c)(4) shall not be subject to any reduction in the rate of adjusted basic pay payable, or total compensation provided, to such covered employee.

(b) PRESERVATION OF OTHER RIGHTS.—In the case of each covered employee as of the conversion date, the Secretary shall take any actions necessary to ensure that—

(1) any annual leave, sick leave, or other paid leave accrued, accumulated, or otherwise available to a covered employee immediately before the conversion date shall remain available to the employee until used; and

(2) the Government share of any premiums or other periodic charges under chapter 89 of title 5, United States Code, governing group health insurance shall remain at least the same as was the case immediately before the conversion date.

SEC. 5. CONSULTATION REQUIREMENT.

(a) EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATIVE.—The labor organization certified by the Federal Labor Relations Authority on June 29, 2011, or successor labor organization shall be treated as the exclusive representative of full- and part-time non-supervisory TSA personnel carrying out screen-

ing functions under section 44901 of title 49, United States Code, and shall be the exclusive representative for such personnel under chapter 71 of title 5, United States Code, with full rights under such chapter. Any collective bargaining agreement covering such personnel on the date of enactment of this Act shall remain in effect, consistent with subsection (d).

(b) CONSULTATION RIGHTS.—Not later than 7 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall consult with the exclusive representative for the personnel described in subsection (a) under chapter 71 of title 5, United States Code, on the formulation of plans and deadlines to carry out the conversion of covered employees and covered positions under this Act. Prior to the conversion date, the Secretary shall provide (in writing) to such exclusive representative the plans for how the Secretary intends to carry out the conversion of covered employees and covered positions under this Act, including with respect to such matters as—

(1) the anticipated conversion date; and

(2) measures to ensure compliance with sections 3 and 4.

(c) REQUIRED AGENCY RESPONSE.—If any views or recommendations are presented under subsection (b) by the exclusive representative, the Secretary shall consider the views or recommendations before taking final action on any matter with respect to which the views or recommendations are presented and provide the exclusive representative a written statement of the reasons for the final actions to be taken.

(d) SUNSET PROVISION.—The provisions of this section shall cease to be effective as of the conversion date.

SEC. 6. NO RIGHT TO STRIKE.

Nothing in this Act shall be considered—

(1) to repeal or otherwise affect—

(A) section 1918 of title 18, United States Code (relating to disloyalty and asserting the right to strike against the Government); or

(B) section 7311 of title 5, United States Code (relating to loyalty and striking); or

(2) to otherwise authorize any activity which is not permitted under either provision of law cited in paragraph (1).

The Acting CHAIR. No further amendment to the bill, as amended, shall be in order except those printed in House Report 116-411.

Each such further amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. ROGERS OF ALABAMA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in House Report 116-411.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, as the designee of the gentlewoman from Puerto Rico (Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN), I rise to offer an amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of section 4, add the following:

(c) GAO STUDY ON TSA PAY RATES.—Not later than the date that is 9 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit a report to Congress on the differences in rates of pay, classified by pay system, between Transportation Security Administration employees—

(1) with duty stations in the contiguous 48 States; and

(2) with duty stations outside of such States, including those employees located in any territory or possession of the United States.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 877, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This amendment is a sensible requirement to examine the pay equity for screeners in all parts of the United States.

Mr. Chair, I thank the gentlewoman from Puerto Rico (Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN) for her amendment and for her leadership on this issue.

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

Mr. ROSE of New York. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment, even though I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from New York is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. ROSE of New York. Mr. Chair, this measure improves the underlying bill by requiring GAO to study differences between pay rates for TSA employees working in Alaska, Hawaii, and the territories and those working in the contiguous 48 States.

We know that pay satisfaction is very low within TSA. In fact, in a recent governmentwide survey, TSA's workforce reported being the least satisfied with pay than Federal workers at 414 other Federal agencies.

I commend Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN for recognizing that, under the current system, there are disparities in pay within TSA that have implications for workers outside the contiguous 48 States.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. ROSE OF NEW YORK

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in House Report 116-411.

Mr. ROSE of New York. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill, add the following:

SEC. 7. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN CRIMES RELATING TO TERRORISM.

Nothing in this Act may be construed to contradict chapter 113B of title 18, United States Code, including with respect to—

(1) section 2332b (relating to acts of terrorism transcending national boundaries);

(2) section 2339 (relating to harboring or concealing terrorists); and

(3) section 2339A (relating to providing material support to terrorists).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 877, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ROSE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

Mr. ROSE of New York. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Before I begin, I would like to thank Chairman THOMPSON for his leadership in bringing this important bill to the floor today. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this bill.

On 9/11, we all watched in horror as the events of that day played out in real time.

As a native New Yorker growing up in the shadows of the World Trade Center, I saw firsthand the impact that terrorism can have.

Since that fateful day, we have seen our Nation take many important steps to prevent terrorist attacks from happening. For example, Congress created the Transportation Security Administration and passed several laws strengthening our Nation's transportation systems.

While I applaud these efforts and those of others, we must continue to remain vigilant in light of current world events.

My amendment, in this light, is simple. It reaffirms our Nation's commitment to prevent terrorism and ensures our national security agencies can continue to prosecute and prevent terrorist activities from occurring in our homeland.

Mr. Chair, I say to my colleagues, let us all take a simple but important step to reaffirm our commitment to prevent terrorism. I urge all Members to vote "yes" on this amendment.

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

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Alabama is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, as we have discussed, this bill makes it more difficult for TSA to protect the traveling public from terrorism. The gentleman's amendment does nothing to fix that.

In fact, the gentleman's amendment does nothing at all, but it certainly is reassuring to hear that some in the majority still support our counterterrorism laws.

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

Mr. ROSE of New York. Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support my amendment to continue protecting our Nation from terrorism, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. ROSE).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. The Chair understands that amendment No. 3 will not be offered.

AMENDMENT NO. 4 OFFERED BY MR. PETERS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 4 printed in House Report 116-411.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Add at the end the following:

SEC. 7. REPORT BY GAO REGARDING TSA RECRUITMENT.

Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report on the efforts of the Transportation Security Administration regarding recruitment, including recruitment efforts relating to veterans and the dependents of veterans and members of the Armed Forces and the dependents of such members. Such report shall also include recommendations regarding how the Administration may improve such recruitment efforts.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 877, the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of my amendment to H.R. 1140, the Rights for Transportation Security Officers Act.

Mr. Chair, I thank Chairman THOMPSON for his work on this important bill to help get our Transportation Security officers, or TSOs, onto the General Schedule scale and give them needed workplace protections that other Federal workers receive.

Every week, other Members of Congress and I see the vital role Transportation Security officers perform in keeping our country safe. They are essential to national security.

Unfortunately, there is a serious employee recruitment and retention problem at the Transportation Security Administration.

In 2017, the TSA spent \$75 million just on recruitment, hiring, and training costs. Over 1,900 TSOs quit that year, at a cost of \$16 million to the taxpayer.

Putting these employees on the GS scale will help with these retention issues.

Additionally, Congress needs to ensure we recruit the most qualified individuals to combat terrorism and keep travelers safe. In order to do that, we need to know how the TSA is recruiting top candidates, including military veterans.

My amendment requires a GAO study on how the TSA recruits workers and, specifically, TSA's efforts to recruit veterans and military spouses.

In San Diego, where we have the third largest veteran population in the country, we often see vets continuing to serve their country through Federal employment. Security jobs like those in the TSA demand a competency often found in military veterans. Hiring vets is an asset to the TSA, but we have heard from TSOs in my district that job dissatisfaction prompts many of them to leave the TSA in favor of working elsewhere.

The GAO study I am proposing will also provide recommendations for improvement, enabling the TSA to continue cultivating a workforce that complements the goals of the agency and responsibly spends our tax dollars.

Many Members of this Chamber, on both sides of the aisle, have stood on this floor and championed the cause of hiring vets and military spouses. It is a policy that we have incentivized private corporations to implement, and we have criticized employers for not doing or doing improperly.

Mr. Chair, I ask that my colleagues support this amendment so that we can ensure TSA is effectively recruiting the most qualified candidates and spending our taxpayer dollars wisely.

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

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment, even though I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. CISNEROS). Without objection, the gentleman from Alabama is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, this amendment calls for a study on how TSA can recruit more veterans.

I find that ironic, given that the underlying bill actually eliminates the existing hiring preferences for veterans, but the study is a good idea. Maybe it will come back and tell Congress that they ought to restore the hiring preferences for veterans that we currently have. That would be a good way to recruit veterans.

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

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Chair, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON), my colleague and the chair of the committee.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentleman for yielding time.

Mr. Chair, we have worked long and hard on crafting a bill that I am convinced would be in the best interests of those TSO employees who work diligently to keep us safe, making sure that all is well when we fly in and out of Washington as Members of Congress, as well as the 450 airports all around the United States.

They do a good job, but they are not treated fairly.

We want to make sure, in this instance, with the amendment, that we improve on the bill. So I rise in support of the amendment offered by my colleague, Mr. PETERS from California.

TSA takes pride in hiring veterans and reports that a quarter of its workforce is comprised of veterans. That is a good thing.

Still, there are questions about the way TSA uses its personnel flexibilities when it comes to recruiting and hiring veterans.

The Peters amendment would require the Government Accountability Office to conduct a study of TSA's recruitment process, including its recruitment of veterans. This amendment will improve the underlying bill by ensuring that, as TSA moves forward under title 5, it does so in a way that recruits and retains veterans.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, I can't overstate this: The real irony of this amendment is the underlying bill eliminates the hiring preferences for veterans.

We all want to give preference to veterans for their service to our country. The best thing we can do to make that happen is to leave current law in place.

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

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Chair, I appreciate the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS) not opposing this particular amendment, understanding his reservations about the underlying bill.

I think what we are trying to do in good faith is to address some of the issues that he has raised about what some of the best procedures are to pursue going forward.

Mr. Chair, I ask my colleagues for their support, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS).

The amendment was agreed to.

□ 0930

AMENDMENT NO. 5 OFFERED BY MR. BROWN OF MARYLAND

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 5 printed in House Report 116-411.

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Add at the end the following:

SEC. 7. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that the Transportation Security Administration's personnel system provides insufficient benefits and workplace protections to the workforce that secures the nation's transportation systems and that the Transportation Security Administration's workforce should be provided protections and benefits under title 5, United States Code.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 877, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BROWN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, I want to recognize the hard work of Chairman BENNIE THOMPSON on the underlying bill, and the entire Homeland Security Committee.

My district, Maryland's Fourth Congressional District, has the fifth largest number of Federal employees in the country. These public servants go to work every day to make the country safer and a better place to live for our families.

For years, transportation security officers have not had basic workplace protections, such as collective bargaining rights, whistleblower protections, and paid leave. Since 2011, transportation security officers, who make up 70 percent of TSA's workforce, have had labor union representation but, because of limitations imposed by TSA, have been denied full collective bargaining rights.

TSOs were most severely impacted during the last government shutdown. During the shutdown, more than 50,000 TSA officers were deemed essential Federal employees, meaning they had to work without pay. Due to financial strain, officers called out in record numbers, which led to low morale and high turnover among its workforce.

Staffing shortages prompted officials to consolidate checkpoints, creating long lines at some of the country's busiest airports, including Miami, Atlanta, and in my backyard at BWI Thurgood Marshall and Reagan National Airport, where my constituents felt the most strain.

Federal workers who protect our country should not have to work in such strenuous conditions. Transportation security officers are vital safeguards for our Nation's transportation system. They should be afforded the same rights and benefits as other Federal employees.

My amendment reaffirms the importance of TSA's workforce and recognizes that TSOs should be provided the same protections and benefits as other Federal employees under title V.

In addition to collective bargaining rights, the transition to title V would increase salaries for most TSA employees and provide opportunities for regular pay raises for those meeting performance standards.

TSA employees and TSOs are essential to our national security and safety. It is time we treat them with the respect they deserve. I strongly encourage my colleagues to support this amendment and the underlying legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, this amendment is a sense of Congress articulating support for the underlying bill, an underlying bill which I

have made clear over the last 2 days would reduce pay and benefits for our TSOs. That is unacceptable. We should be trying to increase their pay and benefits and their flexibility rather than trying to cap it by moving into title V.

I can't support this amendment because I don't support the underlying bill. There are many of us who feel that way, who care very deeply about TSOs being compensated better and given better benefits, so, for that reason, I oppose the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON), my friend and chairman of the committee.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Chair, I appreciate the gentleman yielding me the time.

Let me be clear. This bill enhances opportunities for TSOs. It increases the possibility of them getting employment by putting them on the GS schedule for Federal employees, so I am somewhat mystified that a bill that is designed to bring a group of employees into a system that all other Federal employees are in is somehow penalizing those employees.

The very intent of this bill is to level the playing field for TSOs, who, everybody agrees, are doing a wonderful job, so I continue to be somewhat baffled by the arguments against it.

I support the gentleman from Maryland's amendment. This amendment adds additional language to the bill to reiterate Congress' intent that TSA employees should have the same protections and benefits as the rest of the Federal workforce.

This current system that we have is not working for TSA employees. All you have to do is talk to them. When you go through the airports, just ask them: "Are you happy with how you are being treated and paid right now?" Without a doubt, they will tell you: "No." So this is to fix it.

I compliment the gentleman from Maryland's strengthening of the intent of this legislation. But, more importantly, the bargaining unit that represents the employees, the American Federation of Government Employees, which represents all the TSOs, all 46,000, they are in support of it.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support the amendment.

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, my friend and colleague from Mississippi is right about part of what he said, that is that if you talk to TSOs throughout this country, they are grossly dissatisfied with their pay, and rightfully so. We have not done our job in Congress to adequately fund the TSA to pay them better.

The TSA wants to increase their pay. Under current law, they have a lot more capacity to raise their pay. If we move them to title V, that pay is capped.

My friend from Maryland is absolutely right in his desire to want to

help the TSOs. This underlying bill doesn't do it. We need to get with our appropriating brothers and sisters and urge them to fund the President's 2021 budget which does provide the money that would allow TSOs to be properly paid and not capped.

I remind everybody that it was the Obama human capital experts who had a blue-ribbon study that recommended that we not move the TSA employees back to title V because it would, in fact, cut their pay and limit many of their benefits.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BROWN).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 6 OFFERED BY MR. KIM

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 6 printed in House Report 116-411.

Mr. KIM. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Add at the end the following:

SEC. 7. ASSISTANCE FOR FEDERAL AIR MARSHAL SERVICE.

The Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration shall engage and consult with public and private entities associated with the Federal Air Marshal Service to address concerns regarding Federal Air Marshals related to the following:

- (1) Mental health.
- (2) Suicide rates.
- (3) Morale and recruitment.
- (4) Any other personnel issues the Administrator determines appropriate.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 877, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. KIM) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

Mr. KIM. Mr. Chair, I rise today to introduce this simple amendment that addresses a complex and tragic problem.

The U.S. Federal Air Marshal Service, men and women tasked with protecting the thousands of airline passengers and crew who fly across the United States and globally every day, is in a state of crisis.

The public servants who are committed to our safety are subject to high-stress work environments that have led to a drastic increase in health issues, turnover in staff, and even a number of highly disturbing murders and suicides. In a story published by ABC News last year, Sonya Hightower LaBosco, the president of the Air Marshal National Council, a union which represents thousands of air marshals, said: "The crisis is here—it's an epidemic."

My amendment addresses that epidemic by requiring that the TSA consult with the Federal Air Marshal Service and the bodies who represent its members to address concerns that

have led to this crisis. It provides a path to finding solutions on mental health and suicide, while improving morale, recruitment, and retention.

The cost of inaction is simply too high. We see the cost of inaction in the story of Mario Vanetta. Mario was a New Jersey air marshal who fatally shot his wife and himself in a murder-suicide last October. Mario left behind three children, and his tragic story is one we cannot ignore or forget.

When our neighbors answer the call to service, they deserve our full support. Members of the Federal Air Marshal Service serve our country every day under incredible stress and difficult conditions. We have seen what those conditions do and the lives they impact. The time is now to act, to honor their service, and to put an end to this epidemic before it takes more American lives.

Mr. Chair, I hope you will join me in passing this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting Chair (Mr. BROWN of Maryland). Without objection, the gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chair, we have consistently seen reporting and data highlighting the unique health and well-being challenges of Federal air marshals. This amendment is a commendable effort to examine the issue, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

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

Mr. KIM. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON).

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Chairman, I am happy to rise in support of the amendment offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. KIM).

Federal air marshals are an essential component of the layered aviation security system that was created in the wake of the September 11 attacks. Every day, these quiet heroes keep the flying public safe.

As Representative KIM's amendment recognizes, there are some major personnel changes within FAMS that need timely attention. I commend the gentleman from New Jersey for introducing this amendment to direct TSA to aggressively take on the mental health and morale challenges within this subset of the TSA workforce.

Again, I compliment the gentleman for his amendment and urge support.

Mr. KIM. Mr. Chair, I would like to remind my colleagues that this bill isn't just a matter of national security; it is a matter of life and death for the men and women we depend on to keep our airline passengers and crews safe every day.

Mr. Chair, I urge everyone to join me in standing up for them and to put an end to this crisis, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. KIM).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MR. CISNEROS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 7 printed in House Report 116-411.

Mr. CISNEROS. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Add at the end the following:

SEC. 7. VETERANS HIRING.

The Secretary shall prioritize the hiring of veterans, including disabled veterans, and other preference eligible individuals, including widows and widowers of veterans, as defined in section 2108 of title 5, United States Code, for covered positions.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 877, the gentleman from California (Mr. CISNEROS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. CISNEROS. Mr. Chair, I want to thank my colleague, Mr. THOMPSON, for his steadfast leadership on this critical issue and for working with me to ensure that this amendment be made in order.

Mr. Chair, I rise to offer an amendment which would require the Secretary of Homeland Security to prioritize the hiring of veterans and related preference-eligible individuals, including disabled veterans and widows or widowers of veterans, for positions within the Transportation Security Administration.

Mr. Chair, I rise as a supporter and cosponsor of H.R. 1140 because I believe we must do what we can to ensure our public servants have fair pay and adequate protections. This is especially true for the Federal workforce charged with preserving our national security and protecting our Nation.

As the threats against our Nation continue to evolve in complexity, TSA employees are tasked with adapting just the same. They deserve the ability to negotiate compensation equitable to the service they provide.

□ 0945

I rise to offer this amendment to ensure that our TSA workforce includes the fortitude of our Nation's heroes, veterans who are already mission-driven, molded in integrity, national-security minded, and, above all, driven by a proven track record of service to the mission. I have heard firsthand testimony of servicemen and -women, many returning with service-connected disabilities, but many who still yearn to serve and protect our Nation.

What better way than with the Transportation Security Administration, a crucial necessity to the safe-keeping of our Nation's citizens?

My amendment would direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to prioritize our Nation's heroes first when hiring to support TSA's workforce. This includes veteran-related-preference-eligible individuals such as disabled veterans and widows or widowers of veterans. As a Navy veteran and member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and the House Armed Services Committee, the hiring of our servicemembers and veterans is one of my top priorities.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this amendment to ensure we do not overlook veterans who would strengthen the TSA workforce.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

Here is another example of a messaging amendment that doesn't fix the veterans' hiring problem in the underlying bill. All this does is restate the veterans preference language in title 5. It does not restore the full veterans preference that exist under current law.

I don't understand why the majority keeps restating this instead of fixing the underlying bill and allowing the veterans preference—which is broader—to remain in place without the impediment imposed by this underlying bill.

So, Mr. Chairman, I oppose the amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CISNEROS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON).

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. CISNEROS).

Let me be clear. We want to do all we can for our veterans. They have done a tremendous job defending us all over the world. The least we can do is when they return, or, unfortunately, when they don't return through tragedy, we take care of the families by offering them employment.

This is a simple, commonsense amendment that I would hope there would be no disagreement on. All this does is provide the same language that we use for all other title 5 employees, which the intent of the overall bill is to bring everybody under the same system.

So, I rise in support of the gentleman from California's amendment and ask for its approval.

Mr. CISNEROS. Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to close.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to reiterate this is a simple amendment in support of our Nation's veterans. I urge my colleagues to adopt the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, I want to restate that the underlying bill restricts the veterans pref-

erence in the hiring that exists now. Under current law, all veterans are given preference in hiring at the TSA. Under the underlying bill, it would be restricted to those veterans who had a rank of O3 or less. Only they would get preferences. I don't think this is where this Congress wants to go.

Mr. Chairman, I oppose the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. CISNEROS).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 8 OFFERED BY MS.

SPANBERGER

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 8 printed in House Report 116-411.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Add at the end the following:

SEC. 7. PROHIBITION ON CERTAIN SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATION.

Beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, covered employees may not use or have installed on United States Government-issued mobile devices the social media video application known as "TikTok" or any successor application.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 877, the gentlewoman from Virginia (Ms. SPANBERGER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Virginia.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to begin by thanking Chairman THOMPSON for his leadership on this important legislation and for his commitment to the men and women who keep our airports and travelers safe.

I am proud to cosponsor this bipartisan bill because I share the chairman's commitment to ensuring that the TSA workforce receives the rights that they have earned.

I am also proud to lead this amendment, which would codify the administration's ban on TSA employees using or installing the app TikTok on their government-issued phones.

While to some TikTok may seem like a harmless app, TikTok presents a significant counterintelligence threat. Our intelligence experts are rightly concerned about the use of the TikTok app, especially on U.S. Government-issued devices.

As many of my colleagues know, TikTok, like other Chinese companies,

is required under Chinese law to share information with the government and its institutions. There are real concerns that this app could also collect information on users in the United States to advance Chinese counterintelligence efforts. And because it could become a tool for surveilling U.S. citizens or Federal personnel, TikTok has no business being on U.S. Government-issued devices.

While entrusted with keeping Americans safe, our security personnel should not use apps that could compromise Federal Government data. There is always a threat that TikTok could be used to compromise government devices, including those used in our airports and among our airport personnel. That is why this amendment is so important and why we should pass it without delay.

Recently, the TSA announced a prohibition on employees using or downloading TikTok on their government-issued work phones, and my amendment would make this ban law. Other government agencies and departments have instituted a prohibition on the use of TikTok on government-issued phones including the U.S. Army, the State Department, and the Department of Homeland Security.

TSA is right to institute this policy, especially as TikTok refuses to provide more transparency into some of its more controversial practices and use.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on my amendment to keep our government devices and our airports safe from potential foreign surveillance, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to the bill, although I am not opposed to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, as the gentlewoman from Virginia has just stated, the administration has already taken some proactive steps to deal with this threat; however, we need to remain vigilant when it comes to dealing with counterintelligence threats and concerns in the Federal workforce. I think this amendment does that.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support it, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON).

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Chairman, I compliment the gentlewoman from Virginia in offering this amendment.

Recently, the intelligence community raised national security concerns about the TikTok app and its ties to China. As we always and have been continuously informed, the Chinese are trying to get information on what we are doing every day of the week, every

month, all the year. In response to this, TSA banned the use of TikTok by TSA employees on government-provided devices.

Representative SPANBERGER's amendment is to be commended for recognizing that national security concerns about this app and successor apps will not go away over time and for authorizing this amendment to be codified in law.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment and to continue protecting our Nation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Virginia (Ms. SPANBERGER).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 9 OFFERED BY MS. MUCARSEL-POWELL

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 9 printed in House Report 116-411.

Ms. MUCARSEL-POWELL. Mr. Chairman, I rise as the designee of Ms. SCHRIER, and I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Add at the end the following:

SEC. 7. PREVENTION AND PROTECTION AGAINST CERTAIN ILLNESS.

The Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration, in coordination with the Director of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, shall ensure that covered employees are provided proper guidance regarding prevention and protections against coronavirus, including appropriate resources.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 877, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. MUCARSEL-POWELL) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

Ms. MUCARSEL-POWELL. Mr. Chairman, this amendment will ensure that the TSA Administrator works in coordination with the Directors of the Centers for Disease Control and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases to ensure that TSA employees are provided the proper guidance regarding prevention and protections against coronavirus, including appropriate resources.

TSA employees are on the front lines of strengthening the safety of our transportation systems while ensuring the freedom of movement for people and commerce, which is why this underlying legislation is so important.

As part of their mission, TSA employees constantly come in close contact with countless people every day

from across the country and from around the world. This means that their potential risk and exposure to the virus is heightened.

Our TSA employees work every day to protect us as we travel. In turn, we must do all we can to protect them while they are on the job.

Mr. Chairman, I urge support of this amendment and underlying bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Chairman, this amendment recognizes that the coronavirus is a serious public health threat and that the TSA has a responsibility to educate its personnel as to how they should protect themselves. I can't imagine why anybody would oppose it.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes," and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. MUCARSEL-POWELL. Mr. Chairman, I am in agreement. I urge the support of this agreement, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. MUCARSEL-POWELL).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Florida will be postponed.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. MUCARSEL-POWELL) having assumed the chair, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1140) to enhance the security operations of the Transportation Security Administration and stability of the transportation security workforce by applying the personnel system under title 5, United States Code, to employees of the Transportation Security Administration who provide screening of all passengers and property, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.