

clock. It is critical that the Federal agencies have stepped up to the plate to answer the calls for help.

President Trump and his team at the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Personnel Management should be commended for issuing timely directives that gave agencies the necessary guidance and flexibility to accomplish their missions.

The requirements of this bill may duplicate planned administration and agency actions. Therefore, the bill could have benefited from further committee work to avoid potential duplication. However, H.R. 7340 is well intentioned, and I support governmentwide transparency.

I have heard my colleague, Mr. CONNOLLY, speak passionately about Mr. Chai, about his character and his passion for working with children, and my thoughts and prayers are with his family, friends, and colleagues that knew him so well.

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

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, Mrs. MILLER, for her kind remarks, and I certainly know they will be appreciated by his widow, Christina.

Mr. Speaker, we have no further speakers on this side, and I am prepared to close.

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

Mrs. MILLER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further comments on this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I urge my friends in the House, on a bipartisan basis, to join with me in honoring Chai and preventing further deaths and further infections from COVID-19 within the Federal workforce and the Federal contract workforce. This is a prudent measure, and, as I said, President Trump's OMB does not oppose this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the passage of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7340, 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.

COVID PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE, AND EFFECTIVE PLANNING FOR ADVANCED REQUIREMENTS BY THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH ACT OF 2020

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7496) to require Federal agencies to submit plans for responding to any resurgence of COVID-19, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7496

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 "COVID Preparedness, Response, and Effective Planning for Advanced Requirements by the Executive Branch Act of 2020" or the "COVID PREPARE Act of 2020".

SEC. 2. COVID-19 RESURGENCE PLAN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the head of each agency shall submit to Congress an initial report detailing an action plan, informed by research and best practices learned from the onset of COVID-19 and previous presidentially declared emergencies, for addressing the needs and mitigating and eliminating the risks and challenges associated with any resurgence in COVID-19 cases, that includes—

(1) agency priorities for preparing for and responding to any resurgence of COVID-19, including continuity of operations and fulfilling the mission of the agency;

(2) measurable goals specific to priorities and a time line for addressing each priority;

(3) anticipated challenges to addressing priorities and how the agency will address such challenges;

(4) how the agency will consult with Congress, the public, State and municipal governments, and relevant stakeholders while working remotely; and

(5) how the agency plans to issue relevant guidance to entities under the jurisdiction of the agency.

(b) SUBSEQUENT REPORTS.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and quarterly thereafter until the President ends the declared emergency, the head of each agency shall submit to Congress a report that provides an update of the details submitted in the plan under subsection (a), including—

(1) the status of each priority;

(2) an explanation for any goal that has not been met within the specified time frame; and

(3) any changes or updates to the plan.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) AGENCY.—The term "agency" has the meaning given that term in section 551 of title 5, United States Code.

(2) STATE.—The term "State" means each of the several States, the District of Columbia, each commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States, and each federally recognized Indian Tribe.

SEC. 3. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled "Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation" for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) and the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. MILLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and in-

clude extraneous material on the measure before us.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representatives BRAD SCHNEIDER and JOHN KATKO for their strong bipartisan work on this good-government bill.

Reflecting back on the outbreak of the pandemic, I think we can all agree that our Nation and the Federal Government were not prepared for what lay ahead. Conflicting safety and work-from-home guidelines caused confusion across the Federal workforce. We didn't have a clear understanding of how the virus spread or how best to respond to it, so agencies managing offices and priorities across the country were left to make their own best decisions as they saw it. Many agencies were not telework-ready, and we did not grasp the sheer length of time that this pandemic would last, let alone plan for it.

Now with the winter months approaching, the projections are grim. In June, the University of Washington School of Medicine predicted 200,000 U.S. deaths by October, a number we had already passed by September 22. Their model now predicts, sadly, the death rate will more than double by the end of this year. In all likelihood, the worst is still to come. But this time we can and must be prepared.

To make sure the Federal Government is ready for the challenges ahead, the COVID PREPARE Act would require each Federal agency submit to Congress an initial action plan for addressing and managing any resurgence of coronavirus cases. The plans would use the important lessons learned since the onset of the coronavirus crisis to develop data-driven blueprints for anticipating and addressing any resurgence. The bill also would require agencies to provide quarterly progress reports to Congress.

Agencies should already be engaging in the strategic evidence-based planning required by this bill, so compliance ought not to be difficult. Adding this important step would maximize the impact of these plans by ensuring transparency and accountability through oversight.

It is more urgent than ever that Federal agencies ensure the responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars while protecting their workforces and the most effective pandemic response possible by committing to a sound and transparent planning and preparedness process.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of this thoughtful bill as a complement to the bill we just passed, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on H.R. 7496, the COVID PREPARE Act of 2020.

The bill requires every Federal agency to report COVID-19 resurgent action plans to Congress. These plans will cover agency pandemic resurgence preparations to assure agency mission continuity.

The bill also requires agencies to outline their communication plans to necessary stakeholders, including Congress, States, and localities, and entities in the agency's jurisdiction. Finally, the bill requires quarterly updates on these plans through the end of the pandemic. This, of course, presumes a resurgence of the pandemic, which we hope will not happen.

In discussing this bill, we would be remiss if we did not commend the work the Federal agencies and their workforce have already done and continue to do combating COVID-19 across our Nation.

We should recognize the progress we have made as a nation in fighting this global pandemic. Thanks to this administration's leadership, we are seeing continual progress in the coronavirus fight.

The President's Cabinet and agency leaders have been constantly evaluating the pandemic and making decisions in real time, with the safety of the Federal workforce and the American public as their primary goal.

As our collective knowledge of COVID-19 evolves, Congress needs to ensure that the legislation we advance empowers Federal agencies to make these critical real-time decisions. Congress needs to be careful about continually laying on new reporting requirements to already-strained Federal agencies.

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These agencies are currently responsible to congressional oversight, and new, broadly defined reporting requirements can have the unintended consequences of redirecting scarce agency resources during a national emergency.

H.R. 7496 requires, within 30 days of the legislation's enactment, that every Federal agency communicates plans to Congress for how they will handle the unthinkable; this pandemic worsening.

The bill's language is broad, and we didn't have the opportunity to fully engage in debate on what it means and what metrics we are using.

Legislation like this could have benefited from additional work in our committee to clarify its intentions.

Fortunately, the agencies already have plans in place, and we hope the resurgence action plans envisioned by this bill won't be needed.

Thanks to the administration's Operation Warp Speed, the American people are optimistic that the Food and Drug Administration will shortly announce a safe and effective vaccine.

In the meantime, we need to work in Congress to assure that Federal agencies are able to remain fully focused on handling their present work and challenges so that we can stop this virus.

Our constituents sent us here to work together, put partisanship aside,

and ensure our Nation's government has the resources that it needs.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on legislation that helps our government remain effective at fighting this pandemic.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I do think it is important when we talk about Operation Warp Speed and we talk about the promise of vaccines, that we remind ourselves that not all vaccines are curative. In fact, many vaccines exist to lessen the severity of the illness that could follow.

We are 100 years after the Spanish flu, and we still don't have a cure for the flu. We have an annual vaccine to lessen the severity of the illness should you get it and to prevent it in some cases, but not a cure.

We have been grappling with AIDS for over 40 years. We don't have a drug or a vaccine that completely cures AIDS.

So when we talk to the American public, we have to be careful about the implied promise or explicit promise those of us in public life make.

That is why I think Mr. SCHNEIDER's bill and Mr. KATKO's bill is so important. In the event we don't have a vaccine that is efficacious, we need to have contingency planning.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SCHNEIDER), the author of this bill and my friend.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY), my friend, for yielding me the time.

I rise today in support of the COVID PREPARE Act, H.R. 7496.

As I stand here, our Nation stands at more than 7 million Americans confirmed infected with the SARS-Cov-2 virus and more than 206,000 American lives lost to COVID-19.

The scale and scope of this pandemic is unprecedented in American history, causing dual national crises: one of public health, the other of economic calamity.

Over the past 6 months, the pandemic has affected all of us, putting our loved ones at risk, overwhelming our healthcare systems, keeping our kids out of school, devastating our businesses, and pushing State and local governments to the brink.

Most experts agree that things are likely to get worse before they get better. According to Reuters, for the week ending September 27, total new cases are up 10 percent from the prior week. Daily new cases are again rising, with The New York Times reporting a 23 percent increase in average daily cases over 2 weeks ago. And The Times shows that more than half of U.S. States already have high rates of infection—at least 15 cases per 100,000 population—or are concerning facing rising rates of infection.

So many people are suffering and looking to their government for relief. They needed help as they navigated the daunting challenges of spring and summer, and they want confidence that the Federal Government, our entire government, has a plan as we head into the fall and winter.

Every day I hear from constituents in my community, Illinois' 10th Congressional District, about how they are struggling to cope. I hear from parents juggling full-time jobs while schooling their children; from small business owners scraping to pay their bills and worried they may have to shut their doors forever; from healthcare workers forced to use and reuse their PPE, the personal protective equipment that keeps them safe—for up to an entire week because of ongoing shortages of supplies; from city mayors and village presidents forced into cutting essential services and laying off critical workers; from individuals of all ages and in all stages of life concerned about their future and the future of our country.

With the timeline for rolling out a safe and effective vaccine still unknown, it is imperative that the government develop and implement comprehensive strategies for beating back this virus and mitigating its effect on our healthcare system, on our economy, and our lives and our livelihoods.

This is not about politics. Congress and the administration must work together to provide immediate relief to those suffering now and get us on a path to full recovery as soon as possible.

We can't get there by ignoring our challenges or by wishing them away. We can only get to the other side of these crises with clear-eyed assessment and realistic, fact-based, science-driven solutions.

These are the ideas that lie behind the COVID PREPARE Act. This is bipartisan, commonsense legislation, crafted with my friend JOHN KATKO, to assure the American people that their Federal Government is fully prepared to address this ever-changing public health crisis and economic crisis.

This legislation would require Federal agencies to submit to Congress their plans for addressing surges of COVID-19, anticipating a potential increase in infections and even greater demands on our healthcare system and pressure on our economy.

Trying to anticipate the unforeseen is always a difficult task, but any number of our ills—from shortages of PPE, to nationwide testing strategies, to school reopening protocols—could be at least partially cured by thoughtful planning and careful preparation.

The COVID PREPARE Act will provide bipartisan oversight and full transparency in both the planning and execution of our national response.

The goal of this legislation is not to tell our Federal agencies what to do. Rather, this bill provides the American people transparency and confidence that their government is putting their

needs and the needs of our Nation front and center; that the government is anticipating what resources and responses will be required in the immediate, middle, and long-term battle against COVID; and that we are taking the necessary steps at the Federal level to maximize our likelihood of national success.

In a time of such great uncertainty, any reassurances we can provide our country should and will be a welcome salve.

I will say it again: ending the pandemic should not, should not be a partisan issue. We need to move forward together, Democrats and Republicans. My bill seeks to do just that, and to take an aggressive approach to tackling this urgent public health crisis.

We can certainly hope for the best, but we must responsibly prepare for the worst.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have no further comments on this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I would just simply close by reminding everybody that bad planning exacerbated greatly the severity and duration of this pandemic. And if we have learned anything, we have learned that we need to plan, we need to have a plan, and that is certainly true with our Federal agencies.

I believe this bill is a commonsense bill that will add to our capability to respond quickly in the event of a resurgence of the coronavirus, and I urge its passage.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HECK). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7496, 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.

TRANSNATIONAL WHITE SUPREMACIST EXTREMISM REVIEW ACT

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5736) to direct the Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis of the Department of Homeland Security to develop and disseminate a threat assessment regarding threats to the United States associated with foreign violent white supremacist extremist organizations, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5736

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 “Transnational White Supremacist Extremism Review Act”.

SEC. 2. THREAT ASSESSMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis of the Department of Homeland Security shall, in coordination with appropriate Federal partners, develop a terrorism threat assessment and reference aid regarding threats to the United States associated with foreign violent white supremacist extremist organizations. Consistent with the protection of classified and confidential unclassified information, the Under Secretary shall share the threat assessment developed under this section with State, local, and Tribal law enforcement officials, including officials who operate within State, local, and regional fusion centers through the Department of Homeland Security State, Local, and Regional Fusion Center Initiative established in accordance with section 210A of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 124h).

(b) COORDINATION.—The threat assessment and reference aid developed pursuant to subsection (a)—

(1) shall be developed in coordination with the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties of the Department of Homeland Security and other appropriate Federal agencies; and

(2) may be informed by existing products developed by such Office and agencies, as appropriate.

(c) OVERVIEW.—The threat assessment and reference aid shall include an overview of symbols, flags, or other references utilized by adherents of foreign violent white supremacist extremist organizations.

(d) DISTRIBUTION.—Consistent with the protection of classified and confidential unclassified information, the Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis of the Department of Homeland Security shall share the threat assessment and reference aid with the following:

(1) State, local, and Tribal law enforcement officials, including officials who operate within State, local, and regional fusion centers through the Department of Homeland Security State, Local, and Regional Fusion Center Initiative established in accordance with section 210A of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 124h).

(2) Appropriate owners and operators of online platforms to assist in identifying content that may be associated with a foreign violent white supremacist extremist organization that may violate the terms of service of such online platforms, upon request from such online platforms and in consultation with the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties of the Department.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) FOREIGN VIOLENT WHITE SUPREMACIST EXTREMIST ORGANIZATION.—The term “foreign violent white supremacist extremist organization” means an organization based outside the United States that seeks, wholly or in part, through unlawful acts of force or violence, to support a belief in the intellectual and moral superiority of the white race over other races.

(2) ONLINE PLATFORM.—The term “online platform” means internet-based information services consisting of the storage and processing of information by and at the request of a content provider and the dissemination of such content to third parties.

(f) LIMITATION.—The Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis of the Department of Homeland Security shall ensure that the threat assessment and reference aid does not contain the name or other identifiable information of any individual or organization engaged in lawful political or public discourse

in the United States protected under the United States Constitution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. UNDERWOOD) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. JOYCE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. UNDERWOOD. 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 Illinois?

There was no objection.

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the government’s latest reports describe violence by white supremacists as a significant terrorist threat to the homeland.

In fact, it was recently reported that DHS analysts assessed “the threat from white supremacists as the deadliest domestic terror threat facing the U.S.”

Further, this past week, a DHS official testified before a Senate committee that attacks by white supremacists are on average the most lethal of domestic terrorist actors.

This statement came on the heels of testimony before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee by FBI Director Christopher Wray, who stated that racially-motivated violent extremists are “the most lethal of all domestic extremists,” and that white supremacists are the number one threat within that group.

We have also seen evidence that this threat is increasingly linked to individuals and groups abroad.

Last year, the perpetrators of terror attacks in El Paso, Texas, and Poway, California, drew inspiration from the deadly white supremacist attack in Christchurch, New Zealand.

There are indications that the links go beyond mere inspiration.

Reports have documented that white supremacists have traveled internationally to train with neo-Nazi militant groups in war zone environments.

By some accounts, white supremacist groups are drawing on jihadist tactics to organize, and the threat they pose is no less deadly.

The Transnational White Supremacist Extremism Review Act would require the Department of Homeland Security to disseminate a terrorist threat assessment regarding foreign, violent white supremacist extremist groups to State and local law enforcement partners.

The bill also authorizes DHS to share information regarding symbols used by such groups with social media companies to assist in efforts to identify content that may violate their terms of service.