

Safe Streets Act of 1968, as added by section 2 of the Act, strike “STATE”;

(8) in section 3054 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as added by section 2 of the Act, after “State” insert “, Indian Tribe, unit of local government, or community-based nonprofit organization”; and

(9) amend section 3055 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as added by section 2 of the Act, to read as follows:

“SEC. 3055. AUTHORIZATION OF FUNDING.

“Subject to the availability of appropriations, for purposes of carrying out this part, the Attorney General is authorized to award not more than \$10,000,000 of funds appropriated to the Department of Justice for these purposes for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2025.”.

Ms. BASS (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading of the amendment.

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

There was no objection.

The amendment was agreed to.

The concurrent resolution was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MISSING PERSONS AND UNIDENTIFIED REMAINS ACT OF 2019

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 2174) to expand the grants authorized under Jennifer’s Law and Kristen’s Act to include processing of unidentified remains, resolving missing persons cases, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 2174

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 “Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains Act of 2019”.

SEC. 2. USE OF GRANT FUNDS.

(a) JENNIFER’S LAW.—Jennifer’s Law (34 U.S.C. 40501 et seq.) is amended—

(1) by striking section 202 (34 U.S.C. 40501) and inserting the following:

“SEC. 202. PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—

“(1) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—The Attorney General may award grants to eligible entities described in paragraph (2) to enable the eligible entities to improve the transportation, processing, identification, and reporting of missing persons and unidentified remains, including migrants.

“(2) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—Eligible entities described in this paragraph are the following:

“(A) States and units of local government.

“(B) Accredited, publicly funded, Combined DNA Index System (commonly known as ‘CODIS’) forensic laboratories, which demonstrate the grant funds will be used for DNA typing and uploading biological family DNA reference samples, including samples from foreign nationals, into CODIS, subject to the protocols for inclusion of such forensic DNA profiles into CODIS, and the privacy protections required under section 203(c).

“(C) Medical examiners offices.

“(D) Accredited, publicly funded toxicology laboratories.

“(E) Accredited, publicly funded crime laboratories.

“(F) Publicly funded university forensic anthropology laboratories.

“(G) Nonprofit organizations that have working collaborative agreements with State and county forensic offices, including medical examiners, coroners, and justices of the peace, for entry of data into CODIS or the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (commonly known as ‘NamUs’), or both.”;

(2) in section 203 (34 U.S.C. 40502)—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking “a State” and inserting “an entity described in section 202”;

(B) in subsection (b)—

(i) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking “State” and inserting “applicant”;

(ii) by striking paragraph (1) and inserting the following:

“(1) report to the National Crime Information Center and, when possible, to law enforcement authorities throughout the applicant’s jurisdiction regarding every deceased unidentified person, regardless of age, found in the applicant’s jurisdiction.”;

(iii) in paragraph (3), by striking “and” at the end;

(iv) in paragraph (4), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”;

(v) by adding at the end the following:

“(5) collect and report information to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) regarding missing persons and unidentified remains.”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(c) PRIVACY PROTECTIONS FOR BIOLOGICAL FAMILY REFERENCE SAMPLES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Any suspected biological family DNA reference samples received from citizens of the United States or foreign nationals and uploaded into the Combined DNA Index System (commonly referred to as ‘CODIS’) by an accredited, publicly funded CODIS forensic laboratory awarded a grant under this section may be used only for identifying missing persons and unidentified remains.

“(2) LIMITATION ON USE.—Any biological family DNA reference samples from citizens of the United States or foreign nationals entered into CODIS for purposes of identifying missing persons and unidentified remains may not be disclosed to a Federal or State law enforcement agency for law enforcement purposes.”; and

(3) by striking section 204 (34 U.S.C. 40503) and inserting the following:

“SEC. 205. USE OF FUNDS.

“An applicant receiving a grant award under this title may use such funds to—

“(1) pay for the costs incurred during or after fiscal year 2017 for the transportation, processing, identification, and reporting of missing persons and unidentified remains, including migrants;

“(2) establish and expand programs developed to improve the reporting of unidentified persons in accordance with the assurances provided in the application submitted pursuant to section 203(b);

“(3) hire and maintain additional DNA case analysts and technicians, fingerprint examiners, forensic odontologists, and forensic anthropologists, needed to support such identification programs; and

“(4) procure and maintain state of the art multi-modal, multi-purpose forensic and DNA-typing and analytical equipment.”.

(b) KRISTEN’S ACT.—Section 102 of Kristen’s Act (34 U.S.C. 40504 note) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 102. AUTHORIZATION OF FUNDING.

“To the extent provided in advance in appropriations Acts, the Attorney General is authorized to use funds appropriated for the operationalization, maintenance, and expansion of the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) for the purpose of carrying out this Act”.

SEC. 3. RESCUE BEACONS.

Section 411(o) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 211(o)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(3) RESCUE BEACONS.—Beginning in fiscal year 2019, in carrying out subsection (c)(8), the Commissioner shall purchase, deploy, and maintain not more than 170 self-powering, 9–1–1 cellular relay rescue beacons along the southern border of the United States at locations determined appropriate by the Commissioner to mitigate migrant deaths.”.

SEC. 4. REPORTING ON NATIONAL MISSING AND UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS SYSTEM (NAMUS) PROGRAM.

Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this act, and every year thereafter, the Attorney General shall submit a report to the appropriate committees of Congress regarding—

(1) the number of unidentified person cases processed;

(2) CODIS associations and identifications;

(3) the number of anthropology cases processed;

(4) the number of suspected border crossing cases and associations made;

(5) the number of trials supported with expert testimony;

(6) the number of students trained and professions of those students; and

(7) the turnaround time and backlog.

SEC. 5. OTHER REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

(a) UNIDENTIFIED REMAINS.—

(1) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection shall submit a report to the appropriate committees of Congress regarding all unidentified remains discovered, during the reporting period, on or near the border between the United States and Mexico, including—

(A) for each deceased person—

(i) the cause and manner of death, if known;

(ii) the sex, age (at time of death), and country of origin (if such information is determinable); and

(iii) the location of each unidentified remain;

(B) the total number of deceased people whose unidentified remains were discovered by U.S. Customs and Border Protection during the reporting period;

(C) to the extent such information is available to U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the total number of deceased people whose unidentified remains were discovered by Federal, State, local or Tribal law enforcement officers, military personnel, or medical examiners offices;

(D) the efforts of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to engage with nongovernmental organizations, institutions of higher education, medical examiners and coroners, and law enforcement agencies—

(i) to identify and map the locations at which migrant deaths occur; and

(ii) to count the number of deaths that occur at such locations; and

(E) a detailed description of U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s Missing Migrant Program, including how the program helps mitigate migrant deaths while maintaining border security.

(2) PUBLIC DISCLOSURE.—Not later than 30 days after each report required under paragraph (1) is submitted, the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection shall publish on the website of the agency the information described in subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) of paragraph (1) during each reporting period.

(b) RESCUE BEACONS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection shall submit a report to the appropriate committees of Congress regarding the use of rescue beacons along the border between the United States and Mexico, including, for the reporting period—

(1) the number of rescue beacons in each border patrol sector;

(2) the specific location of each rescue beacon;

(3) the frequency with which each rescue beacon was activated by a person in distress;

(4) a description of the nature of the distress that resulted in each rescue beacon activation (if such information is determinable); and

(5) an assessment, in consultation with local stakeholders, including elected officials, nongovernmental organizations, and landowners, of necessary additional rescue beacons and recommendations for locations for deployment to reduce migrant deaths.

(c) GAO REPORT.—Not later than 6 months after the report required under subsection (a) is submitted to the appropriate committees of Congress, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit a report to the same committees that describes—

(1) how U.S. Customs and Border Protection collects and records border-crossing death data;

(2) the differences (if any) in U.S. Customs and Border Protection border-crossing death data collection methodology across its sectors;

(3) how U.S. Customs and Border Protection's data and statistical analysis on trends in the numbers, locations, causes, and characteristics of border-crossing deaths compare to other sources of data on these deaths, including border county medical examiners and coroners and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;

(4) how U.S. Customs and Border Protection measures the effectiveness of its programs to mitigate migrant deaths; and

(5) the extent to which U.S. Customs and Border Protection engages Federal, State, local, and Tribal governments, foreign diplomatic and consular posts, and nongovernmental organizations—

(A) to accurately identify deceased individuals;

(B) to resolve cases involving unidentified remains;

(C) to resolve cases involving unidentified persons; and

(D) to share information on missing persons and unidentified remains, specifically with the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs).

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

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCANLON).

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extra-

neous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 2174, the Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains Act, a bipartisan measure aimed at assisting State and local governments to locate missing people and identify human remains.

This bill not only authorizes grant funding to States and localities for such purposes, but it also improves the Federal Government's data collection procedures and expands Customs and Border Protection's response to the tragic rise in migrant deaths along our southern border.

These changes bring much-needed financial relief to local jurisdictions nationwide and provide a modicum of dignity and consolation to the families of those who have perished.

Sadly, there is a pressing need for this legislation. The process by which States and localities and law enforcement agencies must tackle these issues exacts a financial and emotional toll. When remains are found, their identification by State and local law enforcement and medical examiners, often supported by crime and forensic laboratories, provides decedents and their survivors with dignity and respect.

But bringing closure to these families is costly. State and local entities must transport, preserve the remains, perform autopsies, attempt DNA testing, and conduct forensic examinations. These tasks can be particularly burdensome on small jurisdictions that often have to rely on State support to carry out these complex tasks.

That is why the grant program that this bill authorizes is so important. While the need for this support is greatest along our southern border, the grant funds authorized by S. 2174 will support jurisdictions nationwide to carry on this critical work.

S. 2174 also contains a number of provisions that will strengthen the Federal Government's efforts to identify missing and unidentified people. Notably, the bill would create a bridge between States and localities and a Federal database to help match reports of missing people with unidentified remains.

Importantly, the bill authorizes Customs and Border Protection to install up to 170 self-powering cellular relay rescue beacons along the southern border that will help stranded migrants call for help should they find themselves injured or in need of emergency services.

A broad coalition of stakeholders have endorsed S. 2174, including the Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies; the League of United Latin American Citizens, or LULAC; and the Christian Life Commission. This broad swath of support speaks to

the need for the legislation and bolsters the bipartisan nature of the bill.

I want to thank Representative VICENTE GONZALEZ for his leadership on this issue and his tireless work on behalf of his House companion to this bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, while I support this legislation, I strongly believe in ensuring justice for all victims and their families. I want to be absolutely clear that the continued crisis at our border requires more from Congress.

S. 2174 provides resources to law enforcement and related entities tasked with processing the remains of those who tragically died while making the dangerous journey to enter this country illegally.

But Congress should be doing more to secure our borders and to prevent these tragic deaths in the first place. I am concerned about the burdens this bill places on our already strained U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Under this bill, CBP is charged with documenting information about individuals who died at the border, reporting on the causes of their deaths, and mapping their final locations. I truly fear that these reports may be used by open-border advocates to malign the men and women of the U.S. Border Patrol when those advocates inevitably decide to play politics and start to argue that CBP is not doing enough to mitigate migrant deaths.

In reality, to prevent future deaths at the border, we need to make it absolutely clear that no one should embark on this dangerous journey because illegal entry is simply not an option. We must fix our broken immigration system, which incentivizes people to cross our border illegally. Strong border security and interior enforcement is the best way to stop loss of life.

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

□ 1600

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GONZALEZ).

Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 2174, the Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains Act, which gives local law enforcement the tools they need to address a devastating issue that is draining resources in rural communities in south Texas and across the southwest border.

Border communities are currently shouldering the cost of identifying and recovering the remains of migrants who tragically perished while migrating to the United States. This affects our citizens, ranchers, and farmers.

The Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains Act is a bipartisan, bicameral effort that will give local law

enforcement access to Federal dollars and will help free up local resources for rural healthcare, education, broadband, and other key services that are, tragically, needed in these areas.

This is a critical bill to help address issues that are symptomatic of a larger problem. Unless we invest time and resources to address the root cause of migration from Central America, we will continue to witness these tragic deaths in our border region.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Brooks County Sheriff Benny Martinez, Jim Hogg County Sheriff Erasmo Alarcon, Jr., and Duval County Sheriff Romeo Ramirez, to name a few. These men have been on the front lines of this issue and continue their work to identify who has died.

I also acknowledge the Southern Border Communities Coalition, the Church World Services, and the Texas Civil Rights Project for their work to raise awareness about this issue and help build support for this bill. Without the support of this large cross section of stakeholders, we would not be here passing this legislation today.

For the families that have lost their loved ones, this bill is an opportunity to bring closure. I know many of you may not find the answers you seek, but there is a much better chance because of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, in recognition of the bipartisan support for this bill, I request that all my colleagues vote in support of this important effort.

Mr. RESCHENTHALER. Mr. Speaker, in closing, while I support this bill, I think Congress must do more to secure our borders.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the assistance provided by this bill will help bring peace of mind to the families of missing persons by taking meaningful steps to improve the identification of remains.

I applaud the bipartisan and bicameral support for this bill. I thank Representatives GONZALEZ and HURD for their efforts in the House, as well as Senators CORNYN and HARRIS for championing the bill in the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this bill today, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Judiciary, Committee and a member representing a state on the nation's southern border, I rise in strong support of S. 2174, the "Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains Act of 2019," sponsored by the senior senator from Texas, Sen. CORNYN, and Sen. KAMALA HARRIS, the next Vice-President of the United States and the first woman and person of color to win election to that high office.

I support the Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains Act because it is bipartisan legislation that will help prevent migrant deaths on the Southwest border and will help border counties and nonprofit organizations locate and identify missing migrants.

Mr. Speaker, migrants seeking a better and safer life in the United States who attempt to cross the U.S.-Mexico border between ports of entry are often faced with difficult terrain and extremely dangerous conditions.

The temperature in barren border sections of Arizona's Sonoran Desert, for example, can reach over 104 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer and drop to below freezing in the winter.

Since 1998, the U.S. Border Patrol has reported 7,505 migrant deaths on the border, most due to dehydration, drowning, and exposure to extreme heat or cold.

For more than two decades, over one migrant a day has died while attempting to enter without authorization, a misdemeanor offense under Federal law.

The actual number dead is likely much higher than that, as the statistics only report those who have been positively identified by border patrol agents.

The bodies of migrants tragically lost during attempted border crossings become increasingly difficult to identify after exposure to the desert for prolonged periods.

The continuing loss of life on the border is unacceptable and allowing many of the dead to remain unidentified is inhumane, families of border crossers unsure of their loved ones' fate and depriving them of the opportunity unable to say goodbye.

The legislation before us would create grants for humanitarian and state actors to report and identify missing persons and unidentified remains, including migrant border crossers.

The bill also provides resources for rescue beacons, which have been used effectively to rescue migrants who are in danger.

Mr. Speaker, the Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains Act would authorize the Attorney General to provide grants to various entities to report, process, and identify missing persons and unidentified remains.

Entities eligible for the grants would include state and local governments, humanitarian aid groups, nonprofit organizations, forensics and toxicology laboratories, and medical examiners' offices.

This funding will improve reporting of missing persons to the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) and the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs), databases used to identify border crossers who have lost their lives.

Additionally, the legislation authorizes the purchase and implementation of up to 170 self-powered "rescue beacons" in isolated border regions to prevent further migrant deaths.

Rescue beacons are tools used by U.S. Border Patrol in desolate border areas to rescue migrants in distress.

They are 30 to 40 feet tall, solar-powered, and satellite-connected.

They are equipped with a 9–1–1 cellular relay, a strobe light, and a multilingual instructional placard to help migrants alert border patrol personnel to a distress call.

Not long ago, on Christmas Eve, 2017, a distress call from a rescue beacon allowed border patrol agents to rescue a migrant family near Lukeville, Arizona, representing three of hundreds of lives that have been saved by the beacons since they were first implemented in the late 1990s.

As of November 12, 2019, there were 34 rescue beacons situated in desolate border

areas; this bill would increase the total number of beacons by 600 percent.

The bill clarifies privacy protections concerning the use of biometric data in the reporting and identification of missing persons and unidentified remains and provides that any piece of biometric evidence handled by an entity receiving grant funding be used for the sole purpose of identifying missing persons and unidentified remains.

Finally, S. 2174 requires the Attorney General, Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) each to submit annual reports on use of grant funding and on programs implemented to save migrant lives and identify the dead.

Mr. Speaker, the Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains Act would make an immediate impact, both by saving lives on the border and by allowing the families of those who have lost loved ones to gain closure.

I strongly support this bipartisan, common-sense reform that would enable the United States to lessen the loss of life on our southern border and treat those dying or crossing between ports of entry with dignity and humanity.

I urge all Members to join me in voting to pass S. 2174, the Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains Act of 2019.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCANLON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 2174, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to the extent provided in advance in appropriations Act, the Attorney General is authorized to use funds appropriated for the operationalization, maintenance, and expansion of the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) for the purpose of carrying out this Act".

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Mariel Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

ONE SMALL STEP TO PROTECT HUMAN HERITAGE IN SPACE ACT

Ms. KENDRA S. HORN of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1694) to require any Federal agency that issues licenses to conduct lunar activities to include in the requirements for such licenses an agreement relating to the preservation and protection of the Apollo 11 landing site, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1694

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