

implementation of Netscape browsers throughout the 30 County Library Branches, and a swift transition to the electronic book checkout system for Kern County residents.

One year after transferring to the Bakersfield Municipal Court in 1997, Roy was recruited to the Kern County Department of Child Support Services (KCDCSS). Named the Local Area Network Systems Administrator for KDCSS, Roy led critical improvements to the Department's technology systems for over 20 years, enabling the organization to better assist parents and youth in our community. With a savviness in computer networking and operations management, Roy helped start the KIDZ Child Support Program and implement the State of California's CASES Child Support Program locally. Additionally, when the coronavirus pandemic forced KDCSS operations online, Roy helped County staff work through technological issues so they could continue to serve Kern County residents in a seamless fashion.

Roy's service to Kern County is undeniable. In 2020, he was recognized with the KDCSS Values Award for Teamwork for his patience, work ethic, and respect for all. On behalf of the 23rd Congressional District of California, I want to thank my good friend Roy for his unwavering commitment to bettering our community and Kern County government that serves many of my constituents. Judy and I wish him the best as he enters this new chapter in his life.

HONORING DR. BRIANNA
THOMPSON

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a tenacious and innovative woman, Dr. Brianna Thompson. Dr. Thompson has shown what can be done through hard work, dedication, and a desire to achieve success.

Dr. Brianna Thompson has been awarded top honors with the 2022 Black Engineer of the Year Awards (BEYA), which recognizes African-American scientists and engineers around the country. The winners chosen are leaders shaping the future of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), as well as promoting diversity and inclusion in the STEM pipeline. She was recognized at this year's BEYA STEM Global Competitiveness Conference, which was held in Washington, D.C. Feb. 17 through 19.

Dr. Thompson began her career at ERDC in ITL three years ago as a mathematician and was chosen for the BEYA Modern-Day Technology Leader Award. Her research in hypersonic systems evaluation and design and the coupling of fluid, thermal and structure models for computational simulation of hypersonic systems is making a difference and advancing the capabilities of the Army and the DOD in developing state-of-the-art solutions to challenging problems. Dr. Thompson earned her doctorate degree in computational science from the University of Southern Mississippi.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Dr. Brianna Thompson for

her passion and dedication to the field of Engineering.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY INSPECTOR GENERAL TRANSPARENCY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 5, 2022

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5633. This bill requires the OIG to submit to Congress any report that substantiates a violation of specified provisions regarding prohibited personnel practices, protected communications, or retaliatory personnel actions.

The bill also requires the OIG to submit to Congress any report about a violation of Presidential Personnel Directive-19 (protecting whistleblowers with access to classified information); or an allegation of misconduct, waste, fraud, abuse, or a violation of policy within DHS involving a senior DHS official.

The OIG must make each report publicly available on its website, with some exceptions.

The bill requires the OIG's semiannual reports to include specified information regarding ongoing audits, inspections, and evaluations.

Mr. Speaker, the importance of this bill cannot be understated. Inspectors General are incredibly important in the justice process, and especially so when Homeland Security is under review.

The Department of Homeland Security has one of the hardest jobs of all federal agencies: protecting the homeland from terror.

As a senior member of the Committee on Homeland Security, I am fervently committed to overseeing and improving the Department of Homeland Security and keeping America safe from terrorism.

One way we do that is through enforcing accountability in all the Department's functions, which is the purpose of this bill.

To underscore its importance, I want to remind this body of critical reports from the Office of Inspector General in the Department of Homeland Security in 2018 and 2019. They brought to light the cruel humanitarian situation migrants were suffering through under the previous administration's zero-tolerance immigration policies.

In 2018, the Office of Inspector General released a scathing report detailing the previous administration's child separation policy.

The details of the report were damning. Specifically, it stated that: Department of Homeland Security was not prepared to deal with the staggering repercussions of separating children from their parents and there was no computer or automated system to facilitate the reunification of parents after they have been separated.

The OIG determined that, despite a 72-hour limit on the time a child may be separated from their parents, many children were separated for five days, and some as long as a dozen days.

The report concluded that the government failed to adequately notify parents of the child separation policy, and the process to initiate reunification.

The OIG found that government officials gave inconsistent information to parents arriv-

ing at the border, which had the effect of instilling confusion at these ports of entry.

The report made special note of how the former Secretary of Homeland Security, Kristjen Nielsen signed off on the actions which led to the child separation policy, which is in stark contrast to Secretary Nielsen's May 15, 2018, testimony to the United States Senate.

In another report published in 2019, the Office of Inspector General discussed the pitiful conditions for those being held in detention facilities along the border.

During the Inspector General's visits to five Border Patrol facilities and two ports of entry in the Rio Grande Valley, they reviewed compliance with CBP's Transport, Escort, Detention and Search (TEDS) standards, which govern CBP's interaction with detained individuals, and observed serious overcrowding and prolonged detention of unaccompanied alien children (UACs), families, and single adults that require immediate attention.

Specifically, Border Patrol was holding about 8,000 detainees in custody at the time of our visit, with 3,400 held longer than the 72 hours generally permitted under the TEDS standards. Of those 3,400 detainees, Border Patrol held 1,500 for more than 10 days.

In addition to the overcrowding they observed, Border Patrol's custody data indicates that 826 (31 percent) of the 2,669 children at these facilities had been held longer than the 72 hours generally permitted under the TEDS standards and the Flores Agreement.

For example, of the 1,031 UACs held at the Centralized Processing Center in McAllen, TX, 806 had already been processed and were awaiting transfer to HHS custody. Of the 806 that were already processed, 165 had been in custody longer than a week.

Additionally, there were more than 50 UACs younger than 7 years old, and some of them had been in custody over two weeks while awaiting transfer.

In addition to holding roughly 30 percent of minor detainees for longer than 72 hours, several Rio Grande Valley facilities struggled to meet other TEDS standards for UACs and families.

For example, children at three of the five Border Patrol facilities the Inspector General visited had no access to showers, despite the TEDS standards requiring that "reasonable efforts" be made to provide showers to children approaching 48 hours in detention.

At these facilities, children had limited access to a change of clothes; Border Patrol had few spare clothes for the children and no laundry facilities. While all facilities had infant formula, diapers, baby wipes, and juice and snacks for children, the Inspector General observed that two facilities had not provided children access to hot meals—as is required by the TEDS standards—until the week the Inspector General arrived.

Instead, the children were fed sandwiches and snacks for their meals. Additionally, while Border Patrol tried to provide the least restrictive setting available for children (e.g., by leaving holding room doors open), the limited space for medical isolation resulted in some UACs and families being held in closed cells.

These investigations and reports provide just a snapshot of the work the Office of Inspector General under the Department of Homeland Security does. Time and time again, they have shone a much-needed light on affairs that are all of public interest.

It is for that reason Mr. Speaker I strongly support H.R. 5633.

It will hold all decision makers accountable and force their actions to be submitted not only to Congress, but the court of public opinion as well.

This bill prioritizes both transparency and accountability, so I urge my colleagues to support this critical piece of legislation.

REPORTING EFFICIENTLY TO
PROPER OFFICIALS IN RE-
SPONSE TO TERRORISM ACT OF
2021

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 5, 2022

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1540, the Reporting Efficiently to Proper Officials in Response to Terrorism Act of 2021 or the REPORT Act.

The purpose of this bill is to provide reports to Congress that are jointly developed by relevant federal agencies regarding incidents of terrorism.

This bill requires the Department of Homeland Security, in coordination with the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, whenever an incident of terrorism occurs in the United States, to submit to Congress an unclassified report upon completion of the investigation by the primary U.S. government agency conducting the investigation concerning the incident.

The report should contain:

1. A statement of the facts of the incident that are known at the time of the report.
2. Any recommendations for changes in practices or law, consistent with the Constitution, with particular attention to changes that could help prevent future incidents of terrorism.

The bipartisan bill requires the Department of Homeland Security, the Justice Department, the FBI, and/or the National Counterterrorism Center to work together to submit a report to Congress after a foreign or domestic terrorist attack, which must include an explanation of what happened, any gaps in national security, and recommendations for additional measures to improve homeland security and prevent future terrorist attacks.

After a terrorist attack, federal agencies will be required to report to Congress with information about exactly what happened and recommendations to prevent future attacks.

The first priority of government should be making sure that all Americans are safe, secure, and free.

The 9/11 attack on American soil on September 11, 2001 took the lives of nearly 3,000 innocent civilians and since that day, the role of virtually every federal, state, and local law enforcement agency changed.

The 9/11 attack remains a tragedy that defines our nation's history. But the final chapter will be written by those who are charged with keeping our nation and people safe while preserving the way of life that terrorists sought to change.

On January 6, 2021, during a joint session of Congress, a mob breached the U.S. Capitol, illegally entering the complex, violent par-

ticipants, incited by the former President's rhetoric, injured scores of D.C. Police and U.S. Capitol Police officers—killing one, while four civilians also died.

The escalation in violent domestic attacks since the January 6 attack has been felt by our nation's law enforcement officers, as well as others which is evidenced by the rise in murder and assaults across the nation.

Today, we find ourselves in a nation where the terrorism landscape is more complex, it is imperative that we recognize and communicate the evolving and unorthodox nature of the terrorism threats we face today.

This bill is the most effective way for us to protect our country through solid reporting and communicating.

To prevent terrorist attacks and ensure efficiency and effectiveness in responding to an attack, agencies need to coordinate with each other to determine what went wrong so that we can strengthen our counterterrorism efforts moving forward.

Congress must have all available information to make the most informed policy decisions following a terrorist attack.

The REPORT Act ensures that members of Congress will receive the full accounting of the facts, so that they can hold federal agencies accountable.

Information sharing with both Congress and the American people, is a vital element of preventing, and responding to, terrorism.

I ask my colleagues to join me in voting for H.R. 1540 because our mission has been and will continue to be focused on preventing and preparing for all issues surrounding terrorism.

We owe a debt to those who have lost their lives and we must do all that we can to prevent another attack on United States soil.

DHS ILLICIT CROSS-BORDER
TUNNEL DEFENSE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 5, 2022

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4209, the "Department of Homeland Security Illicit Cross-Border Tunnel Defense Act."

This bill authorizes for FY2022 and FY2023 U.S. Customs and Border Protection activities to identify and close tunnels criminals use to illegally cross our Southern Border.

This bill also directs the Customs and Border Patrol to develop and report to Congress a strategic plan to improve tunnel closures.

According to Customs and Border Patrol, Cross-border tunnels are dug by transnational criminal organizations to smuggle contraband into the U.S. from neighboring countries. Current detection capabilities rely on random tips and the laborious collection of human intelligence (HUMINT).

When tunnels are discovered, U.S. Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement have limited ability to access the tunnel to arrest and prosecute those involved in creating and using the tunnel.

The reason behind such limited ability is because Customs and Border Patrol lack the needed fiscal resources needed to combat

tunnel construction and usage. This bill aims to ameliorate that problem.

Mr. Speaker, after considering statements from Customs and Border Patrol, it is clear that people seeking a better life do not use illegal tunnels to achieve such ends. The tunnels are instead used by those seeking to wreak havoc and bring crime into our communities, with no other purpose.

For example, upon discovery of a 183-foot-long subterranean tunnel in Mexicali, Baja California, near the international border, Cardell T. Morant, special agent in charge of HSI San Diego said, "These types of tunnels enable drug traffickers to conduct illicit activities virtually undetected across the U.S.-Mexico border."

Morant continued, "Discovering and shutting down these tunnels deals a major blow to drug trafficking organizations because it denies them the ability to smuggle drugs, weapons and people across the border."

That tunnel had an entrance measuring 12 feet by 10 feet and extended 3 feet north of the international border wall but had no exit on the U.S. side of the border, apparently creating temporary exits on an ad hoc basis.

The Drug Trafficking Organization who designed it equipped the tunnel with electricity, ventilation, a rail system with a cart, and an electric hoist.

Mr. Speaker, these tunnels, even if they are only open for a short period, can allow traffickers to move massive amounts of drugs, humans, currency, and firearms back-and-forth between Mexico and the United States.

As Chair of the Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security Committee, I am committed to ensuring our internal and homeland security. Fighting these criminals at every turn is critical to achieving of that objective, and this bill provides the CBP additional tools for that purpose.

I am therefore proud to support H.R. 4209, the "Department of Homeland Security Illicit Cross-Border Tunnel Defense Act" and urge my colleagues to as well.

DHS TRADE AND ECONOMIC
SECURITY COUNCIL ACT OF 2021

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 5, 2022

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4476, the "Department of Homeland Security Trade and Economic Security Council Act of 2021."

This bill establishes the DHS Trade and Economic Security Council, which shall provide trade and economic security advice and recommendations to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

This includes identifying high priority risks and setting priorities for protecting the nation's trade and economic security.

The bill also establishes the position of Assistant Secretary for Trade and Economic Security within DHS's Office of Strategy, Policy, and Plans.

Mr. Speaker, the mission of the Department of Homeland Security is to secure the nation from the many threats we face.

Those threats encompass not only threats abroad but also at home, and our economic security is integral to national security.