

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.

Securing our economy means we will have safeguards in place to help prevent another economic disaster like the one brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, from which countless Americans suffered.

The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic fallout caused significant hardship. In the early months of the crisis, tens of millions of people lost their jobs.

While employment began to rebound within a few months, unemployment remained high throughout 2020.

Improving employment and substantial relief measures helped reduce the very high levels of hardship seen in the summer of 2020.

Nonetheless, considerable unmet needs remained near the end of 2021, with 20 million households reporting having too little to eat in the past seven days and 10 million households behind on rent.

In early 2022, some 3 million fewer people are employed than before the pandemic, though steady progress has been made, including in recent months.

Hardship in 2020 and 2021 would have been far worse without the extraordinary steps taken by the federal government, states, and localities to respond to the pandemic and its economic fallout.

Key hardship indicators showed strong improvement during early 2021, aided by job growth and government benefits.

Hardship rates fell especially fast thanks to the American Rescue Plan enacted on March 11, 2021, which included \$1,400 payments for most Americans as well as other assistance to struggling households.

Food hardship among adults with children also fell after the federal government began issuing monthly payments of the enhanced and expanded Child Tax Credit, which was first distributed on July 15, 2021, along with improvements in food assistance.

While those measures taken by the Biden Administration were swift and, I believe, life-saving, much of the suffering the American people went through could have been mitigated through extensive planning.

This bill provides those means, which drives my support. No more Americans should suffer because the federal government refused to plan in the case of a disaster.

The DHS Trade and Economic Security Council Act of 2021 is a legislative embodiment of that understanding, so I am proud to support it. I urge my colleagues to as well.

RESILIENT ASSISTANCE FOR MITIGATION FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONSTRUCTION BY AMERICANS 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. 5689, the Resilient Assistance for Mitigation for Environmentally Resilient Infrastructure and Construction by Americans Act or the Resilient AMERICA Act.

This bill bolsters U.S. disaster resilience and expands resources and strategies for hazard mitigation by state, local, tribal, territorial governments, and some nonprofit organizations.

The bill permits the redistribution of hazard mitigation funds that are unclaimed or unobligated for use in addressing a future major disaster.

The legislation also increases from 6 percent to 15 percent the estimated aggregate amount of grants made for national public infrastructure pre-disaster mitigation assistance so that we're better prepared to respond to disasters.

It also makes private nonprofit facilities eligible for technical and financial assistance in the implementation of cost-effective pre-disaster hazard mitigation measures.

The overall effect would be to expand the use of hazard mitigation assistance to cover certain activities pertaining to wildfires, tsunamis, and ice storms.

Additionally, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) must set aside 10 percent of the funds annually to update relevant building codes on which consensus has been reached.

FEMA must also carry out a pilot program through which states and localities award grants to individuals for retrofitting their residences with appropriate hazard mitigation measures.

This legislation will build on the resilience initiatives contained in the recent bipartisan infrastructure law and provide additional tools to reduce risks posed by the changing climate.

For every dollar invested in resilience and predisaster mitigation, the taxpayer receives anywhere from \$3.00 to \$11.00 in return.

The Resilient AMERICA Act returns unspent funds from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF), which ensures that these expiring and unspent funds will still help our communities prepare for and respond to disasters.

This bill doubles the funding stream dedicated to FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation program and extends eligibility for Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) to include private nonprofits (PNPs), which ultimately will reduce the impact and damage from a disaster.

It also expands the reach of the post-disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) to prevent utility outages in the face of extreme wildfire, wind, tsunami, and ice events.

It additionally funds residential resilience retrofit block grants to states, tribes, and territories to strengthen homes for maximum protection and safety.

It is clear that climate change is making extreme weather more intense and severe.

The snow and ice that unleashed a cascading effect of power and water outages in Texas and surrounding states was caused by a series of rare winter storms in 2021 and 2022.

My constituents were without potable water weeks after the storm, a lot of this damage was a direct consequence of a decades-long failure to maintain and upgrade our essential infrastructure.

We cannot leave our constituents living in mold-ridden homes, in the freezing cold, awaiting implementation of better, large-scale infrastructure.

We need our federal agencies and state governments to be proactive, anticipating potential infrastructure failures and working quickly to resolve them before Americans pay the price of our aged infrastructure.

This will reduce risk, save costs and encourage long-term planning and proactivity, rather

than on-the-fly response to the impending challenges to our infrastructure.

Storms are inevitable, but they don't need to become life, threatening disasters.

I ask my colleagues to join me in voting for H.R. 5689 because we all deserve better protection from the things we know are coming.

UPHOLDING THE FOUNDING DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION AND ESTABLISHING A CENTER FOR DEMOCRATIC RESILIENCE

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 House Resolution 831, which reaffirms unequivocal support for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as an alliance founded on democratic principles.

This resolution also calls on the President to use the voice and vote of the United States to adopt a new Strategic Concept for NATO that is clear about its support for shared democratic values and committed to enhancing NATO's capacity to strengthen democratic institutions within NATO member, partner, and aspirant countries.

Finally, the resolution calls on the President to use the voice and vote of the United States to establish a Center for Democratic Resilience within NATO headquarters.

First, I would like to commend all Ukrainians for their outstanding courage, resilience, fortitude, and bravery. It is truly inspiring for Americans, and for people around the world. America stands with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.

Russia's launch of a premeditated war against Ukraine is an attack on democracy and a grave violation of international law, global peace, and security.

The fighting has sparked massive displacement and has forced over two million Ukrainians to flee their homes to neighboring states and has put women and girls at heightened risk of violence.

Although the world hopes for peace, Russia's invasion of Ukraine shows no signs of ending. Russian forces continue their bombardment of Ukrainian cities, including the capital, Kyiv, and the southern port city of Mariupol.

Additionally, as a body we must condemn the recent execution style killings of Ukrainians in Bucha.

It is abundantly clear that Russian soldiers were out to torture, rape, and kill innocent Ukrainian civilians. These actions amount to war crimes, and we must treat them as such.

Therefore, along with the President I believe we must hold Russian authorities and President Putin accountable before the International Criminal Court via a War Crimes trial.

This will bring the justice so greatly deserved to those families who lost their mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters to savagery. I additionally believe that this is a good first action under NATO's new Strategic Concept, which this bill seeks to redefine.

Considering the direness of the situation in Ukraine, it is absolutely critical that NATO