

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2494, PROTECT OUR LAW ENFORCEMENT WITH IMMIGRATION CONTROL AND ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2023; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3091, FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER SERVICE WEAPON PURCHASE ACT; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H. CON. RES. 40, EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS AND CONDEMNING EFFORTS TO DEFUND OR DISMANTLE LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

SPEECH OF

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 16, 2023*

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to speak on the Rule offered in consideration of H.R. 2494—Protect Our Law enforcement with Immigration Control and Enforcement (POLICE) Act of 2023, H.R. 3091—Federal Law Enforcement Officer Service Weapon Purchase Act, and H. Con. Res. 40—Expressing support for local law enforcement officers and condemning efforts to defund or dismantle local law enforcement agencies.

It is unfortunate that this Rule in particular does not include the many amendments that have been offered by my Democratic Colleagues.

As it pertains to H.R. 2494—Protect Our Law enforcement with Immigration Control and Enforcement (POLICE) Act of 2023, this bill in particular is incredibly ill drafted and intended bill that does not seek to address illegal immigration or support for law enforcement—rather it creates punitive deportation penalties to remove individuals who are lawfully here—cruelly scaling back on legal immigration pathways rather than increasing them.

This bill is a solution in search of a problem—essentially seeking to expand the scope of people who can be deported.

It is so broadly drafted that people who pose no real danger to law enforcement could be subject to deportation.

Let's be clear, this is not about undocumented immigrants who are already removable. This is about people who have come lawfully and been admitted to the United States.

We are talking about lawful permanent residents. People who have set down roots and established themselves here in the United States.

Given that my Republican colleagues have been unwilling to add a conviction requirement or a requirement that the offense included the intention to cause harm or use violence, I would hope they would be willing to accept an amendment that allows an immigration judge or Department of Homeland Security adjudicator to look at variety of mitigating factors

when assessing if someone should be deemed deportable.

And so, my amendment offered in the Rules Committee would have allowed for mitigating factors to be taken into account before someone is deported as a result of an assault on a law enforcement officer.

As has already been discussed, this bill is attempting to add a new avenue to deport people with green cards.

If we are going to deport these people, it should be for a serious offense and there needs to be serious consideration of the circumstances pertaining to the alleged offense.

People who are convicted of serious assaults on law enforcement officers are already deportable.

Under current immigration law, if an individual is convicted of a crime of violence and sentenced to a year or more in prison, that is an aggravated felony and that person is deportable.

The same is true for someone who is convicted of a “crime involving moral turpitude,” where the crime is punishable by imprisonment of one year or more.

Both of these deportability grounds are currently invoked when there is a conviction for a serious, intentional assault on a law enforcement officer, where bodily injury occurs or is intended.

This amendment would allow the official making the final determination on deportation the ability to examine additional mitigating factors as evidence weighing against deportation.

The official would be able to take into account:

- if there was intent to harm;
- the severity of offense;
- if the act resulted in harm;
- the individual's military service (if any);
- how long the individual has been in the United States; and
- the individual's ties to the community.

These factors are vitally important for an immigration judge or other adjudicator to consider in order to ensure that we do not end up with some of the absurd results which have already been outlined today by my colleagues.

We should not be deporting long-term green card holders for minor offenses. Just as a reminder, these examples include:

A green card holder in a fire who pushes a firefighter out of the way of a falling beam. This person would have committed assault and become deportable.

Likewise, if a foreign student whose religion prohibits blood transfusions is receiving medical care from an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and she swats the EMT's hand away because she is trying to give him a blood transfusion, that student will have committed assault on a law enforcement officer and become deportable under this bill.

As another example, if a green card holder sees a fight on the street and attempts to intervene by getting between the individuals and pushing them apart. If one of the individuals was an undercover police officer performing his duties, the individual would have com-

mitted assault under this bill and become deportable.

In all of these examples, one would hope the individuals would never be charged, let alone convicted of a crime.

However, even without a conviction or intent to harm requirement, by admitting to actions that constitute assault, any of those individuals would have admitted to intentionally assaulting a law enforcement officer and would become deportable under this bill.

We should not be deporting green card holders for such minor offenses.

If the majority insists on doing so, they should at least allow adjudicators to look at mitigating factors to ensure that we are preventing good members of our society from getting swept up in this overbroad bill.

Additionally, in speaking on the Rule for H. Res. 40, Expressing support for local law enforcement officers and condemning efforts to defund or dismantle local law enforcement agencies, let me just say that it is unfortunate that the Rules Committee did not consider amendments on this bills.

Despite having the opportunity for open debate, the Committee regrettably chose to consider this legislation under a closed rule—foreclosing any ability for us to make this Resolution one that we could come together on.

Had the Rule allowed, I would have submitted an amendment to remove incendiary and vague language as well as false and misleading claims from this Resolution in an effort to gain agreement around what should be its central point—that we recognize and appreciate the service of all law enforcement officers and condemn all calls to abolish law enforcement agencies of any kind.

First and foremost, my amendment would have removed the word “local” anywhere it appears because we should state unequivocally that we support all law enforcement officers—unconditionally.

We know that all law enforcement—male, female, LGBTQ+, very experienced, rookie, patrol, or behind a desk—work tirelessly to protect us and keep us safe. Whether they are state, local, tribal, or federal agents or officers—we are grateful for their service.

These are the individuals we rely on to stop a mass shooter as they opened fire on shoppers at a mall in Texas; to guard and police our borders; to seek out predators behind a computer screen; or to help us locate an elderly or disabled loved one who has wandered off.

And so, this Resolution, as it is currently written, ignores a large portion of dedicated officers who do not fall within the definition of “local law enforcement”—a term of art of which we legislators are well aware.

My amendment would have corrected that omission and acknowledges the 137,000 federal agents and officers in the 50 states and the District of Columbia—including the United States Capitol Police.

Secondly, my amendment would have eliminated problematic, unnecessary language and misleading claims.

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

For example, my amendment would have removed the claim that leftist activists and progressive politicians actively encouraged resentment toward law enforcement, which casts a wide, unfair, and erroneous net.

It would also eliminate the claim that language regarding funding police vilifies and harms local law enforcement.

We can all agree that we need law enforcement. Of that, there is no doubt. But defunding the police means different things to different people.

From completely abolishing or disbanding law enforcement agencies—as some of my Republican colleagues have proposed we do to ATF, FBI, and even DOJ—to adding resources to other programs or services that might have been neglected in the past or to lighten the load of officers who are called upon to respond to too much.

That is why I believe my amendment would have allowed Congress to come together on this Resolution, using language on which we all can agree—that does not accuse, disparage, or attempt to shame.

Resolutions like this one make it difficult for us to commence the truly difficult work of making policing safer for law enforcement officers and the communities they serve.

I have worked for decades to adopt reasonable gun violence prevention legislation and to institute transformative policing reforms.

All too often law enforcement officers are taken by the violence we expect them to prevent. And increasingly, officers and agents are losing their lives to gun-related violence—often times with handguns.

Although the number of law enforcement officers who died in the line of duty decreased by more than 30 percent over the first six months of 2022 compared to that same period in 2021, the number of officers killed by guns increased by nearly 20 percent.

And, according to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, for the whole of 2022, the number of officers killed decreased by roughly 61 percent—that is from 586 federal, state, tribal and local law enforcement officers killed in 2021 down to 224.

Despite this dramatic decrease in line-of-duty deaths, due almost entirely to the significant reduction in deaths resulting from COVID-19, by the end of 2022, the same number of officers died by gunfire as in the previous year—reflecting a 21 percent increase over the historical average of firearms-related deaths between 2010 and 2020. This is unacceptable.

Let's get back to the real work of Congress instead of engaging in partisan gamesmanship.

Lastly, in speaking on the Rule for H.R. 3091, the Federal Law Enforcement Officer Service Weapon Purchase Act.

Rather than destroying retired, surplus handguns, this legislation would allow federal agencies to sell those handguns to federal law enforcement officers in good standing—promoting public safety, reducing waste, and recouping taxpayer funds.

Although I support this underlying legislation, I would point out that the previous version of this bill, introduced by former Congresswoman Val Demings, included a requirement that any law enforcement officer making a purchase must pass a background check as part of the transfer. But this version does not.

Congresswoman Demings's bill also wisely advised via a sense of Congress that pro-

ceeds from the sale of these handguns should be used to fund gun violence prevention or gun safety programs.

These are both excellent ideas that we should add back into this legislation.

While we might assume that no problems could arise in the sale of a handgun to an officer in good standing, a background check or records check of some kind would ensure that vital information has not been missed, overlooked, or fallen through a gap in reporting.

Questions still remain and law enforcement continues to investigate the mass shooting that occurred in Allen, Texas.

But we know that a Defense Department official said that Army staff “quickly identified” that the shooter “was a problem.”

And the Pentagon confirmed that the shooter was terminated from the Army for mental health reasons—after only three months and without completing basic training.

And yet, years later, he completed several firearms proficiency courses for his work as a security guard, amassed a cache of firearms and 13 large capacity magazines, and no one caught that this person probably should not have guns.

Even law enforcement officers purchasing firearms for official use must provide a federal firearms licensee with a certification on agency letterhead that the officer will use the firearm in their official duties and that a records check establishes that the purchasing officer has no convictions for misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence—despite there being no requirement to undergo a background check.

Background checks, and records checks in limited circumstances, are important because they help promote public trust.

By ensuring that only responsible, law-abiding individuals, including law enforcement officers, can purchase firearms and are willing to undergo background checks to do so, this program could set the example and promote safer, more secure communities across the country.

We can and we must do more when it comes to buying, selling, and trading firearms. That is why the proceeds derived from the sale of these retired, surplus handguns would be best spent on programs focused exclusively on gun violence prevention and gun safety education and training.

The money earned from these sales could help us find solutions to end the bloodshed because far too many people have died.

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RECOGNIZING THE MEN AND WOMEN IN LAW ENFORCEMENT WHO GAVE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

**HON. NICHOLAS A. LANGWORTHY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 18, 2023*

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the men and women in law enforcement who gave the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. On Friday, May 19, 2023, Sheriff James Allard and the Steuben County Sheriff's Department will host its annual Law Enforcement Memorial Service to honor those who stood on that thin blue line that keeps our families safe and our communities strong across New York's Southern Tier.

Most of us expect our loved ones to come home from work at the end of the day, but there is no such guarantee for Law Enforcement Officers as they take their post. We as a nation must come together to support our Law Enforcement and recognize the inherent danger and sacrifice that these men and women endure to keep the rest of us safe.

I also want to recognize the spouses, children and friends left behind. The pain of losing a loved one never truly goes away, and my heart goes out to those who share in that burden of service and sacrifice.

John 15:13: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

It is my humble honor to ask my colleagues to join me in remembering these brave, dedicated, and courageous men and women who were lost in the line of duty.

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY HEAD START

**HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 18, 2023*

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate a remarkable milestone in our Nation's history—the 58th anniversary of Head Start. The Head Start Project launched in 1965 as a comprehensive, anti-poverty, child development program. Since then, more than 37 million children and their families have enjoyed the benefits of Head Start.

Early in my professional career, I worked as a Head Start teacher at the Nettelhorst School in Chicago. Today, Head Start serves almost 29,000 children and their families in Illinois alone. As I reflect on my experience there and on the history of Head Start, I am still in awe at the impact it has on lifting families out of generational poverty. Head Start has proven itself to be an invaluable program, empowering children from low-income families, those suffering from homelessness and those in the foster care system, and setting them on a path towards success.

As we celebrate the 58th anniversary of this extraordinary program, let us reaffirm our commitment to Head Start, and ensure that every child in America has access to a bright future. Happy Birthday Head Start.

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CONGRATULATING THE SPRING GROVE AREA HIGH SCHOOL ROCKETRY TEAM FOR THEIR VICTORY IN THE NASA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

**HON. LLOYD SMUCKER**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 18, 2023*

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Spring Grove Area High School rocketry team for their victory in the national championship hosted by NASA.

The team has been working meticulously since last August perfecting their design, and to great effect. Despite their team's small size relative to the competition, they worked closely as a team to win against all odds, beating out 800 students from 21 states.