

authorize holding court in the Central Division of Utah in Moab and Monticello.

Adding two additional places to hold court in the Central Division of Utah would help ameliorate the consequential barriers to jury service and court attendance faced by the Federal courts in southeastern Utah. Moab and Monticello are geographically remote, making it difficult for Americans in those communities to readily exercise their Seventh Amendment rights.

We are here today because it makes no sense that litigants should incur dramatically increased travel time and administrative costs to seek justice just because someone lives far from the nearest big city.

Every day, the ratio of Federal judges to Americans decreases as our population continues to increase. That means that every day our constituents are a little less protected by the United States court system than they were the day before.

Legislation like this bill will help alleviate the burdens of our court system, and it is widely popular on both sides of the aisle. That is no small feat.

Congress first organized Utah as one judicial district in 1894 with one authorized judgeship. The State's steady growth prompted Congress to add four additional judgeships over the last 100-plus years and to increase the number of places to hold court in Utah. We are at another such inflection point today.

This bill before us has been requested by the local Federal district, as well as the Judicial Conference, to meet this moment. Small steps, such as passing this bill today, are positive moves in the right direction to help the people of Utah gain equal access to justice.

I thank Congresswoman MALOY and Congressman CURTIS for sponsoring this legislation to improve the lives of the residents of Utah, and I encourage all of my colleagues to support the bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ISSA. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Utah (Ms. MALOY).

Ms. MALOY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 8666, to amend title 28, United States Code, to authorize the holding of court for the Central Division of Utah in Moab and Monticello, Utah.

I start by thanking my colleagues for their comments and support.

Madam Speaker, allowing the Federal court to meet in Monticello and Moab allows all types of civil and criminal court proceedings in southeastern Utah, particularly jury trials.

Jury summonses for Utahns in this part of the State require a five-hour drive one way from places like Blanding to Salt Lake City, and that is a little over 300 miles.

Some criminal cases have to be heard more than four hours from where the crime occurred, and then witnesses, law enforcement, and victims bear the burden of that travel, as do the U.S.

marshals when they transport defendants in criminal cases for jury trials.

This area would also serve the Navajo Nation in the Four Corners part of Utah, where Federal courts have special jurisdiction. Important civil cases require the same kind of travel arrangements.

Madam Speaker, last week in southwestern Utah, I personally was able to witness the investiture of the first Federal judge dedicated specifically to southwestern Utah. I have seen how much that means to those communities in my district, where they can have their day in court and where they have a court in their community. They feel like they have a connection to the judicial system, and that is a really important part of maintaining faith in our institutions and faith in our judicial system. I love to see us working toward getting southeastern Utah the same opportunity.

Our courts are an indispensable part of our Constitution for peacefully resolving our disputes and for administering justice. I am proud to say that this bill helps ensure that rural Utahns have ready access to justice, the judicial branch of their government, and the court system.

Madam Speaker, I thank my fellow Utahns for their support and urge my House colleagues to pass H.R. 8666.

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Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ISSA. Madam Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, Americans deserve accessible courts close to their homes. There is no reason litigants should incur dramatically increased travel time and administrative costs to seek justice just because someone lives far from the nearest large city.

Adding two additional places to hold court in the Central Division of Utah would make the system just a little bit fairer for the people who live there.

Madam Speaker, for that reason, I urge all Members to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ISSA. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, in closing, this is yet another bill that says a great deal about the way Members of Congress know their districts. Members of Congress travel their districts. They understand the needs of it, so when a Congresswoman like Ms. MALOY comes to us, she comes knowing what she needs and has already done the homework, both in traveling and in working with the Judicial Conference.

This is yet another example where the right answer comes from the people closest to the people, the individual Representatives. The committee is proud and happy to support this commonsense change.

Madam Speaker, I urge support of the underlying 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 California (Mr. ISSA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 8666.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROTECTING AMERICANS FROM RUSSIAN LITIGATION ACT OF 2024

Mr. HUNT. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 9563) to amend title 28, United States Code, to limit the availability of civil actions affected by United States sanctions, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 9563

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 "Protecting Americans from Russian Litigation Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States—

(1) to ensure that United States persons are not disadvantaged for actions or omissions undertaken to comply with United States sanctions and export controls; and

(2) to ensure that foreign persons, or those acting on their behalf, cannot obtain compensation for any action directly or indirectly related to United States persons attempting in good faith to comply with their obligations under United States sanctions.

SEC. 3. LIMITATION ON CIVIL ACTIONS AFFECTED BY UNITED STATES SANCTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 111 of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“§ 1660. Limitation on civil actions affected by United States sanctions

“(a) LIMITATION.—Notwithstanding any provision of law, a person may not bring a civil action in Federal court to obtain relief for a claim where—

“(1) the underlying conduct or circumstances giving rise to the claim resulted from the imposition of United States sanctions impeding the performance of a contract (whether directly or indirectly, or in whole or in part); and

“(2) the United States sanctions described in paragraph (1) went into effect after the date on which the contract was executed.

“(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section may be construed to limit—

“(1) the authority of the President, or any delegate of the President (including the Office of Foreign Asset Control of the Department of the Treasury), to restrict or authorize legal services, to enter into a settlement agreement, or to enforce any lien, judgment, arbitral award, decree, or other order through execution, garnishment, or other judicial process; or

“(2) any right, remedy, or cause of action available to a victim of international terrorism, torture, extrajudicial killing, aircraft sabotage, or hostage taking, who is, or

was at the time of the victim's injury, a national of the United States, a member of the United States Armed Forces, an employee of the United States Government, or an individual performing a contract awarded by the United States Government acting within the scope of their employment, or a family member of any such victim, under any applicable State or Federal law, including—

“(A) chapter 97 of this title;

“(B) chapter 113B of title 18; and

“(C) the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012 (22 U.S.C. 8701 et seq.), and any other laws providing for the application of sanctions with respect to Iran or Syria.

“(c) UNITED STATES SANCTIONS DEFINED.—In this section, the term ‘United States sanctions’ means any prohibition, restriction, or condition on transactions involving property in which any foreign country or national thereof has an interest that is imposed by the United States to address threats to the national security, foreign policy, or economy of the United States pursuant to—

“(1) section 203 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1702); or

“(2) any other provision of law, including any export controls.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of West Virginia). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HUNT) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HUNT. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H.R. 9563.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support for H.R. 9563, the Protecting Americans from Russian Litigation Act of 2024.

The Protecting Americans from Russian Litigation Act is simple. It is about protecting American businesses that are being unfairly punished by our adversaries.

U.S. sanctions are a vital tool of American foreign policy that safeguard peace and security, but there are times when U.S. sanctions can put American businesses in difficult situations. A U.S. business that sells goods in Russia, for example, may no longer be able to fulfill orders or complete contracts because of said sanctions.

In such sanctions, their Russian customers have been known to go to Russian courts for breach of contract or other claims. Suffice it to say, American businesses aren't likely to be treated fairly in a Russian court these days.

Russia is engaging in frivolous legal action against American companies because they divested out of their country after they invaded Ukraine.

Whether it is Russia, China, Iran, or any of America's adversaries, we have

an obligation to protect America's interests and America's businesses at home and abroad. This bill would protect U.S. businesses and ensure that they are not unfairly punished for simply complying with U.S. sanctions and export controls. Similar provisions protect European companies in the EU courts, and it is high time that Americans get the same protections.

That is why this bill is so important in protecting American companies from unfair litigation. It will provide protection for U.S. companies by barring civil action against those who are forced to breach a contract because of compliance with U.S. sanctions and export controls. American companies shouldn't be forced to pay penalties for doing the right thing and complying with U.S. law.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to co-lead the Protecting Americans from Russian Litigation Act of 2024 with my colleague from Maryland, Mr. GLENN IVEY. I am also honored to have my fellow Judiciary Committee colleagues, JERRY NADLER, DARRELL ISSA, SCOTT FITZGERALD, HANK JOHNSON, and LAUREL LEE, join as original cosponsors.

Protecting our businesses from being targeted by adversaries is not a partisan issue, which is why this bill passed the Judiciary Committee with bipartisan support on a voice vote. This bill proves that even in a divided Congress, we can still work across the aisle in a bipartisan manner on the issues that matter to the United States the most.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 9563. I commend all the bill's sponsors and the Judiciary Committee for their hard work on this important bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 9563, the Protecting Americans from Russian Litigation Act of 2024, is targeted legislation to eliminate a loophole in U.S. law that could allow Russian companies to take advantage of Americans in the United States Federal court system.

Under the Biden-Harris administration, the United States has sanctioned thousands of Russians and Russian entities. Agencies across our government, including but not limited to the United States Treasury, the Department of Commerce, and the Office of Foreign Assets Control have worked to make foreign aggression unaffordable for the Russian war machine.

Sanctioned Russian entities, for the most part, have little recourse. A Russian company, for example, cannot physically force U.S. software companies to license platforms or provide them with IT services.

In some limited situations, however, sanctioned Russian entities could bring suit in the United States Federal court system. The legislation before us today would close that loophole.

H.R. 9563 amends title 28 of the United States Code to ensure that U.S.

individuals cannot be sued for good faith efforts to comply with U.S. sanctions and export controls. Good faith compliance can include refusal to perform on a purchase contract, the revocation of software credentials, or the freezing of funds of a sanctioned entity, to name a few.

For example, under this provision, a Russian diamond mine could not sue an American company in Federal court for refusing to honor an importation contract because the U.S. issued diamond sanctions in March 2022.

Our businesses here at home should not be open to liability for complying with the law, but that is exactly what happened to J.P. Morgan earlier this year.

Throughout 2024, J.P. Morgan has been embroiled in U.S. and Russian lawsuits with Russian bank VTB for complying with U.S. sanctions related to the war in Ukraine.

I recognize there are some in this country who have praised Russia for its aggression, who have suggested that we should no longer provide aid to our ally Ukraine. As Russia's war continues unabated, however, it is important we remember that Russia's aggression is a destabilizing force in the region. An emboldened Russia, bolstered by North Korean military aid, represents a clear threat to the United States' interests abroad and to our NATO allies. We should not reward their behavior by letting them take advantage of U.S. companies in our courts.

Madam Speaker, I thank my friends, Congressman HUNT and Congressman IVEY, for their work on this bill. I am glad to join them as a cosponsor in this legislation, and I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 9563.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HUNT. Madam Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. IVEY), my friend.

Mr. IVEY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 9563, the Protecting Americans from Russian Litigation Act.

I am proud to partner with my co-lead and my friend from Texas, Congressman WESLEY HUNT, on this important legislation.

I also thank Ranking Member NADLER and Representatives ISSA, FITZGERALD, LEE, and JOHNSON for their support, as well.

In response to Putin's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the United States imposed numerous sanctions and export controls on Russia.

The Protecting Americans from Russian Litigation Act would protect American companies that are targeted by Russian litigants seeking damages resulting from good faith compliance with these sanctions.

Unlike the United Kingdom and the European Union, the U.S. Federal law

does not currently protect companies complying with U.S. sanctions and export controls from litigation. Because of this, some Russian entities subjected to sanctions have sued American companies in Russian courts, resulting in significant financial penalties to American businesses in certain cases.

This bill would prevent Russian entities from seeking relief for these claims in Federal court, thereby ensuring American companies are not punished for their good faith compliance with U.S. sanctions.

Additionally, this bill does not interfere with or limit the rights, remedies, or causes of action available to victims of international terrorism.

This commonsense legislation would protect American companies and ensure Russia is held accountable for its illegal invasion of Ukraine.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support passage of this bill.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, Russian companies should not be able to use U.S. Federal law to punish U.S. entities for good faith compliance with American sanctions.

H.R. 9563 would ensure that Russia and Russian entities cannot exploit loopholes in our laws to punish United States businesses.

Because of the ongoing threat posed by Russia, U.S. sanctions are as important today as they were when the war began nearly 3 years ago. Making compliance easier on American companies is an important way to ensure the U.S. remains strong in its resolve to defend and support Ukraine.

Madam Speaker, I urge all Members to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HUNT. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend, Congressman IVEY, for co-sponsoring this bill with me.

This is about putting the priorities of the American public first, and it is about protecting the companies in this country that have done the right thing because of the sanctions that we have placed on Russia.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support 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 Texas (Mr. HUNT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 9563.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROTECTING AMERICAN INDUSTRY AND LABOR FROM INTERNATIONAL TRADE CRIMES ACT OF 2024

Mr. HUNT. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 9151) to strengthen the Department of Justice's enforcement against trade-related crimes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 9151

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 "Protecting American Industry and Labor from International Trade Crimes Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. TRADE-RELATED CRIMES DEFINED.

In this Act, the term "trade-related crimes" shall be defined as violations of law that are implicated by criminal activities in furtherance of the evasion of duties, tariffs, and other import- and export-related fees, import and export restrictions, or requirements imposed by the Tariff Act of 1930, the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, the Trade Act of 1974, or the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, as well as all other laws and regulations involving criminal activities relating to United States imports and exports, trade-based money laundering, and smuggling.

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW STRUCTURE TO PROSECUTE INTERNATIONAL TRADE CRIMES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—A task force, named program, or other similar structure to investigate and prosecute trade-related crimes, with particular emphasis on violations of the statutes enumerated in section 4(a)(2), shall be established within the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice not later than 120 days after the date on which appropriations are made available to carry out this Act, and coordinated by a supervisory criminal trial attorney selected by the Assistant Attorney General of the Criminal Division or other official designated by the Attorney General.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—To support this effort, the Attorney General shall—

(1) create within the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice new positions for criminal trial attorneys and associated support personnel responsible for leading and coordinating trade-related crime investigations and cases, including those that may significantly impact more than one district;

(2) ensure that experienced and technically qualified criminal prosecutors support the effort; and

(3) promote and ensure effective interaction with law enforcement, industry representatives, and the public in matters relating to trade-related crimes.

SEC. 4. DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF NEW TRADE CRIMES STRUCTURE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Through the efforts of the task force, named program, or other structure identified in section 3(a), the Attorney General shall accomplish each of the following:

(1) Increase the capabilities and capacity of the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice to prosecute trade-related crimes.

(2) Increase the number of trade-related crimes being investigated and prosecuted, including pursuant to health, safety, financial, and economic trade-related crimes, including—

(A) section 305 of title 13, United States Code;

(B) section 15 or 16 of the Toxic Substances Control Act (15 U.S.C. 2614 or 2615);

(C) section 371 of title 18, United States Code;

(D) section 541 of title 18, United States Code;

(E) section 542 of title 18, United States Code;

(F) section 543 of title 18, United States Code;

(G) section 545 of title 18, United States Code;

(H) section 546 of title 18, United States Code;

(I) section 554 of title 18, United States Code;

(J) section 1001 of title 18, United States Code;

(K) section 1341 of title 18, United States Code;

(L) section 1343 of title 18, United States Code;

(M) section 1349 of title 18, United States Code;

(N) section 1956 of title 18, United States Code;

(O) section 1957 of title 18, United States Code;

(P) section 2320 of title 18, United States Code; and

(Q) section 301 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 331).

For the purposes of this Act, this list does not include violations of national security-related laws and regulations, including the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2771 et seq.), International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.), Export Control and Reform Act (50 U.S.C. 4801 et seq.), and the Trading with the Enemy Act (50 U.S.C. 4305(b)).

(3) Participate in basic and advanced training events with Homeland Security Investigations, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and other Federal agencies and provide technical assistance, where appropriate, to Homeland Security Investigations, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and other Federal agencies with respect to the investigation and prosecution of trade-related crimes.

(4) Develop multi-jurisdictional responses and partnerships with respect to trade-related crimes through informational, administrative, and technological support to other Federal agencies and agencies of countries that are trading partners of the United States, as a means for such agencies to acquire the necessary knowledge, personnel, and specialized equipment to investigate and prosecute trade-related crimes.

(5) Participate in nationally coordinated investigations in any case in which the Attorney General determines such participation to be necessary, as permitted by the available resources of the Department of Justice.

(6) Ensure that all components that enforce laws against trade-related crimes regularly consult with each other.

(b) ABSENCE OF EXCLUSION OF PURSUING OTHER REMEDIES.—Litigation by the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice shall not preclude additional criminal prosecution or civil action against trade-related violations. Nothing in this Act shall prevent the Criminal Division, Civil Division, and other Department of Justice components from pursuing enforcement action where appropriate.

SEC. 5. ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS.

The Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security, shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary, Committee on Ways and Means, and Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on the Judiciary and Committee on Finance of the Senate a report on the work of the Department of Justice with respect to investigation and enforcement of trade-related crimes. Specifically, the report shall—

(1) be submitted not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, not later than February 1 of each year that begins after the submission of the first report;

(2) include annual statistics on the volume of publicly charged trade-related crimes and indictments;

(3) include a summary on how the funds appropriated for trade-related crimes were utilized in the prior reporting period, including staff and operating expenses; and

(4) provide an estimate of any additional funding needed to combat trade-related crimes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HUNT) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HUNT. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H.R. 9151.