

Wipe every tear from our eyes and grant us the peace in knowing that the gift of Congressman SYLVESTER TURNER's memory will be both a blessing and an inspiration to us as we seek to glorify You, as he did, in the living of these days.

In Your eternal name, we pray.
Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JOHNSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNIZING ESSENTIAL LEGISLATION THAT SUPPORTS OUR NATION'S VETERANS

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize essential legislation that supports our Nation's veterans. We must ensure that our veterans are cared for and have the resources they need to thrive so no veteran is left behind.

Currently, too many of our veterans struggle with the difficulties of transitioning back into civilian life and far too many continue to face homelessness or housing instability.

The Department of Veterans Affairs created the Grant and Per Diem program to help address this issue.

Unfortunately, the application process for GPD grants is complex and burdensome, often discouraging participation from groups that can make a real difference.

To correct these inefficiencies, I am introducing the bipartisan Simplifying Veterans Assistance Act, which requires the VA to provide clear guidance and best practices for organizations applying for GPD grants.

By simplifying the GPD application process and enhancing communication between the VA and community organizations, we ensure that those dedicated to serving our veterans have the necessary tools and resources to combat veteran homelessness effectively.

DON'T VOTE FOR A BILL THAT DISMANTLES THE GOVERNMENT

(Ms. JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the

House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, the House is soon going to vote on some legislation that guts Medicaid and it slashes healthcare for veterans. It cuts funding from important infrastructure projects and takes food away from families struggling to survive.

We have a choice: We can invest in the people we serve, or we can let Republicans burn it down.

I am fighting for \$2 million to help our Dallas Police Officers tackle violent crime, gangs, and drug trafficking. I am working to secure over \$1 million to upgrade security at Dallas Fort Worth International Airport because keeping Americans safe should not be up for debate.

We can fund these programs, but instead of trying to make government work, Republicans are doing everything they can to break it, stripping away services that millions of people rely on.

I will not vote for a bill that carries out Trump's mission to dismantle our government. I will not vote for a bill that takes healthcare, food, and security from the people who need it most, especially as they work to line the pockets of Trump and his friends on the backs of hardworking Americans.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleague to do what is right and vote "no" on this bill. Let's stand up for the people who sent us here.

HONORING THE 100th BIRTHDAY OF A TRUE AMERICAN HERO, LIEUTENANT COMMANDER JOHN PAUL SURPRENANT

(Mr. HARIDOPOLOS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HARIDOPOLOS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a true American hero, Lieutenant Commander John Paul Surprenant, a retired officer in the United States Navy, as we celebrate his upcoming 100th birthday and service to our country.

Paul joined the Navy as a seaman recruit in 1943. He rose through the ranks to become a lieutenant commander over a distinguished 30-year career. He served on 13 Navy vessels, including the USS *Tirante* during World War II, where his crew was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation. He is the last surviving member of that crew.

Beyond his wartime service, his greatest legacy is his family: his wife, Louise, a fellow Navy veteran, and their five children, two of whom served in uniform.

Now retired in my hometown of Melbourne, Florida, Paul remains a proud patriot whose century of life has been dedicated to the service of our country and his family.

Madam Speaker, today, I honor Lieutenant Commander Surprenant. The Nation salutes him.

ENSURE OUR GROWERS HAVE ACCESS TO CUTTING-EDGE PRECISION AGRICULTURE TECHNOLOGIES

(Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I rise to highlight the Promoting Precision Agriculture Act, legislation I introduced with the gentleman from Kansas, TRACEY MANN.

Agriculture is our top industry in North Carolina. The bill would establish a partnership between the Federal Government and the private sector to create voluntary interconnectivity standards and prioritize the cybersecurity needs for precision agriculture technologies.

Precision agriculture includes robotics, sensors, monitors, and drones to help growers increase efficiency, potentially boosting crop yields while lowering costs for fuel, fertilizer, and other inputs.

It helps our farmers to be successful, profitable, and productive. We must ensure our growers have access to the cutting-edge precision agriculture technologies and broadband services necessary to do what they do best, and that is feed, fuel, and clothe the American people.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. Foyxx). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 9 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1600

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BENTZ) at 4 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

SUBTERRANEAN BORDER DEFENSE ACT

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 495) to require annual reports on counter illicit cross-border tunnel operations, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 495

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 “Subterranean Border Defense Act”.

SEC. 2. ANNUAL REPORTS ON COUNTER ILLICIT CROSS-BORDER TUNNEL OPERATIONS.

Paragraph (2) of section 7134(a) of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (Public Law 117-263; 6 U.S.C. 257 note) is amended by inserting “and annually thereafter” after “development of the strategic plan”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 495.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 495, the Subterranean Border Defense Act.

The collective failure of the last administration and its refusal to secure our borders allowed transnational criminal organizations to go unchecked in their efforts to infiltrate the United States.

Illicit tunnel pathways into our country have only made it easier for criminals to bring their illegal businesses into the homeland, from human trafficking to drug smuggling deadly fentanyl and other drugs that are being funneled from nations afar, including Communist China. Fortunately, President Trump, border czar Homan, and Secretary Noem have arrived to set the situation right.

H.R. 495 will require DHS to provide annual reports on its efforts to counter illicit tunnel operations at our borders.

I commend the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CRANE) for his leadership on this effort, and I urge strong support for the measure.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in strong support of H.R. 495 because we need more oversight and information on the threat of tunnels going under our border.

It is a fact that tunnels, clandestine tunnels, under our borders have been an issue for not years but decades, and it is time we take action. It is time that Congress be informed of our progress to prevent such tunnels from

happening. That is why I support H.R. 495.

Tunnels are used by transnational criminal organizations looking to make a profit at the expense of our taxpayers. Over the last 30 years, cartels have created illegal and sophisticated tunnels under our border walls to smuggle drugs into our country, as well as money and weapons out of our country.

This bill creates an annual reporting requirement to keep Congress informed on the Department of Homeland Security's efforts to counter illicit cross-border tunnels and hold the bad actors accountable.

This information will help us, Congress, address the issue at the border and let us, as Members of Congress, better respond to the challenges.

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

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CRANE), the author of this bill.

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in favor of my bill, the Subterranean Border Defense Act, a bipartisan piece of border security legislation that I have introduced alongside the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA).

Effective border security is created by overlapping deterrents, something we always need at our borders. The Subterranean Border Defense Act would help us address the growing threat of illicit cross-border tunnels by requiring annual reports to Congress on counter-tunneling operations, fortifying our security system at the border.

Put simply, this would help ensure that Congress has the necessary data to forge another much-needed layer of defense.

As transnational criminal organizations continue to grow in both size and sophistication, illicit cross-border tunnels along the southwest border of the United States represent a significant and growing threat to national security. Congress must address this deadly threat and ensure U.S. Customs and Border Protection has the resources needed to acquire counter-tunnel technology.

Since 1990, officials have discovered more than 140 tunnels that have breached the U.S. border, with an 80 percent increase in tunnel activity occurring since 2008.

Over the years, CBP has worked to combat these tunnels as part of their overall strategy. In fact, the United States conducts research, development, and test activities with Israel, which must contend with a vast network of Hamas tunnels originating in the Gaza Strip. This partnership helps us to detect and destroy tunnels in our respective countries.

The FY23 NDAA mandated that CBP submit a one-time report to Congress on a strategic plan to counter illicit cross-border tunnel operations. This

singular report has since led Congress to conduct critical oversight and has enabled CBP to formalize many of the processes, technologies, and resources needed to counteract illicit tunnels under the U.S.-Mexico border.

My bill would expand on this success by mandating a report every year going forward to ensure Congress has sufficient knowledge and oversight regarding this dynamic threat.

With border crossings thankfully going down since January, I think it is safe to assume this will drive threats at our border underground through these tunnels.

I thank Mr. CORREA for co-leading with me, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this legislation for a secure southern border.

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this bill is an important step in the right direction. Receiving information from the Department of Homeland Security on an annual basis will improve Congress' efforts to counter illicit cross-border tunnels and hold bad actors accountable. I support this bipartisan piece of legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for the purpose of closing.

I again thank both of my colleagues, Mr. CORREA and Mr. CRANE, for putting this together.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 495, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 495.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays. The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

DHS BIODETECTION IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 706) to improve the biodetection functions of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 706

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 “DHS Biodefense Improvement Act”.