

I thank Delegate STACEY PLASKETT of the U.S. Virgin Islands for her leadership on this bill, and I thank Representative FULCHER, as well, for this effort.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT).

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member PALLONE, this body, and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for recognizing the national security interest of this legislation, H.R. 1737, to direct the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to submit to Congress a report containing an assessment of the value, cost, and feasibility of developing this transatlantic submarine fiber optic cable that has been discussed.

Today, hundreds of undersea fiber optic cables connect North America to Europe, South America, and Asia, but not a single cable directly links North America to the African Continent. This represents both a strategic vulnerability and a missed economic opportunity.

The diaspora link act represents an opportunity to establish a high-speed, secure telecommunications data connection to Africa from American soil to facilitate deepened economic connections and aid American regional security assistance. This link will allow America to establish a direct digital presence on the African Continent, both to capitalize on emerging economic opportunities and to protect our Nation against cyber and military threats.

The study will examine Lagos, Nigeria, and Accra, Ghana, as potential African landing points. Both cities serve as established telecommunications hubs with existing undersea cable infrastructure linking West Africa to Europe and South America. The presence of American embassies in both locations offers critical security benefits for cable operations.

Our adversarial nations are rapidly expanding their influence across the African Continent, and a direct American telecommunications link to the continent is a strategic necessity.

China has systematically expanded its telecommunications and military presence across Africa. The Chinese multinational Huawei has constructed roughly 70 percent of Africa's information technology infrastructure. China is pursuing the same strategy in the Caribbean, where at least 10 nations have signed Belt and Road agreements that open their nations to Chinese investment and influence.

China's expansion into Africa and the Caribbean makes establishing our own direct telecommunications link to these regions a strategic necessity.

Russia, as well, has destabilized Africa through disinformation campaigns and mercenary operations, positioning itself as an alternative to Western partnerships while fueling antidemocratic sentiment. This strategy has made Africa a flash point in the global strategic competition between Russia and the West. Moscow's support for authoritarian governments includes backing multiple coups in Nigeria, Mali, Sudan, Guinea, and Burkina Faso that directly threaten democratic progress.

Our adversaries are systematically exploiting Africa's vast mineral wealth while we lack direct access. Russia and China are extracting critical resources across the continent: uranium from Niger, the world's seventh largest producer; gold and lithium from Mali's extensive deposits; cobalt from the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and bauxite and phosphate from Burkina Faso. These materials are essential to technology as well as defense industries. We cannot afford to remain on the sidelines.

Additionally, there are many African countries that want to engage with us, that want to do business with us. Burkina Faso and Angola have reached out to our country to engage more, and this is an additional way for us to do that.

Additionally, let's look at the populations. Africa has almost a billion individuals under the age of 30. The United States has only 100 million. The entire European Union has 140 million. These young people represent a growing economic as well as potential allyship for the United States, and we all know that social media and internet commerce is the mechanism by which we are able to engage them.

An undersea cable linking the American East Coast to Africa via the United States Virgin Islands would create both a critical national security asset and a digital commerce expressway to strengthen America's global political, economic, and military positions. Such undersea cable development would leverage the Virgin Islands' already existing telecommunications infrastructure, which already connects the territory to South America and the mainland in the United States and facilitates additional regional links.

The diaspora link act enables the United States to counter Chinese influence and global telecommunications while leveraging our existing strategic assets. The U.S. Virgin Islands not only hosts established cable infrastructure but maintains a National Guard installation on St. Croix with an adjacent military support airport, assets that could directly support and secure these telecommunications operations.

The Virgin Islands, the most southern point of the United States, sits at

the crossroads of centuries-old transit routes, and we now have a chance to transform this strategic location into a cornerstone of American telecommunications infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Energy and Commerce Committee for its unanimous support of this legislation through regular order. This bill passed the House in the 118th Congress with bipartisan support and identical text.

I thank my colleague, Congressman FULCHER, for his continued partnership to advance America's telecommunications as well as military and national security.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this critical measure. Congress must protect American security interests in the Caribbean and strengthen our partnership across the Atlantic with our African partners.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, obviously, from what you are hearing from the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT), this is an important bill in terms of not only the Virgin Islands but strengthening our links, communications, and economy with Africa, as well.

For all those reasons, I urge that we support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I commend the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for offering this very important bill, and I encourage a "yes" vote on this particular bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1737.

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.

#### ROMANCE SCAM PREVENTION ACT

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2481) to require online dating service providers to provide fraud ban notifications to online dating service-members, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2481

*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 "Romance Scam Prevention Act".

#### SEC. 2. ROMANCE SCAM PREVENTION.

(a) FRAUD BAN NOTIFICATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—An online dating service provider shall provide to a member of the online dating service a fraud ban notification if

the member has received a message through the online dating service from a banned member of the online dating service.

(2) REQUIRED CONTENTS.—A fraud ban notification under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) The username or other profile identifier of the banned member, as well as the most recent time when the member to whom the notification is being provided sent or received a message through the online dating service to or from the banned member.

(B) A statement, as applicable, that the banned member identified in subparagraph (A) may have been using a false identity or attempting to defraud members.

(C) A statement that a member should not send cash or another form of currency or personal financial information to another member.

(D) Information regarding best practices to avoid online fraud or being defrauded by a member of an online dating service, which may be provided through a link to another web page or disclosure.

(E) Contact information to reach the customer service department of the online dating service provider.

(3) MANNER AND TIMING.—

(A) MANNER.—A fraud ban notification under paragraph (1) shall be—

(i) clear and conspicuous; and

(ii) provided by email, text message, or, if consented to by the member receiving the fraud ban notification, other appropriate means of communication.

(B) TIMING.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in clauses (ii) and (iii), an online dating service provider shall provide a fraud ban notification under paragraph (1) not later than 24 hours after the fraud ban is initiated against the banned member.

(ii) DELAY BASED ON JUDGMENT OF PROVIDER.—If, in the judgment of the online dating service provider, the circumstances require a fraud ban notification under paragraph (1) to be provided after the 24-hour period described in clause (i), the online dating service provider shall, except as provided in clause (iii), provide the notification not later than 3 days after the day on which the fraud ban is initiated against the banned member.

(iii) DELAY UPON REQUEST OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIAL.—If, due to an ongoing investigation, a law enforcement official requests an online dating service provider to delay providing a fraud ban notification under paragraph (1) beyond the time when the notification is required to be provided under clause (i) or (ii), the online dating service provider—

(I) may not provide the notification before the end of the period of delay (including any extension of such period) requested by the law enforcement official; and

(II) shall provide the notification not later than 3 days after the last day of the period of delay (including any extension of such period) requested by the law enforcement official.

(4) SAFE HARBOR APPLICABILITY.—An online dating service provider is not liable to a member, a banned member, or a former member for a claim based on an online dating service provider's action to comply with the requirements for providing a fraud ban notification under this subsection.

(b) ENFORCEMENT.—

(1) ENFORCEMENT BY THE COMMISSION.—

(A) UNFAIR OR DECEPTIVE ACTS OR PRACTICES.—A violation of this section or a regulation promulgated under this section shall be treated as a violation of a rule defining an unfair or deceptive act or practice under section 18(a)(1)(B) of the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 57a(a)(1)(B)).

(B) POWERS OF COMMISSION.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall enforce this section in the same manner, by the same means, and with the same jurisdiction, powers, and duties as though all applicable terms and provisions of the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 41 et seq.) were incorporated into and made a part of this section.

(ii) PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES.—Any person who violates this section shall be subject to the penalties and entitled to the privileges and immunities provided in the Federal Trade Commission Act.

(iii) AUTHORITY PRESERVED.—Nothing in this section may be construed to limit the authority of the Commission under any other provision of law.

(2) ENFORCEMENT BY STATES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), in any case in which the attorney general of a State has reason to believe that an interest of the residents of the State has been or is threatened or adversely affected by the engagement of any person in an act or practice that violates this section, the attorney general of the State may, as parens patriae, bring a civil action on behalf of the residents of the State in an appropriate district court of the United States to obtain appropriate relief.

(B) RIGHTS OF THE COMMISSION.—

(i) NOTICE TO THE COMMISSION.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (III), before initiating a civil action under subparagraph (A), the attorney general of a State shall notify the Commission in writing that the attorney general intends to bring such civil action.

(II) CONTENTS.—The notification required by subparagraph (I) shall include a copy of the complaint to be filed to initiate the civil action.

(III) EXCEPTION.—If it is not feasible for the attorney general of a State to provide the notification required by subparagraph (I) before initiating a civil action under subparagraph (A), the attorney general shall notify the Commission immediately upon instituting the civil action.

(ii) INTERVENTION BY THE COMMISSION.—Upon receiving the notice required by clause (I), the Commission may intervene in the civil action and, upon intervening—

(I) be heard on all matters arising in the civil action; and

(II) file petitions for appeal of a decision in the civil action.

(C) LIMITATION ON STATE ACTION WHILE FEDERAL ACTION IS PENDING.—If the Commission has instituted a civil action for a violation of this section or a regulation promulgated under this section, no attorney general of a State may bring an action under subparagraph (A) during the pendency of that action against any defendant named in the complaint of the Commission for any violation of this section or a regulation promulgated under this section alleged in the complaint.

(D) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—For purposes of bringing a civil action under this subsection, nothing in this subsection may be construed to prevent the attorney general of a State from exercising the powers conferred on the attorney general by the laws of the State to conduct investigations, to administer oaths or affirmations, or to compel the attendance of witnesses or the production of documentary or other evidence.

(E) ACTIONS BY OTHER STATE OFFICIALS.—In addition to a civil action brought by an attorney general under subparagraph (A), any other consumer protection officer of a State who is authorized by the State to do so may bring a civil action under subparagraph (A), subject to the same requirements and limitations that apply under this paragraph to a civil action brought by an attorney general.

(c) ONE NATIONAL STANDARD.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A State, or political subdivision thereof, may not maintain, enforce, prescribe, or continue in effect a provision of any law, rule, regulation, requirement, or standard having the force and effect of law of the State, or political subdivision of the State, that requires an online dating service provider to notify, prohibits an online dating service provider from notifying, or otherwise affects the manner in which an online dating service provider is required or permitted to notify, a member of the online dating service that the member has received a message from or sent a message to a member whose account or profile on the online dating service is the subject of a fraud ban through the online dating service.

(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—This subsection may not be construed to preempt any law of a State or political subdivision of a State relating to contracts or torts.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) BANNED MEMBER.—The term “banned member” means a member of an online dating service whose account or profile on the online dating service is the subject of a fraud ban.

(2) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission” means the Federal Trade Commission.

(3) FRAUD BAN.—The term “fraud ban” means the termination or suspension of the account or profile of a member of an online dating service because, in the judgment of the online dating service provider, there is a significant risk the member will attempt to obtain cash or another form of currency from another member through fraudulent means.

(4) MEMBER.—The term “member” means an individual who—

(A) submits to an online dating service provider the information required by the provider to establish an account or profile on the online dating service; and

(B) is allowed by the provider to establish such an account or profile.

(5) ONLINE DATING SERVICE.—The term “online dating service” means a service that—

(A) is provided through a website or a mobile application; and

(B) offers members access to dating or romantic relationships with other members by arranging or facilitating the social introduction of members.

(6) ONLINE DATING SERVICE PROVIDER.—The term “online dating service provider” means a person engaged in the business of offering an online dating service.

(7) STATE.—The term “State” means each State of the United States, the District of Columbia, each commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States, and each federally recognized Indian Tribe.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall take effect on the date that is 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BILIRAKIS. 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 in the RECORD on this particular bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2481, the Romance Scam Prevention Act, led by Representative VALADAO. This legislation would require online dating platforms to notify users when they have interacted with someone who has been removed from the platform for fraudulent activity.

Online dating platforms have been around for over 30 years, and they continue to grow in popularity. While they can help people connect, their accessibility and digital format have also created new risks, unfortunately.

The FTC, the Federal Trade Commission, reported that romance scams lost victims \$1.3 billion in 2022. I have constituents who were victims, unfortunately. Many of those affected were elderly individuals who lost their retirement savings. What a shame.

By requiring a fraud ban notification, we can put a stop to these senseless scams and protect vulnerable consumers.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in voting in favor of H.R. 2481, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of H.R. 2481, the Romance Scam Prevention Act.

As more consumers report using online dating services, it is important that they are made aware of potential harms. This bill ensures that when an online dating service bans a user for fraud, it notifies all the other users who have been in contact with that banned person on the service. This will help to reduce the number of people who fall victim to identified fraudsters looking to extort money from dating app users.

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Mr. Speaker, this bill is an important first step in addressing harm in the online dating space. However, there is a lot more to be done, and vulnerable consumers need a strong and independent Federal Trade Commission to prosecute fraudsters and scammers and to protect them from having their emotions exploited for financial gain.

I encourage my Republican colleagues to support this legislation as well as the bipartisan FTC that ensures consumer protection measures like this one are fully and fairly enforced for all Americans. I thank Representatives PETTERSEN and VALADAO for their leadership on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from the great State of California (Mr. VALADAO), a very effective Member of Congress.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge support for my bill, the Romance Scam Prevention Act. Every year, millions of Americans from all ages and backgrounds use dating apps and websites to make connections.

For many, online dating has made it easier to build relationships. Unfortunately, there are countless stories of criminals using these sites for fraudulent activity.

While it is sadly common to see users lie about things like their age and occupation, romance scammers use fake profiles to develop connections and emotionally or financially exploit unsuspecting users. According to the Federal Trade Commission, Americans lost over \$1.1 billion in 2023 alone, with senior citizens being the age group most at risk.

There have been countless stories of people being conned out of their entire life savings, all because they believed they had found love online. People who meet online often take their conversations to other communication platforms and might not know that they are talking to someone who has been removed from the original dating app.

This bill requires dating platforms to issue fraud ban notifications to users who have interacted with an account who has been removed for fraudulent activity.

As criminals are becoming more sophisticated when it comes to exploiting victims online, it is time to put safeguards in place to protect users from financial fraud.

I thank Chairman GUTHRIE and his staff at the Committee on Energy and Commerce for their work on this important bill, as well as my co-leads, Representatives BRITTANY PETTERSEN, TOM SUOZZI, and CRAIG GOLDMAN.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I will close by saying I do think this is an important bill for avoiding fraud. I am very concerned about fraud on these dating service apps. I commend Mr. VALADAO for bringing this forward, and I urge everyone to support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I urge a “yes” vote on this particular bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2481.

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.

#### GLOBAL INVESTMENT IN AMERICAN JOBS ACT OF 2025

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1679) to direct the Secretary of Commerce, in coordination with the heads of other relevant Federal departments and agencies, to conduct an interagency review of and report to Congress on ways to increase the global competitiveness of the United States

in attracting foreign direct investment.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1679

*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 “Global Investment in American Jobs Act of 2025”.

#### SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the ability of the United States to attract foreign direct investment from responsible private-sector entities based in trusted countries is directly linked to the long-term economic prosperity, global competitiveness, and security of the United States;

(2) it is a top national priority to enhance the global competitiveness, economic prosperity, and security of the United States by—

(A) removing unnecessary barriers to foreign direct investment from responsible private-sector entities based in trusted countries and the jobs that such investment creates throughout the United States;

(B) promoting policies to ensure the United States remains the premier global destination to invest, hire, innovate, provide services, and manufacture products;

(C) promoting policies to ensure the United States remains the global leader in developing and deploying cutting-edge technologies, such as self-driving vehicle technology, artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, quantum computing, blockchain; and

(D) promoting policies that maintain and expand resilient supply chains and reduce the dependence of the United States on supply chains from China;

(3) maintaining the United States commitment to an open investment policy with private-sector entities based in trusted countries encourages other countries to reciprocate and enable the United States to open new markets abroad for United States companies and their products;

(4) while foreign direct investment by responsible private-sector entities based in trusted countries can enhance the United States economic strength, policies regarding foreign direct investment should reflect security interests and should not disadvantage domestic investors or companies;

(5) United States efforts to attract foreign direct investment from responsible private-sector entities based in trusted countries should be consistent with efforts to maintain and improve domestic standard of living;

(6) as digital information becomes increasingly important to the United States economy and the development of new technologies and services that will be crucial to the country's competitiveness in the 21st century global economy, barriers including data localization and infringement of intellectual property rights must be further addressed; and

(7) foreign direct investment by companies or other entities owned, directed, supported, or influenced by the Chinese Communist Party is a threat to U.S. security and merits an aggressive policy framework to protect U.S. interests, jobs, intellectual property, and security.

#### SEC. 3. FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT REVIEW.

(a) REVIEW.—The Secretary of Commerce and the Comptroller General of the Government Accountability Office, in consultation with the Federal Interagency Investment Working Group established by Executive Order 13577 and in consultation with the heads of other relevant Federal departments