

my colleagues to join in advancing it on the floor today.

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

Mr. BERA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this bill to reauthorize the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, or USCIRF, through fiscal year 2028.

Since its establishment 28 years ago, USCIRF has served as an independent, bipartisan watchdog monitoring conditions on the ground and providing policy recommendations to Congress and the administration.

Its work reinforces the principles reflected in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and helps ensure that our advocacy for religious freedom is consistent, credible, and universal.

True religious liberty cannot mean protection for only a favored few. It extends to all people.

A consistent defense of freedom of thought, consciousness, religion, and belief, or nonbelief, strengthens our voice globally and advances global stability, security, and prosperity.

When governments suppress religious belief, broader repression often follows. In many parts of the world, severe restrictions on religion are an early warning sign of authoritarian consolidation and instability.

Mr. Speaker, for these reasons, we need to reauthorize this commission so they can continue to do their good work.

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

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank our very distinguished chairman for his strong leadership on religious freedom generally but for this legislation as well. I do appreciate that so much. I want to thank BRAD SHERMAN, who is the Democratic cosponsor, for his leadership in backing this important reauthorization of the United States International Religious Freedom Commission.

As I think Members know, USCIRF was created—the acronym we all use for the commission—by Congress to protect religious freedom through the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, a historic landmark law authored by Frank Wolf in 1998.

USCIRF's high-quality reporting and high-profile commissioners influence the State Department's work on religious freedom, and also provide Congress with insights with its incisive commentary, making all of the work that all of us do, especially State, more transparent, honest, and effective.

The Commission defends the universal right to freedom of religion abroad. It sponsors hearings, fact-finding trips, reviews reports from all comers, especially NGOs and others, religious communities who are, unfortu-

nately, being repressed in many countries of the world. They make very, very good recommendations that often are followed.

□ 1610

I also point out that I have probably chaired more than 700 hearings on human rights over the years. I have been here since the year 1980. I always want to have somebody from the commission there, always. They come. They give whatever—the name of the country. They give their insights after a great deal of due diligence. And what a difference that makes in terms of our understanding what is actually going on.

USCIRF commissioners are appointed by the President and the congressional leadership. There are nine of them of both parties, so it is totally bipartisan.

Last month, our former colleague, Vicky Hartzler, completed a distinguished term on the commission. None of you would be surprised to know that she was very active as the chair of the commission and did a magnificent job. She was appointed by Speaker JOHNSON, as was Maureen Ferguson, who also just completed her term and did so with great distinction.

Again, I remind my colleagues, it was our very good friend, Frank Wolf, who, in 1998, with great legislative skill, commitment, and driving passion, drove the adoption of a singularly important human rights law, the International Religious Freedom Act, or IRFA. This law created a system for naming and taking action of what was now called Countries of Particular Concern, or CPCs.

History has shown that when the United States elevates religious freedom and that priority is conveyed to Countries of Particular Concern, conditions often change for the positive. Prisoners of conscience gain their freedom, and progress is made toward the free exercise of religious liberty.

As the author of the Frank Wolf International Religious Freedom Act of 2016, which updated Frank's legislation, I do follow the CPC recommendations very closely. In that law, we created entities of particular concern, like Boko Haram and some of these horrible organizations that kill people simply because of their faith.

The USCIRF acts as a true watchdog, recommending with incisive commentary that the State Department designated countries not leave somebody off because of political considerations. If they are committing human rights abuses against people of faith, they need to be held to account.

CPC is followed by a two-step process: first a designation, followed thereafter by sanctions, more than 18 of them prescribed into law. We are hoping that they won't be used. We want to see real reform and people protected like in China and elsewhere from people who wish them ill.

I again thank our Members, BRAD SHERMAN, GUS BILIRAKIS, HENRY

CUELLAR, and all the others who have supported this bill and ask my colleagues to support the legislation.

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

Mr. Speaker, reauthorizing USCIRF would ensure continuity in its important work. Protecting religious freedoms abroad advances both our values and interests, and it promotes stability and respect for fundamental rights. Join me in supporting this bill.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the right to freely exercise your religion without fear of persecution is an unalienable right that belongs to all people.

By passing this bill, the U.S. Congress is recommitting itself to that fundamental truth, that fundamental freedom.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill, and I call upon the Senate to take up and pass H.R. 1744 as soon as possible.

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. MAST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1744, as amended.

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

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to extend and authorize annual appropriations for the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom through December 31, 2028."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROTECTING EUROPE FROM ANTISEMITIC CRIME AND EXTREMISM ACT

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6297) to require the Department of State to provide briefings on antisemitism in Europe, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6297

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 Europe from Antisemitic Crime and Extremism Act" or the "PEACE Act".

SEC. 2. CONSULTATIONS ON ANTISEMITISM IN EUROPE.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs, in consultation with other relevant officials of the Department of State, should assess the persistent and growing threat of antisemitism and acts of international terrorism in Europe as a matter of importance to the foreign policy of the United States; and

(2) the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, acting through the Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs, should diplomatically engage governments of countries of apparent concern on efforts for transatlantic cooperation to counter and address antisemitism and acts of international terrorism that may threaten transatlantic stability, the safety and security of United States citizens, and institutions abroad.

(b) CONSULTATION.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for two years, the Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs shall consult with the appropriate congressional committees on the matters described in subsection (a).

(c) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAST) and the gentleman from California (Mr. BERA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MAST. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H.R. 6297.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, anti-Semitism and international terrorism in Europe are real threats that undermine regional stability, transatlantic security, and the safety of American citizens living abroad. This threat skyrocketed after Hamas' October 7 terrorist attack. France recorded over 1,000 anti-Semitic incidents in just 1 month alone. Germany experienced a 240 percent increase. More recent incidents further underscore that threat.

On October 2, 2025, a deadly anti-Semitic attack at a Manchester synagogue during Yom Kippur killed two and injured others. In March 2025, a 22-year-old was arrested in Madrid for attempting to set fire to Rimmon Kosher, a busy kosher restaurant. Authorities charged him with anti-Semitic hate crime, attempted murder, and arson.

In March of 2026, two suspects on a motor scooter detonated an explosive device against the outer wall of an Orthodox Jewish school in Amsterdam. Also, in March of 2026, an explosive device detonated in front of a historic synagogue in Belgium during the early morning hours.

Beyond anti-Semitic attacks, Europe continues to face threats from the Islamic extremism. In February of 2025, French authorities classified a deadly knife attack in Mulhouse as an Islamic terrorist act, while German authorities

disrupted and investigated multiple suspected Islamist-inspired plots during 2025.

This legislation builds on the Trump administration's effort to combat anti-Semitism and strengthen international counterterrorism cooperation. It ensures continued U.S. diplomatic engagement with European allies, and it requires regular consultations with Congress.

I thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FINE), my colleague and the sponsor of this bill, for his leadership on the issue. The bill passed the Committee on Foreign Affairs with broad bipartisan support. I urge my colleagues to join me in advancing it on the floor today.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the PEACE Act.

Acts of anti-Semitism are on the rise globally. This is also true in Europe, where increasingly vocal fringe political movements, particularly far-right movements, are emboldened by increased political discourse on both sides of the Atlantic that harkens back to the unacceptable political rhetoric of old.

Combating anti-Semitism has long been a priority for both Democratic and Republican administrations and has been a central element of U.S. foreign policy for years.

This bill expresses the sense of Congress that the State Department should assess and address the threat of anti-Semitism in Europe and requires consultation with Congress on addressing these threats.

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

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FINE).

Mr. FINE. Mr. Speaker, one would have thought after October 7, 2023, the world's worst attack against Jews since the Holocaust, which obviously took place in Europe, there would have been an outpouring of sympathy and less anti-Semitism in the world. In Europe, in particular, that is not what happened.

A study conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights recorded an increase of up to 400 percent in anti-Semitic activity since October 7. That same study also found that 96 percent of European Jews that were surveyed, almost every single one said that they encounter anti-Semitism in their daily lives—not once a month, not once a year, but every day in their actual existence.

Crimes linked to anti-Semitism are on the rise all throughout Europe. Even our major allies in the region have seen a dramatic increase.

France saw 1,600 anti-Semitic acts in 2024, a 300 percent increase since before October 7. The United Kingdom had

over 3,500 anti-Semitic incidents in 2024, up dramatically from the 1,600, which is still too many, that they had before October 7, 2023.

Statistics only show part of the picture. My friend and colleague, the chairman, gave some stories. What is remarkable is we didn't coordinate, and every story that he told is different than one that I am about to tell you.

On February 11 in Paris, a 13-year-old Jewish boy was attacked by five men on his way to synagogue—13 years old, five adult men. During the attack, he was called Jewish slurs by the perpetrators.

On March 23, in London, four ambulances operated by a Jewish charity were destroyed in an arson attack by three men.

□ 1620

Mr. Speaker, these are stories that affect Europeans, but the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe affects Americans, as well, particularly when we visit Europe. This isn't just about protecting European Jews. It is about protecting Americans when we go there.

On April 29 of this year, two Jewish men were stabbed by someone who said that he went out with the intention of stabbing people who looked visibly Jewish. One of the two was an American.

On November 10, 2025, in Milan, a Jewish American was attacked after he was identified based on his “Orthodox Jewish attire.” These are Americans being attacked in Europe.

My bill would direct the State Department to assess the growing threat of anti-Semitism in Europe and provide diplomatic channels to make clear to our European allies that this conduct is simply unacceptable. After this assessment, the Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs will engage with European countries that are identified as countries of concern to say that they have to cooperate with us to deal with this rising anti-Semitism problem.

This commonsense, bipartisan legislation passed through committee unanimously, 49-0, and I thank the co-sponsors of the bill, Republicans MAX MILLER, MIKE LAWLER, and Representative CLAUDIA TENNEY, but also Democrats EUGENE VINDMAN and LAURA GILLEN.

I also thank the chairman and the ranking member, both of whom have supported the bill, and I thank the majority leader for putting it on the floor today.

Finally, I would just say this. We said, after the Holocaust, never again, but the facts are that there is a real risk of it happening.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to vote today to take this one small step to make sure that it doesn't happen ever again.

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

Mr. Speaker, I support this measure. I encourage all of my colleagues to do so, as well, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, the rise of anti-Semitic violence and terrorist attacks across Europe is a stark reminder that radical extremism is not a relic of the past. It is a clear and present danger to freedom, to democracy, and to Western civilization.

The United States has to stand firmly with our allies, with the Jewish people, and with all those who reject terror and defend liberty.

Peace through strength is not just a slogan. It is a necessity. Weakness invites aggression. Strength deters aggression. H.R. 6297 sends a clear message that America will continue to lead in confronting anti-Semitism and strengthening international efforts to combat terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and 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. MAST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6297, as amended.

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

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill To require the Department of State to consult with Congress on antisemitism in Europe."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PRODUCING RETURNS AND OPPORTUNITY FOR INVESTMENT AND TRADE ACT OF 2026

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5248) to ensure the alignment of economic and foreign policies, to position the Department of State to reflect that economic security is national security, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5248

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

TITLE V—ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

SEC. 501. UNDER SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There shall be in the Department an Under Secretary for Economic Affairs who shall be responsible to the Secretary for matters pertaining to economic growth, commercial expansion, energy, technology policy and innovation, scientific research, commercial outer space affairs, critical minerals, water and the environment, protection of natural resources, sanctions policies, and such other related duties as the Secretary may from time to time designate.

(b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—In addition to the responsibilities described under subsection (a), the Under Secretary for Economic Af-

airs shall maintain continuous observation and coordination of all matters pertaining to economic and business affairs in the conduct of foreign policy, including, as appropriate, the following:

(1) Preparing an annual strategic plan for expanding opportunities for United States private sector companies in international markets, coordinating the use of sanctions to achieve national security objectives, promoting international trade and investment, developing international policies around new and emerging technologies, ensuring United States leadership in science and technology, protecting natural resources, and promoting United States energy interests.

(2) Developing policies for consideration by the Secretary to promote economic growth, facilitate market access, create business enabling environments abroad, expand trade and investment opportunities for United States companies, promote United States energy exports and energy security, conserve and manage economically important ecosystems and resources, expand access to critical minerals abroad, support United States civil and commercial space governance, promote international standards, policies, and best practices for emerging technology that facilitate United States economic growth, and safeguard the preeminence of the United States dollar in international markets.

(3) Promoting United States international economic interests to be addressed in the Bi-annual National Economic Security Strategy Report, coordinated by the Office of the Chief Economist.

(4) Attending and participating in meetings of the National Security Council, and National Space Council, when applicable, at the direction of the Secretary, for matters related to economic growth, energy, and commercial expansion, commercial outer space affairs, oceans, science and technology developments, natural resource protection, and fulfill the role of Foreign Affairs Sous Sherpa relating to the activities of the Group of Seven Industrial Nations (G-7).

(5) Providing guidance to Department personnel in the United States and overseas who conduct or implement policies, programs, and activities related to economic growth, energy, and commercial expansion, science and technology affairs, natural resource conservation, and civil and commercial activities in outer space.

(6) Coordinating activities related to promoting economic growth, facilitating market access, creating business enabling environments abroad, expanding trade and investment opportunities, promoting of energy exports, conserving and managing economically important ecosystems and resources, expanding access to critical minerals, maintaining United States leadership in science, technology, and outer space, and safeguarding the preeminence of the United States dollar in international markets.

(7) As directed by the Secretary, representing the Department at interdepartmental meetings including the National Economic Council, Homeland Security Council, Council on Environmental Quality, and in providing policy advice to the Secretary on matters under consideration by these groups.

(c) FIRST APPOINTMENT.—On the date of the enactment of this Act, the individual serving before such date of enactment as the Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy and the Environment shall be the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs. Any subsequent appointment of an individual to the position of Under Secretary for Economic Affairs shall be subject to the advice and consent of the Senate.

SEC. 502. ADMINISTRATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TECHNOLOGY SECURITY AND INNOVATION FUND.

Section 102(c) of the CHIPS Act of 2022 (Public Law 117-167; 136 Stat. 1375) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by inserting “, acting through the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs” after “Secretary of State”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following: “Within the Department of State, the Fund shall be overseen and administered by the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs.”

(2) in paragraph (2)(B), by inserting “, acting through the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs” after “Secretary of State”.

SEC. 503. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS.

(a) ADMINISTRATION OF ACCOUNTS.—The Under Secretary for Economic Affairs shall direct, oversee, and otherwise exercise responsibility of funds made available for the International Technology Security and Innovation Fund.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Of the funds authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of State under section 141, the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs shall receive the funds necessary to fulfill the Under Secretary’s responsibilities for fiscal years 2026 and 2027.

SEC. 504. CHIEF ECONOMIST.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is authorized to be in the Department a Chief Economist who shall be responsible to the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs for matters pertaining to analyzing and forecasting the impact of economic trends on diplomatic functions and national security priorities, and such other related duties as the Secretary may from time to time designate.

(b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—In addition to the responsibilities described under subsection (a), the Chief Economist shall provide research and analysis to inform the Department’s strategy for deploying international economic policy to strengthen alliances, deter malign foreign actors, and reduce dependencies on strategic rivals in the conduct of foreign policy, including, as appropriate, the following:

(1) Providing research and analysis to inform the development of the Department’s strategy for deploying foreign policy to ensure supply chain resilience, secure access to raw materials and critical minerals, and maximize international market access.

(2) Providing analysis of complex, emerging geoeconomic issues and offer advice to Department leadership on economic diplomacy challenges.

(3) Conducting research and rigorous, data-driven analysis of high priority issues at the intersection of economics and foreign policy to inform decision-making and diplomatic engagements by senior Department officials.

(4) Maintaining analytical products for the Department on international economic issues, including on sanctions evasion and the vulnerabilities of the United States and its partners to economic coercion, as well as the economic opportunities for United States businesses.

(5) Contributing to the expansion of the economic expertise of the Department through collaboration with the Foreign Service Institute, the academic community, international organizations, and other Federal departments and agencies the Chief Economist determines necessary.

(6) Serving as a liaison to technical experts in economics and related fields in partner governments, international institutions, and elsewhere in the United States government and academic community.