

As a former cop for over a decade in the Denver metro area, I know there is nothing more critical to law enforcement operations than open communication between local, State, and Federal agencies. Information sharing between the men and women on the front lines and Federal intelligence counterparts ensures that bad actors, often tied to international criminal organizations like cartels and terrorist groups, are removed from our streets as quickly as possible.

From my own experience, I know that State and local law enforcement often face national and international threats: terrorists, cartels, cyberattacks, and foreign enemy regimes. This bill supports State and local law enforcement when they encounter those national or those international threats.

Unfortunately, in my home State of Colorado, Denver Democrats are often more concerned about finding ways to weaken law enforcement operations and attacking our brave officers rather than prioritizing public safety. Defund-the-police antics create public safety conflicts and confusion for law enforcement officers who are trying to serve and protect their communities.

This bill ensures that State and local agencies can easily and frequently access the resources they require from their Federal partners when they are facing threats that require Federal backing.

By reorganizing the ELO Office and realigning its essential functions within I&A's partner engagement directorate, this bill streamlines coordination between law enforcement agencies, enhances information-sharing mechanisms, and reduces duplicative actions.

This ensures responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars, and it makes sure that State and local law enforcement agencies have the information that they need when they are facing those national or international threats.

Time and again, we wait for tragedies to remind us that we have to incentivize interagency collaboration. This bill takes the fight to the streets, and it makes sure that we are preventively getting these resources to our State and local law enforcement agencies, because no single law enforcement agency can effectively address the full spectrum of threats without that combined resource.

Madam Speaker, I strongly urge support for this bipartisan piece of legislation and support for the millions of State and local law enforcement officers across our country.

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

Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's and the committee's work on H.R. 7574, and it sounds like, I think, that we are in alignment. I just want to be sure that the language in the bill referring to redundancies isn't used to defund the I&A at the Department of Homeland Security. It sounds

like the gentleman and I are on the same page.

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

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

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 7574. I congratulate Mr. EVANS on this fine piece of 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 New York (Mr. GARBARINO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7574.

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.

STOP FOREIGN FUNDS IN ELECTIONS ACT

Mr. STEIL. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3535) to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to apply the prohibition against contributions and donations by foreign nationals in connection with elections to contributions or donations in connection with ballot initiatives and referenda.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3535

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 "Stop Foreign Funds in Elections Act".

SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON CONTRIBUTIONS AND DONATIONS BY FOREIGN NATIONALS IN CONNECTION WITH BALLOT INITIATIVES AND REFERENDA AND RECALL ELECTIONS.

(a) PROHIBITION.—Section 319(a)(1)(A) of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (52 U.S.C. 30121(a)(1)(A)) is amended by inserting "including a State or local ballot initiative or referendum or recall election" after "State, or local election".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply with respect to contributions and donations made on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. STEIL) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. MORELLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. STEIL. Madam 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 the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3535, the Stop Foreign

Funds in Elections Act, introduced by my friend, Representative BRIAN FITZPATRICK.

U.S. elections should be for U.S. citizens only, and only U.S. citizens should be participating in and donating in political causes.

Today, gaps in our existing laws undermine this principle and actually permit foreign actors to fund U.S. political activities. It is true. Current law allows foreign funding to infiltrate State and local ballot initiatives, referenda, and recall elections.

As we have seen in recent history, those races can attract millions of dollars in outside spending. Some of that has been foreign money, and right now that is completely legal.

Shadowy groups, like Sixteen Thirty Fund, funneled millions of foreign-linked dollars into ballot initiatives and campaigns in States, including Arizona, Nevada, and Ohio.

It sounds crazy, but it is true, Madam Speaker.

We should all be able to agree that foreign funds should not be influencing or financing ballot measures, referenda, or recall elections. Current law, as we know, already prohibits foreign money in Federal elections, and this bill broadens that nonpartisan, commonsense prohibition to similar State and local elections.

Madam Speaker, elections should be decided by Americans, and they should not be influenced or funded by foreign nationals.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation and ensure American elections remain for American citizens only, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, this bipartisan bill, the Stop Foreign Funds in Elections Act, will close a loophole, as my colleague and friend, Mr. STEIL, the chairman of the Committee on House Administration, has indicated, that currently allows foreign nationals to contribute to State and local ballot initiatives, as well as recall referenda.

This change is needed because the Federal Elections Commission previously determined that the Federal Election Campaign Act's foreign national prohibition does not actually reach ballot initiatives that do not appear to be linked to an office-seeking candidate at the Federal, State, or local level.

The FEC often sends legislative recommendations to Congress, adopted on a bipartisan basis, to update and strengthen our campaign finance regime. This very bill has been included in their recent recommendations. In fact, this bill is among the highest priority legislative recommendations from the FEC.

I thank the bill's sponsor, Congressman FITZPATRICK, as well as the bill's co-lead, Congressman GOLDEN, for their important work on this issue.

I am glad to see the House taking seriously the risk of foreign interference in domestic elections. In that spirit, I encourage my colleagues to consider other comprehensive democracy reforms to close loopholes.

House Democrats' Freedom to Vote Act, which includes the DISCLOSE Act, would crack down on foreign campaign spending, and I think it is well past time for Congress to do something to stem the tide of dark money, including foreign money, in American elections.

This bill is a start, and I think I would continue to urge us to do more.

Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, this bill is broadly about making sure that American elections are for American citizens only.

As my colleague Mr. MORELLE noted, there is a significant, gaping hole in U.S. campaign finance laws, and, in particular, that is in relation to the measures that we have spoken about, about ballot initiatives, other essential pieces of American democracy that currently allow for foreign funding to come in and influence those campaigns.

While that is not an office seeker for elected office, I think it is without a doubt that those elections and those ballot initiatives are in many ways equally essential to American democracy. Closing out this gap and making sure that foreign funds are not finding their way into U.S. elections is absolutely essential.

I thank my colleague, Mr. FITZPATRICK, for authoring this legislation, understanding the importance of making sure that we are rooting out foreign funds inside U.S. elections. There is a basic premise and a basic principle, and in a particular period of time when it is so simple and so easy for funds to be transmitted into these political activities here in the United States of America, an individual outside of the United States could easily move funds in to influence a U.S. election.

Of course, it is illegal for a donation to be made to an individual seeking Federal elected office, but right now the underlying law does not ban that for purposes of ballot initiatives, local ballot initiatives, referenda, or recall elections.

This legislation fixes that very important point.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MORELLE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I concur with my colleague about the importance of making sure that we don't have involvement of foreign entities into our politics.

If I can just opine for a minute, I do think in many ways one of the real

challenges facing this country right now is a lack of faith in their government and Americans losing trust and losing faith. Part of that is because of the broad influence of money just generally in our politics. You see billionaires contributing hundreds of millions of dollars. We see the influence of dark money, of super-PACs.

I am looking forward to over the next several months working with my colleagues, and over the next several years, if need be, to repair some of the damage to those relationships and let the people of this country know that the democracy which we celebrated 250 years of this month that it is in their hands, that they are ultimately the sovereigns, and that there weren't outside influences. But I think that is becoming harder and harder to be able to make that point and to convince people of that without dramatic changes in the way we finance our campaigns and the way that the public dialogue engages.

Frankly, I am disappointed in the Supreme Court's decision just this month related to coordination between super-PACs and party committees and individual candidates. I think there is much to do. If we are going to have the ability to persuade American citizens that their government is theirs, we are going to have to take out the influence of all manner of people. Certainly, this bill is a step in the right direction.

I see my colleague, the sponsor of the bill, has arrived, so I will certainly let him address the House.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. STEIL. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK), the author of this bill who is not only a colleague but also a friend.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of my legislation, H.R. 3535, the Stop Foreign Funds in Elections Act.

Madam Speaker, this legislation is built on a simple principle: American elections should be decided by the American people, not by the influence of foreign actors.

The Stop Foreign Funds in Elections Act closes a dangerous and longstanding loophole in our current election system. While current Federal law already prohibits foreign nationals from contributing to candidates running for office, there remains gaps when it comes to State and local ballot measures.

Ballot initiatives, referendum, and recall elections often determine major public policy questions that directly affect American communities, yet existing law does not clearly prohibit foreign money from being used to influence these outcomes. This bill closes that loophole.

Madam Speaker, this is not a partisan issue. Whether the issue on the

ballot is one you support or oppose, every American should agree that the outcome should reflect the will of the American voters, not the financial influence of foreign interests.

Our elections and ballot measures exist to give the American people a voice, not outside actors with agendas that may conflict with our national interests.

The Stop Foreign Funds in Elections Act simply extends an existing safeguard to ensure that all taxpayer-funded elections receive the same protection from foreign influence.

I thank Congressman GOLDEN for his partnership on this legislation as well as Chairman STEIL and Ranking Member MORELLE for their engagement on this legislation.

I urge all my colleagues to support this commonsense bill to strengthen the integrity of our electoral system and ensure that our democratic process remains accountable to the citizens that it serves.

Mr. MORELLE. Madam Speaker, again, I reiterate my support for the bill, and I want to thank the bill's sponsors, Mr. FITZPATRICK as well as Mr. GOLDEN, for their work on this bill and continue to believe that there is much we can do and much that we need to do. This is an important step along the way.

I thank my colleague and my friend Chairman STEIL for bringing this bill before us.

Madam Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. STEIL. Madam Speaker, I will close by saying I thank my colleague BRIAN FITZPATRICK from Pennsylvania and Ranking Member MORELLE for their work on closing this gap in Federal law.

I encourage all of my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 3535, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. STEIL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3535.

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.

FEC ADMINISTRATIVE IMPROVEMENTS ACT

Mr. STEIL. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 8738) to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to require electronic report filing for persons making certain electioneering communications and to permit political committees to make disbursements other than by check.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 8738

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