

every year, which makes them an increasingly ripe target for attack by everyone from militias to drug gangs to common criminals. In fiscal year 1995, the FBI investigated nearly 70 armored car robberies. In the first 6 months of 1996, they investigated more than 30 new cases of robbery attempts against armored cars and their crews, and I know that it comes as no surprise that there were injuries and fatalities in a number of these cases, as pointed out by previous speakers.

Armored car crews are trained professionals who need to be able to protect themselves and their cargo against attack. This bill simply makes it easier for these companies and employees to operate safely and legally and safely in interstate commerce, and that is why I have supported this legislation in the past, why I continue to support it today.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. STEARNS].

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate my colleague from Kentucky [Mr. WHITFIELD] for what he has done on this bill and the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN] for bringing this bill to the House floor.

In the United States armored cars are used to transport millions and millions of dollars in currency, coins, food stamps, and other valuable property. The Federal Government remains the largest customer to the armored car industry. As a result of their cargo, armored cars are often a target of crime. In order to protect the safety of both the cargo and the individuals responsible for its transport, we are once again considering amendments to the Armored Car Industry Reciprocity Act.

Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to have been an original cosponsor of similar legislation which passed the House unanimously during the 104th Congress.

The need for these amendments can be illustrated by an incident, a case in New Jersey, in which the operation of an armored car across the State lines almost ended in the loss of \$40 million in very valuable Federal property. The armored car was stopped by a policeman for a traffic violation, and when the licenses were checked of the armored car guards, it is found that they did not have the proper permit, and they were arrested for carrying a weapon without a permit in that State. The armored car remained on the side of the highway overnight, containing \$40 million worth of very valuable property. Had the amendments we are considering today been in place, the potential for a financial detrimental situation could have been avoided altogether.

I think it important, Mr. Speaker, to emphasize that these amendments do

not place weapons in the hands of additional people. The reciprocity of the licenses extends only to those professionals who have obtained a weapons license in that primary State of employment, and of course when they get this permit, they must commit to a safety test, and their record is checked and a background check is made.

Since the genesis of this legislation involves the reciprocity of weapons licenses, I want to briefly mention legislation that I have introduced to allow reciprocity for concealed weapons, licenses that would be given to individuals. H.R. 339 establishes the right-to-carry parameters across State lines. It is my hope that my colleagues will join me in support of further reciprocity for gun owners.

Mr. Speaker, today we are faced with an easy task. By passing H.R. 624 we will remove the barriers that currently inhibit interstate travel of armored cars. It is senseless that armored car guards who have met the professional licensing requirements to carry a weapon in one State should be required to obtain a license in every State that they travel through when they are transporting their cargos.

So I urge passage of this bill and I again compliment the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN] and the gentleman from Kentucky [Mr. WHITFIELD].

Mr. MANTON. Mr. Speaker, we have no more requests for time, so I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume merely to again thank the gentleman from New York [Mr. MANTON] for his extraordinary help and cooperation in moving this bill forward, and all the members of our subcommittee of the Committee on Commerce who participated in this effort, and I urge final passage of the bill.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of H.R. 624, the Armored Car Reciprocity Improvement Act.

In the United States, armored cars are used everyday to transport millions of dollars in currency, coins, food stamps, and other valuable property for both private entities and the Federal Government. The value of this cargo is not in dispute, but the ability of those charged with the responsibility of transporting it is.

The legitimacy of those who currently transport cargo by armored car across State lines, must be universally recognized by all States. H.R. 624 will go a long way in accomplishing this goal.

This bill will accomplish several important functions for the armor car industry and its customers, who depend on the ability of armored cars and their attendants to function across the State lines.

The bill requires that a criminal background check be conducted on an individual applying for a firearms license only when that person applies for his or her initial license, and it clarifies that it is the State that must conduct the initial criminal background check, and not some third party.

Finally, this bill would establish that reciprocity be granted for both weapons licenses

and any other permits or licenses required in a State, if the crew member has met all relevant requirements for working as an armored car crew member in the State in which he or she is primarily employed.

Currently, only five States meet the eligibility requirements for reciprocity under the Armored Car Industry Reciprocity Act of 1993. It is estimated that the change in the law proposed by this bill would enable 28 other States to become immediately eligible for reciprocity.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, I have no other requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. (Mr. SHAYS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 624.

The question was taken.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5 of rule I and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 624 and to insert extraneous material into the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

#### REPEALING FEDERAL CHARTER OF GROUP HOSPITALIZATION AND MEDICAL SERVICES, INC.

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 497) to repeal the Federal charter of Group Hospitalization and Medical Services, Inc., and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 497

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

#### SECTION 1. REPEAL OF FEDERAL CHARTER OF GROUP HOSPITALIZATION AND MEDICAL SERVICES, INC.

(a) REPEAL OF FEDERAL CHARTER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Act entitled "An Act providing for the incorporation of certain persons as Group Hospitalization, Inc.", approved August 11, 1939 (53 Stat. 1412), is repealed.

(2) AUTHORIZATION TO FILE ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION.—Group Hospitalization and Medical Services, Inc. is hereby authorized to file articles of incorporation under the District of Columbia Nonprofit Corporation Act.

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall take effect upon the filing and effectiveness of articles of incorporation of Group Hospitalization and Medical Services, Inc. under the District of Columbia Nonprofit Corporation Act.

(b) EFFECTS OF BECOMING A DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA NONPROFIT CORPORATION.—Effective