

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.

STOLEN IDENTITY REFUND FRAUD PREVENTION ACT OF 2016

Mr. RENACCI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3832) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to prevent tax-related identity theft and tax fraud, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3832

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 “Stolen Identity Refund Fraud Prevention Act of 2016”.

SEC. 2. CENTRALIZED POINT OF CONTACT FOR IDENTITY THEFT VICTIMS.

The Secretary of the Treasury, or the Secretary’s delegate, shall establish and maintain an office at the Internal Revenue Service and procedures to ensure that any taxpayer whose return has been delayed or otherwise adversely affected due to the theft of the taxpayer’s identity has a centralized point of contact throughout the processing of his or her case. The office shall coordinate with other offices within the Internal Revenue Service to resolve the taxpayer’s case as quickly as possible.

SEC. 3. TAXPAYER NOTIFICATION OF SUSPECTED IDENTITY THEFT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 77 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“SEC. 7529. NOTIFICATION OF SUSPECTED IDENTITY THEFT.

“If the Secretary determines that there was an unauthorized use of the identity of any taxpayer, the Secretary shall—

“(1) as soon as practicable and without jeopardizing an investigation relating to tax administration, notify the taxpayer and include with that notice—

“(A) instructions to the taxpayer about filing a police report, and

“(B) the forms the taxpayer must submit to allow investigating law enforcement officials to access the taxpayer’s personal information, and

“(2) if any person is criminally charged by indictment or information relating to such unauthorized use, notify such taxpayer as soon as practicable of such charge.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 77 of such Code is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“Sec. 7529. Notification of suspected identity theft.”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to determinations made after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 4. REPORT ON ELECTRONIC FILING OPT OUT.

The Secretary of the Treasury (or the Secretary’s delegate) shall submit a feasibility study to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate describing a program under which a person who has filed an identity theft affidavit with the Secretary may elect to prevent the processing of

any Federal tax return submitted in an electronic format by that taxpayer or a person purporting to be that taxpayer. The study shall be submitted within 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act and should also include a recommendation on whether to implement such a program.

SEC. 5. USE OF INFORMATION IN DO NOT PAY INITIATIVE IN PREVENTION OF IDENTITY THEFT REFUND FRAUD.

The Secretary of the Treasury, and the Secretary’s delegate, shall use the information available under the Do Not Pay Initiative established under section 5 of the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Improvement Act of 2012 (31 U.S.C. 3321 note) to help prevent identity theft refund fraud.

SEC. 6. REPORT ON IDENTITY THEFT REFUND FRAUD.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than September 30, 2018, and biannually thereafter through September 30, 2023, the Secretary of the Treasury (or the Secretary’s delegate) shall report to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate on the extent and nature of fraud involving the use of a misappropriated taxpayer identity with respect to claims for refund under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 during the preceding completed income tax filing season, and the detection, prevention, and enforcement activities undertaken by the Internal Revenue Service with respect to such fraud, including—

(1) detailing efforts to combat identity theft fraud, including an update on the victims’ assistance unit;

(2) information on both the average and maximum amounts of time that elapsed before the cases of victims of such fraud were resolved; and

(3) discussing Internal Revenue Service efforts associated with other avenues for addressing identity theft refund fraud.

(b) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—In addition, each report shall provide an update on the implementation of this Act and identify the need for any further legislation to protect taxpayer identities.

(c) PROGRESS ON OUTREACH AND EDUCATION.—In the first biannual report on identity theft refund fraud under subsection (a), the Secretary (or the Secretary’s delegate) shall include—

(1) an assessment of the agency’s progress on identity theft outreach and education to the private sector, State agencies, and external organizations; and

(2) the results of a feasibility study on the costs and benefits to enhancing its taxpayer authentication approach to the electronic tax return filing process.

SEC. 7. INFORMATION SHARING AND ANALYSIS CENTER.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary (or the Secretary’s delegate) shall establish an information sharing and analysis center to centralize, standardize, and enhance data compilation and analysis to facilitate sharing actionable data and information with respect to identity theft.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after establishment of the information sharing and analysis center, the Secretary (or the Secretary’s delegate) shall submit a report to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and Committee on Finance of the Senate on the information sharing and analysis center described in subsection (a). The report shall include the data that was shared, the use of such data, and the results of the data sharing and analysis center in combating identity theft.

SEC. 8. LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT LIAISON.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Commissioner of Internal Revenue shall establish within the

Criminal Investigation Division of the Internal Revenue Service the position of Local Law Enforcement Liaison.

(b) DUTIES.—The Local Law Enforcement Liaison shall serve as the primary source of contact for State and local law enforcement authorities with respect to tax-related identity theft, having duties that shall include—

(1) receiving information from State and local law enforcement authorities;

(2) responding to inquiries from State and local law enforcement authorities;

(3) administering authorized information-sharing initiatives with State or local law enforcement authorities and reviewing the performance of such initiatives;

(4) ensuring any information provided through authorized information-sharing initiatives with State or local law enforcement authorities is used only for the prosecution of identity theft-related crimes and not re-disclosed to third parties; and

(5) such other duties relating to tax-related identity theft prevention as are delegated by the Commissioner of Internal Revenue.

SEC. 9. IRS PHONE SCAM REPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Inspector General for Tax Administration, in consultation with the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Trade Commission, shall submit a report to Congress regarding identity theft phone scams under which individuals attempt to obtain personal information over the phone from taxpayers by falsely claiming to be calling from or on behalf the Internal Revenue Service.

(b) CONTENTS OF REPORT.—Such report shall include—

(1) a description of the nature and form of such scams;

(2) an estimate of the number of taxpayers contacted pursuant to, and the number of taxpayers who have been victims of, such scams;

(3) an estimate of the amount of wrongful payments obtained from such scams; and

(4) details of potential solutions to combat and prevent such scams, including best practices from the private sector and technological solutions.

SEC. 10. PROVIDING IDENTITY THEFT PREVENTION INFORMATION WHILE ON HOLD WITH INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE.

The Secretary of the Treasury, or the Secretary’s delegate, shall ensure that if a taxpayer is on hold with the Internal Revenue Service on a taxpayer service telephone call the following information is provided:

(1) Basic information about common identity theft tax scams.

(2) Directions on where to report such activity.

(3) Tips on how to protect against identity theft tax scams.

SEC. 11. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.

No additional funds are authorized to carry out the requirements of this Act and the amendments made by this Act. Such requirements shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RENACCI) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RENACCI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within

which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 3832, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise to urge approval of H.R. 3832, the Stolen Identity Refund Fraud Prevention Act of 2016.

I introduced this bipartisan legislation with my friend and colleague, Mr. LEWIS, to combat tax-related identity theft. On a personal note, it has been an honor to work with Mr. LEWIS. He paid me a great compliment when he said I “rained passion and truth” on the important issue of identity theft. Truthfully, since Congressman LEWIS was first elected, he has been a legislator who has brought great passion and truth to every endeavor of his storied career. I truly thank him for working with me on this legislation.

Tax-related identity theft is an evolving criminal activity that targets innocent taxpayers nationwide and robs the Treasury of billions of dollars each year. I was grateful for the opportunity last month to testify before the Committee on Ways and Means about my experience with tax-related ID theft. Last year, my personal information was stolen, and someone used that information to electronically file a fraudulent tax return for my wife and me. That return, which included a fraudulent W-2 from the House of Representatives, claimed a significant refund, with the proceeds directed to a bank account outside the U.S. So when it comes to ID theft, I truly understand the impact that it has on taxpayers in northeast Ohio and across the country.

I am committed to cracking down on the growing threat, and this bipartisan bill is an important first step forward. I was pleased that two core components from this bill were included in the PATH Act that passed last December. The remaining components of this bill will help further shield taxpayer dollars from thieves and reduce the hardships that are caused by this criminal activity. They include establishing a centralized point of contact at the IRS for ID theft victims. This will make it easier for victims to resolve their ID theft tax cases and ensure a unit at the IRS is held accountable for handling a taxpayer’s case from start to finish.

Another one would improve the taxpayer notification of suspected ID theft. When the IRS determines there has been the unauthorized use of a taxpayer’s identity, the IRS would be required—as soon as practicable and without jeopardizing an investigation—to notify the taxpayer and give instructions to the taxpayer about filing a police report.

The last one I will mention would require the IRS to submit a study on the feasibility of establishing a program

for ID theft victims to be able to opt out of electronic filing. This provision would require the IRS to report back to Congress within 180 days on this issue.

I also thank my friend, Mr. PASCRELL, for his work on this issue and for his amendments that were incorporated into the bill during this markup last month.

Mr. Speaker, tax-related identity theft is one of the most pressing challenges that we face in the world of tax administration. This complex and evolving threat requires cooperation from Congress, the IRS, State revenue agencies, and industry stakeholders. While I am aware that not every tax-related ID theft problem is best served with a congressional solution, this legislation is an important first step in fighting ID theft and in better protecting victims.

I urge all Members to support this bipartisan legislation.

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, May 13, 2016.

Hon. KEVIN BRADY,
Chairman, Committee on Ways & Means,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BRADY: I am writing with respect to H.R. 3832, the “Stolen Identity Refund Fraud Prevention Act,” which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary. As a result of your having consulted with us on provisions in H.R. 3832 that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary, I agree to discharge our committee from further consideration of this bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor for consideration.

The Judiciary Committee takes this action with our mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of H.R. 3832 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and that our committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as this bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues in our jurisdiction. Our committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation, and asks that you support any such request.

I would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 3832, and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration of H.R. 3832.

Sincerely,

BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC, May 16, 2016.

Hon. BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GOODLATTE: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 3832, the “Stolen Identity Refund Fraud Prevention Act of 2016.” As you noted, the Committee on the Judiciary was granted an additional referral of the bill.

I am most appreciative of your decision to waive formal consideration of H.R. 3832 so

that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor. I acknowledge that although you waived formal consideration of the bill, the Committee on the Judiciary is in no way waiving its jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in those provisions of the bill that fall within your Rule X jurisdiction. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees on any House-Senate conference involving this legislation.

I will include a copy of our letters in the Congressional Record during consideration of this legislation on the House floor.

Sincerely,

KEVIN BRADY,
Chairman.

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

I commend my friend from Ohio (Mr. RENACCI) for his work on this bill. As he knows, I have been interested in this issue of tax fraud and identity theft for some time.

I am pleased that the bill we are marking up today, H.R. 3832, includes many provisions included in the bill that I put forth, H.R. 3981, the Identity Theft and Tax Fraud Prevention Act. These provisions include having a central point of contact for a victim of identity theft and taxpayer notification of suspected identity theft. In addition, two of my amendments were included in the bill.

The first would create a local law enforcement liaison within the Criminal Investigation Division of the IRS. Our police and law enforcement officers are out every day, keeping our communities safe and tracking down criminals. Too often, coordinating their efforts with the IRS when it comes to identity theft is not as easy as it should be.

My amendment helps law enforcement officers do their jobs by creating a local law enforcement liaison at the IRS. This position will be tasked with sharing information and responding to local law enforcement when they have information or inquiries about identity theft cases. It is common sense, and it will make it easier for police officers to go to a single place at the IRS when they want to work a case.

The second amendment included in this bill deals with the IRS phone scam, and this is growing by the day. Imagine sitting at home when you receive a call from a threatening voice on the other end of the line that claims to be the IRS. For too many Americans, this experience is all too familiar. These criminals may ask unsuspecting citizens for their personal information, for their Social Security numbers, or even for bank account information—that has been done; it is very common—and will threaten them with arrest or other penalties if the listeners don’t comply. These phone scams have become increasingly aggressive and harmful to taxpayers.

My amendment addresses this problem in practical ways. First, it requires the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration to issue a report that identifies potential technological solutions to the phone scam.

Second, it would have the IRS provide information to callers who may be put on hold, when calling in, regarding common identity theft tax scams and how to avoid them.

We need to do all we can to make sure taxpayers are informed and armed against these scams. Identity theft and tax fraud is a growing problem in the United States of America. As technology changes and as criminal syndicates target American citizens' tax returns, we have an obligation to address the issue.

This bill does not go quite as far as I would have liked, and I urge my colleagues to take a look at H.R. 3981. I am also proud to be a cosponsor of Congressman JOHN LEWIS' bill, the Taxpayer Protection Act of 2016, which takes additional steps to increase funding for taxpayer services and to end the use of private debt collectors.

This bill is a step in the right direction. I congratulate its sponsor as it is a good example of how we can work together across the aisle and find commonsense solutions for the American people. I hope this is a harbinger of things to come. Who knows?

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RENACCI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY).

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support H.R. 3832. Mr. RENACCI and I are very good friends, as I am with Mr. LEWIS, and it is good to see Mr. PASCRELL here today.

The gentleman is right in that it is nice to see us working together to do something about people. This is about people. This is policy that concerns people, and it works in the right direction. I don't think there is anything quite as unnerving as finding out that somebody has stolen your identity. I think Shakespeare sums it up right in Othello by putting it really succinctly when he says: "But he that filches from me my good name, robs me of that which not enriches him, and makes me poor indeed."

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Now, Pennsylvania is sixth in population but second when it comes to fraud, tax fraud. This is incredible that this could happen.

As we sit here today—and as Mr. PASCRELL so clearly pointed out, and Mr. RENACCI—this is about protecting people from people who wish to do them harm. They not only wish to take their tax returns, but it robs them of their identity. There is nothing that could be more chilling than losing your identity.

As we look at how this goes forward—and I think that this phone fraud is the one that is particularly interesting. When the IRS calls on you, it is not on the phone. It is in writing. And I tell constituents all the time, I also have received those calls saying that: Hey, you know what? You need to get in touch with us right now. We can handle this over the phone with you.

I said: Fine. You know what? Leave your name and number, and I will get back to you because I am really busy right now.

That is followed by a very quick click.

There is so much going on in our world today. We are so vulnerable at every single turn. We put so much information out there on ourselves. This is a piece of legislation that protects people. It protects not only their returns, but protects their identity.

So I am glad that Mr. RENACCI has done this with Mr. LEWIS and my good friend Mr. PASCRELL. We stand here today with the same purpose, and that is to protect the people who sent us here to represent them. It is the least we can do.

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

I just want to quickly say that what is really happening out there is that many seniors are being preyed upon. When you get a threatening phone call, you don't know what to think. And when you are up there in age, as some of us are, Mr. KELLY, you don't know what to expect, and you don't know who to turn to.

So this is very important, what Mr. RENACCI is putting forth right now. I just want everyone to understand that. It has good bipartisan support, and I hope that we can move this very, very quickly.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RENACCI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. REED).

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio for yielding.

I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to join my colleagues on both sides of the aisle—Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. RENACCI, and Mr. KELLY—in a common refrain. What Mr. RENACCI, Mr. LEWIS, and Mr. PASCRELL have identified here is something we have been working on in the committee for quite some time, and that is to make sure that we have a tax administration and a Tax Code that respects the privacy of individuals.

When that privacy is violated—I cannot speak like my colleague from Pennsylvania and quote Shakespeare, as I am a simple country lawyer from western New York—simply, what we need to do is to stand on the side of our taxpayers. When tax fraud occurs, real people suffer as a result of it.

What Mr. RENACCI and all of us have come together here to support are simple, commonsense reforms that are going to help people out like Terry. Terry is from Hornell in my district. He reached out to us, Mr. Speaker, about 1½ years to 2 years ago. He, too, was the victim of identity fraud and identity theft.

When he went to file his return, he found out that he would not be getting that refund because someone had already stolen that money from the U.S. Government. Terry relied on that money, Mr. Speaker. He needed that money. After many phone calls, after

many efforts from our office, we were able to work it out and get that taken care of for Terry.

Terry is representative of millions of Americans who have found themselves in this situation, just like Mr. RENACCI did. So I applaud Mr. RENACCI for developing these commonsense reforms that are going to give a point of contact at the IRS, that are going to make sure when people engage in identity theft in the tax arena that there are real penalties and consequences to that behavior.

I strongly support this legislation, Mr. Speaker, and I urge my colleagues, just as has been demonstrated here today, to come together as we care deeply about the American taxpayer and stand for them as the victims of this crime.

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

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

I again want to thank my colleague, Mr. LEWIS, for his work with me and this legislation. I also truly want to thank Mr. PASCRELL. As he said, I hope it is a sign of things to come, where we can work together on important issues that face the American people.

I urge all Members to support H.R. 3832, the Stolen Identity Refund Fraud Prevention Act of 2016.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 3832, the Stolen Identity Refund Fraud Prevention Act of 2016, as amended. While I support the legislation's underlying goal of deterring and preventing tax-related identity theft and tax fraud, I strongly oppose the bill's expansion of mandatory minimum sentencing.

Section 5 of the bill would expand the mandatory minimums found in Title 18 Section 1028A of the United States Code. This section of Title 18 imposes a mandatory minimum sentence of two years for "aggravated identity theft." Under section 5 of this bill, a violation of section 7206(b) of the Internal Revenue Code would require a judge to impose a two year mandatory minimum regardless of the circumstances of the case. While a two year sentence may be appropriate for most individuals convicted under this bill, it should be left to the discretion of the sentencing judge to determine the exact sentence based on all the relevant facts and circumstances.

Research and evidence in the past few decades has demonstrated that mandatory minimums are ineffective deterrents, waste the taxpayers' money, force judges to impose irrational sentences, and discriminate against minorities, particularly with regards to drug offenses. Unfortunately, there are too many mandatory minimums in the federal code.

Mr. Speaker, if we expect to do anything about that problem, the first step has to be to stop passing new ones. The mandatory minimums in the code today did not get there all at once—they got there one at a time, each one part of a larger bill, which on balance might have been a good idea. Therefore, the only way to stop passing new mandatory minimums is to stop passing bills that contain mandatory minimums.

Therefore, I urge my colleagues to vote No on H.R. 3832.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RENACCI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3832, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REAFFIRMATION OF THE TAIWAN RELATIONS ACT AND THE SIX ASSURANCES

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 88) reaffirming the Taiwan Relations Act and the Six Assurances as the cornerstone of United States-Taiwan relations, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 88

Whereas the Cold War years cemented the close friendship between the United States and Taiwan, with Taiwan as an anti-Communist ally in the Asia-Pacific;

Whereas United States economic aid prevented Taiwan from sliding into an economic depression in the 1950s and greatly contributed to the island's later economic takeoff;

Whereas Taiwan has flourished to become a beacon of democracy in Asia and leading trade partner for the United States, and the relationship has endured for more than 65 years through many shifts in Asia's geopolitical landscape;

Whereas the strong relationship between the United States and Taiwan is based on mutually beneficial security, commercial, and cultural ties;

Whereas Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Susan Thornton stated in her testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on February 11, 2016, that "The people on Taiwan have built a prosperous, free, and orderly society with strong institutions, worthy of emulation and envy";

Whereas Deputy Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken stated on March 29, 2016, that with Taiwan's January 2016 elections, "the people of Taiwan showed the world again what a mature, Chinese-speaking democracy looks like";

Whereas on January 1, 1979, when the Carter Administration established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC), it ended formal diplomatic ties with the Republic of China on Taiwan;

Whereas, the United States Congress acted swiftly to reaffirm the United States-Taiwan relationship with the enactment of the Taiwan Relations Act just 100 days later, ensuring the United States maintained a robust and enduring relationship with Taiwan;

Whereas the Taiwan Relations Act (Public Law 96-8) was enacted on April 10, 1979, codifying into law the basis for continued commercial, cultural, and other relations between the United States and Taiwan;

Whereas the Taiwan Relations Act was enacted "to help maintain peace, security, and stability in the Western Pacific", which "are in the political, security, and economic interests of the United States and are matters of international concern";

Whereas the United States Congress significantly strengthened the draft legislation originally submitted by the Executive

Branch to include provisions concerning Taiwan's security in the Taiwan Relations Act;

Whereas then-Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Kin Moy stated in his written testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on March 14, 2014, that, "Our enduring relationship under the Taiwan Relations Act represents a unique asset for the United States and is an important multiplier of our influence in the region", and credited the Taiwan Relations Act for having "played such a key part in protecting Taiwan's freedom of action and U.S. interests the last 35 years in the Asia-Pacific area";

Whereas then-Special Assistant to the President and National Security Council Senior Director for Asian Affairs Evan Medeiros noted on March 28, 2014 that the Taiwan Relations Act was "an enduring expression to the people of Taiwan about our commitment to their well-being, their security, their economic autonomy, and their international space";

Whereas the Taiwan Relations Act states "the United States decision to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China rests upon the expectation that the future of Taiwan will be determined by peaceful means";

Whereas the Taiwan Relations Act states that it is the policy of the United States to "provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character" and "to maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people on Taiwan";

Whereas each successive United States Administration since the enactment of the Taiwan Relations Act has provided arms of a defensive character to Taiwan;

Whereas a 2015 Department of Defense report to Congress on Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China stated that, "Preparing for potential conflict in the Taiwan Strait remains the focus and primary driver of China's military investment";

Whereas the United States has an abiding interest in the preservation of cross-Strait peace and stability, and in peace and stability in the entire Asia-Pacific region;

Whereas on July 14, 1982, as the United States negotiated with the People's Republic of China over the wording of a joint communique related to United States arms sales to Taiwan, President Ronald Reagan instructed his representative in Taiwan, American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) Director James R. Lilley, to relay a set of assurances to Taiwan's then-President Chiang Ching-kuo;

Whereas in House and Senate testimony immediately after the issuance of the August 17, 1982, Joint Communique with the PRC, then-Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs John H. Holdridge stated on behalf of the Executive Branch that—

(1) "... [W]e did not agree to set a date certain for ending arms sales to Taiwan";

(2) "... [W]e see no mediation role for the United States" between Taiwan and the PRC;

(3) "... [N]or will we attempt to exert pressure on Taiwan to enter into negotiations with the PRC";

(4) "... [T]here has been no change in our longstanding position on the issue of sovereignty over Taiwan";

(5) "We have no plans to seek" revisions to the Taiwan Relations Act; and

(6) the August 17 Communique, "should not be read to imply that we have agreed to engage in prior consultations with Beijing on arms sales to Taiwan";

Whereas these assurances, first delivered to Taiwan's president by AIT Director Lilley, have come to be known as the Six Assurances;

Whereas in testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on October 4, 2011, then-Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell stated that, "[The] Taiwan Relations Act, plus the so-called Six Assurances and Three Communiques, form the foundation of our overall approach", to relations with Taiwan; and

Whereas in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on April 3, 2014, Assistant Secretary of State Daniel R. Russel stated that the Six Assurances "continue to play an important part as an element of our approach to Taiwan and the situation across the strait": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) affirms that the Taiwan Relations Act and the Six Assurances are both cornerstones of United States relations with Taiwan; and

(2) urges the President and Department of State to affirm the Six Assurances publicly, proactively, and consistently as a cornerstone of United States-Taiwan relations.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 88.

I would like to recognize Mr. CHABOT for his longstanding dedication and support for the people of Taiwan.

Mr. Speaker, Taiwan has always been a strong friend and critical ally to the United States. Congress has been central to this relationship, championing a strong relationship with Taiwan through landmark measures like the Taiwan Relations Act and through pressing successive administrations to fulfill their obligation to sell defensive arms to Taiwan.

Taiwan is now the United States' ninth largest trading partner, and it is in the U.S.' interest to have a stable and a prosperous Taiwan.

It is an exciting time in Taiwan. In January, a free and fair election once again demonstrated the strength and vibrancy of Taiwan's democratic system. And in 3 days, we expect the newly elected President to be inaugurated in a peaceful transfer of power from one party to another.

The people of Taiwan should be proud of their prosperous, free, and democratic society and what they have been able to accomplish, despite having to face countless challenges outside of their control.

Mr. Speaker, when the U.S. established diplomatic relations with the