

SCHOOL SAFETY ENHANCEMENTS
ACT OF 2008

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2352) to enhance the safety of elementary schools, secondary schools, and institutions of higher education, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.
The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2352

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 "School Safety Enhancements Act of 2008".

**TITLE I—ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION SAFETY ENHANCEMENTS**

SEC. 101. GRANT PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL SECURITY.

Section 2701 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797a) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking "Placement" and inserting "Installation"; and

(ii) by inserting "surveillance equipment," after "detectors,";

(B) by redesignating paragraph (5) as paragraph (6); and

(C) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

"(5) Establishment of hotlines or tiplines for the reporting of potentially dangerous students and situations.";

(2) by striking subsection (d)(1) and inserting the following:

"(1) The Federal share of the costs of a program provided by a grant under subsection (a) shall be not more than 80 percent of the total of such costs."; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

"(g) INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of the School Safety Enhancements Act of 2008, the Director and the Secretary of Education, or the designee of the Secretary, shall establish an interagency task force to develop and promulgate a set of advisory school safety guidelines. The advisory school safety guidelines shall be published in the Federal Register by not later than one year after such date of enactment. In developing the final advisory school safety guidelines, the interagency task force shall consult with stakeholders and interested parties, including parents, teachers, and agencies."

SEC. 102. APPLICATIONS.

Section 2702(a)(2) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797b(a)(2)) is amended to read as follows:

"(2) be accompanied by a report, signed by the chief education officer and the attorney general or other chief law enforcement executive of the State, unit of local government, or Indian tribe, certifying that each proposed use of the grant funds will be—

"(A) an effective means for improving the safety of one or more schools;

"(B) consistent with a comprehensive approach to preventing school violence; and

"(C) individualized to the needs of each school at which those improvements are to be made."

SEC. 103. ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS.

Section 2703 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797c) is amended by striking "and the activities

for which those funds were used" and inserting "and a detailed itemization of how those funds were utilized".

SEC. 104. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 2705 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797e) is amended by striking "\$30,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2001 through 2009" and inserting "\$50,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2009 and 2010".

SEC. 105. ADDITIONAL AMENDMENT.

Paragraph (5) of section 2701(b) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797a(b)) (as amended by section 101 of this Act) is further amended by inserting ", including hazardous conditions" after "and situations".

**SEC. 106. ADDITIONAL AMENDMENT TO THE
GRANT PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL SECURITY.**

Section 2701(b) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3797a(b)) (as amended by sections 101 and 105 of this Act) is further amended by inserting after paragraph (4) the following new paragraph (and redesignating the succeeding paragraphs accordingly):

"(5) Development and implementation of safety measures to protect students in the event of a terrorist attack or other hazardous condition or situation."

**TITLE II—HIGHER EDUCATION SECURITY
ENHANCEMENT**

**SEC. 201. REQUIREMENT FOR CAMPUS SAFETY
ASSESSMENTS.**

Section 485 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(n) CAMPUS SAFETY ASSESSMENT.—Each eligible institution participating in any program under this title shall conduct an annual campus safety assessment that shall be prepared through consultation between the institution's staff, including safety and security personnel, and local law enforcement officials."

SEC. 202. REQUIREMENT FOR CAMPUS EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANS.

Section 485 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended in section 201 (20 U.S.C. 1092), is further amended by adding at the end the following:

"(o) CAMPUS EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN.—Each eligible institution participating in any program under this title shall develop and implement a campus emergency response plan to address a comprehensive set of emergency situations, including the following:

"(1) Natural disasters.

"(2) Active shooter situations.

"(3) Terrorist attacks."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) and the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2352, the School Safety Enhancements Act of 2008, is a vital piece of legislation aimed at ensuring the safety of the students in our Nation's schools.

Over the last decade we've seen horrific school shootings and violence in at least 27 States. Ensuring the safety of our students and teachers at all levels is obviously a priority.

Sponsored by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ROTHMAN), H.R. 2352 addresses this problem by providing increased funding for improving school security and making the grant program more accessible to schools in poor communities.

Specifically, the bill raises the authorization level of Federal grants from \$30 million to \$50 million for Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010. It also decreases the matching non-Federal funds requirement from 50 percent to 20 percent, raising the Federal portion from 50 percent to 80 percent. This change in funding ratios brings the percentage more in line with the traditional split for school grants, and would bring much-needed help to many schools.

Finally, the bill amends the Higher Education Act to require participating institutions to conduct annual campus assessments and develop and implement a campus emergency response plan. I urge my colleagues to support the legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2352, the School Safety Enhancement Act of 2008. Each day roughly 160,000 children miss school because they are afraid of violent incident: 100,000 children take a weapon to school, often a gun, more often a knife; 14,000 young people are attacked on school property each year; 6,250 teachers are threatened each day; and 260 teachers are assaulted. This has to stop.

Normally, the Federal Government doesn't have a role in the day-to-day activities of public schools. In this case, when, in fact, a future workforce is endangered, and the widespread use of these kinds of techniques is often done by gangs and other organized crime links that, in fact, we are fighting on another front.

So, Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this because we cannot put all of our money into fighting gangs on the street. We have to do something to secure schools. We have to make sure that gang membership is not necessary just to go to class.

Mr. Speaker, this is a bipartisan bill. This is a bill that, in fact, was first introduced by, many of the provisions were first introduced by Republicans. It is one of those bills that has transcended the change in the administration, change in leadership of the House.

And I hope that we will continue to have this kind of work, finding smarter ways, better ways to stem crime on the street, including stemming crime in the classroom.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ROTHMAN), the sponsor of the legislation.

Mr. ROTHMAN. I thank the gentleman from Virginia not only for the time but also for his leadership on the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security.

I also want to thank my friend and colleague from California (Mr. ISSA) for all his support in moving this legislation forward.

I also want to recognize the ranking member of the subcommittee, Mr. GOHMERT from Texas. I also would like to acknowledge the leadership of Chairman CONYERS and Ranking Member LAMAR SMITH.

Mr. Speaker, we are often asked, as Members of Congress, why don't you people do anything important? Well, today we're about to do something very important.

Back in 2000, when I was a member of the Judiciary Committee, I received two different letters from two different young girls in two different middle schools in my district. And the letters basically said, Congressman, we're afraid to go to school. There are gangs, there are wise guys, there are kids on drugs. We're not sure who's coming in and out of our school. And we're constantly looking over our shoulders wondering if someone's going to hurt us. Aren't you supposed to be doing something about that? You adults, protecting us kids?

As the father of two kids then, now of two kids and three stepkids, it really did strike me very deeply. And I went to our chairman, may he rest in peace, Chairman Henry Hyde, and I told him about the situation. I told him I had an idea. I said that we should have a matching grant program so it wouldn't be a Federal mandate, that schools that wanted to participate could, those that didn't want to didn't have to. But those who wanted to get metal detectors, new locks on their doors, security training for their personnel, they could apply to the Federal Government through the Justice Department for a grant, a 50/50 grant; the schools put up half, the Feds put up the other half. And if the schools were really destitute and out of money and could demonstrate that, as well as a real need, the Federal Government would pay 100 percent.

This was at the time right after Watergate, rather, after the Clinton impeachment. Needless to say, there was disagreement amongst the parties. The Republicans were in charge.

The bill passed unanimously out of the House Judiciary Committee and

then came to the floor and passed unanimously. And since then, more than 3,400 schools nationwide have benefited, have added security cameras and metal detectors and new locks to limit entranceways and egresses from the schools. More than 177 schools in the Garden State of New Jersey, my State. And I've gotten letters and phone calls and people stopping me on the street thanking me, Congressman, thank you for protecting us.

This year, 7 years after we passed the Secure Our Schools, actually we passed it in 2001, we have an improvement, the School Safety Enhancements Act.

What we found, unfortunately, was that the \$30 million authorized level wasn't enough money to cover all the schools in the country who wanted to participate, who wanted to put up half the money for these security improvements for their schools. There wasn't enough money to go around. So we made our case to the subcommittee and to the full committee, and they were kind enough to work with us and introduce this bill, the School Safety Enhancements Act, to raise the dollar amount from \$30 million authorized to \$50 million authorized.

The other changes we made were to change the Federal match so that the Federal Government could provide even a larger percentage than the 50/50 percentage. We know how strapped local property taxpayers are back home, and so that's the least we could do from the Federal Government.

We also added a couple of other things, as Chairman SCOTT referred to, namely, a campus safety assessment program to implement a campus emergency response plan that would have to be established at all of our universities across the country so that parents who are sending their kids to these universities and colleges would know that, at the very least, there was a plan if, God forbid, there was a tragedy.

We worked very closely, we also established a hot line for call in for kids and others to report problems.

We worked with Senator BARBARA BOXER from the Senate who was instrumental in helping us in that body in adding some of these provisions.

Again, this has complete flexibility. This is not a Federal mandate. Schools have to make the applications on the merits of their need for these safety improvements and for the financial contribution from the Federal Government. But they're willing to kick in their own dollars to help pay for these security improvements, metal detectors, locks on doors, locks on windows and training for security personnel.

It doesn't get better than this when we can provide the money for even more schools and to protect even more students. That's our job, our responsibility as Members of Congress, to protect the people, as moms and dads, aunts and uncles, grandparents and

friends of kids. My goodness, there's nothing more important than preventing harm to our children.

I urge the adoption of this bill.

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Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I yield back my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate everyone working together on this legislation. Schools will be safer if the bill passes. I would hope that it would be the pleasure of the House to pass the bill.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 2352, the "School Safety Enhancements Act of 2007", which is aimed at making America a safer place. The bill under consideration addresses health and safety issues for children. I support this bill and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

H.R. 2352 is necessary and will ensure the protection and safety of our children in a learning environment. Violence at our schools have increased at an alarming rate in states such as California, Colorado, Illinois, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin over the last few years. H.R. 2352 seeks to curb that stem of violence.

H.R. 2352 increases authorized annual funding from \$30 million to \$50 million for FY 2008–2009 for the Secure Our Schools grant program, and decreases the non-federal grant participation percentage from 50 percent to 20 percent. It requires institutions of higher education to conduct annual campus safety assessments and develop and implement campus emergency response plans.

This bill seeks to address the violence in our schools. It will ensure the safety of students and teachers and will make sure that education is the paramount concern of educators.

The Act also increases the federal portion of the funding from 50 percent to 80 percent, which decreases the non-federal portion from 50 percent to 20 percent. According to the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office of the Department of Justice, which administers the Secure Our Schools grants, many of the poorer communities that need help the most have been unable to participate in the program because they cannot afford the previously required 50 percent non-federal grant match. The proposed change in non-federal funding is more in line with the COPS traditional 75/25 percent split, and should allow more participation in the program.

The Act increases the possible uses of funding to include surveillance equipment, hot-lines to report potentially dangerous situations and capital improvements to make school facilities more secure. Finally, the Act requires the establishment of an interagency task force to develop and promulgate advisory school safety guidelines.

The Act amends the existing requirements for grant applications, and requires each grant application to be accompanied by a report, signed by the chief education officer and the attorney general or other chief legal officer, demonstrating that the proposed use of the

grant funds is an effective means for improving school safety, is consistent with a comprehensive approach to preventing school violence, and meets the individualized needs of the particular school.

Finally, the Act amends the Higher Education Act and requires each eligible participating institution to conduct an annual campus safety assessment, and develop and implement a campus emergency response plan to address emergency situations, including natural disasters, active shooter situations, and terrorist attacks. The bill is sponsored by Mr. ROTHMAN, and has 52 cosponsors.

MY THREE AMENDMENTS THAT WERE OFFERED AND ACCEPTED

I have three amendments that I offered and that were accepted concerning this bill. The first extended the current requirement of establishing a hotline or tipline to include the reporting of hazardous conditions, including the presence of hazardous chemicals.

The second one requires schools to develop and implement safety measures to protect students in the event of a terrorist attack or other hazardous condition or situation. It would further require that no funds would be disbursed unless the school had a safety plan in place to respond to a terrorist attack or other hazardous condition or situation.

The need for schools to respond to hazardous conditions or situations is necessary because often children are confronted with hazardous conditions and they simply ignore them. This has been a big problem in the Houston Independent School district. For example, in Key Middle School students were getting sick because they were learning in classrooms where mold was growing on the walls and ceilings. The students saw the mold and were getting sick but they did not know how to respond. These amendments would ensure that children are aware of the toxicity of these chemicals and organic substances. This is a real threat. Key Middle School was subsequently closed because of the severe health risks posed to students. My call for student awareness, training and prevention as pertains to a terrorist attack does not need much explanation. In light of the tragic events of 9/11, we can never be too cautious with schooling and protecting our children. Children need to know what to do and how to respond to dangerous situations during a terrorist threat.

My last amendment goes to the heart of administrative practice. The original bill required that a taskforce create guidelines. Because the taskforce is to be established within 30 days of enactment of this act, my amendment allows the taskforce to convene and within 60 days issue a preliminary advisory school safety guideline and after that time it should provide the public with an opportunity through notice and comment and publish a final advisory school safety guideline not later than 30 days after the preliminary guidelines. This is good administrative practice and ensures public participation by students, teachers, and parents.

I urge my colleagues to support this very important bill.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the School Safety Enhancements Act of 2007. This legislation reauthorizes and strengthens the Secure Our Schools program,

which provides critical support to our Nation's schools for equipment to keep our children safe during their educational time. Over the past 6 years, \$65 million in Federal grant funds have been put to work in a partnership between law enforcement agencies and local schools to invest in security and school safety at more than 2,400 schools nationwide.

As the former superintendent of North Carolina's public schools, I know that a student needs fertile soil for learning to take seed. I have rare firsthand knowledge of the importance of quality school buildings to the educational goals we hold for our schools, and the challenges those schools face in inadequate facilities. There really is no substitute for bricks and mortar when it comes to quality schools. While good teachers and administrators are central to education, we also need a good environment for students. Children cannot learn in facilities that are substandard or overcrowded or where they do not feel safe. That is why I have made it a priority in Congress to support funds for school construction, for school safety, and for school emergency preparedness needs.

This bill is a step to address the pressing needs that schools have for safety. Even as teachers, administrators, and students are working together with law enforcement to make schools a safe place for learning, they can use additional help and guidance to make their planning as effective as possible. I speak to students from North Carolina who are concerned about violence in their schools, about gang activity, or about bullying. Secure Our Schools gives schools and law enforcement agencies the flexibility to address their community's unique needs.

Although schools are central institutions to our communities, they are often overlooked in security and emergency planning. The partnerships between schools and law enforcement facilitated by Secure Our Schools have far-reaching benefits to school safety and the health of our communities.

H.R. 2352 gives these partnerships new tools to keep our children safe by allowing the use of funds for surveillance equipment and capital improvement. In recognition of the incredible need for these funds, it expands the authorization for Secure Our Schools grants to \$50 million. It is a solid step to improve our schools and recognize the hard work of teams of teachers, administrators, health care workers, security staff, and law enforcement personnel in keeping our children safe.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in voting yes for H.R. 2352.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2352, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

AUTHORIZING THE UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT POLICE TO PROTECT OFFICIALS

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6855) to extend the authority for the United States Supreme Court Police to protect court officials off the Supreme Court grounds, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6855

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

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF THE AUTHORITY FOR THE UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT POLICE TO PROTECT COURT OFFICIALS OFF THE SUPREME COURT GROUNDS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Section 6121(b)(2) of title 40, United States Code, is amended by striking "2008" and inserting "2013".

SEC. 2. CHANGING THE TITLE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO THE CHIEF JUSTICE.

Title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in section 133(b)(2), by striking "administrative assistant" and inserting "Counselor";

(2) in paragraphs (1)(E) and (2)(E) of section 376(a), by striking "an administrative assistant" and inserting "a Counselor";

(3) in section 677—

(A) in the heading, by striking "Administrative Assistant" and inserting "Counselor";

(B) in the text, by striking "Administrative Assistant" each place it appears and inserting "Counselor";

(C) in the first sentence of subsection (a), by striking "an" and inserting "a"; and

(4) in the item relating to section 677 in the table of sections at the beginning of chapter 45, by striking "Administrative Assistant" and inserting "Counselor".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) and the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 6855 extends for 5 years existing authority for the Supreme Court Police to protect the