

diplomatic role our military plays as it works in concert with the State Department in being ambassadors of good-will.

—In 2005 when *Comfort* responded on our own shores after the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, providing treatment to thousands in the Gulf Coast region. Despite regional devastation, the USNS *Comfort* was able to provide critical emergency hospital services for residents and first-responders before regular service was restored.

—In 2003, when *Comfort* deployed to war and served as an afloat trauma center for two months during the initial stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

—In 2001, immediately in the aftermath of the 9-11 attacks, when *Comfort* deployed in support of Operation Noble Eagle and provided meals, housing, medical and psychological services to volunteer and relief workers at New York's ground zero.

This is just a sampling of the ship and crew's operational history since *Comfort* was delivered to the Navy in 1987. Untold thousands have benefited from these missions.

Madam Speaker, while many know of *Comfort* and *Mercy*'s life-saving work, few realize that these ships almost did not come into the Navy's fleet. USNS *Comfort* and USNS *Mercy* began their lives as oil-tankers a decade before being delivered to the Navy as hospital ships. In fact, they were destined for the scrap yard, if not for the intervention of Congress and specifically the Appropriations Committee. It was a Congressional Initiative that was the catalyst for the birth of the *Mercy* Class Hospital Ships. My colleagues and I on the Appropriations Committee saw a need for this life-saving capability when others sought to scrap these ships. We saw the value in these *Mercy* Class Hospital Ships, to provide a unique capability of being some of the largest U.S. trauma centers with the distinction of having world-wide mobility. Even in the face of airfield closures, destroyed infrastructure, and interrupted communications, as long as the sea is navigable, the USNS *Comfort* and USNS *Mercy* can get there. Once on the scene, a fully crewed ship brings 1,000 medical professionals, a hospital with a full spectrum of surgical and medical services including four X-rays, a CAT scan unit, a dental suite, two oxygen-producing plants, and 5,000 units of blood. The ships have 12 operating rooms and a total bed capacity of up to 1,000. In short, they are fully functional floating hospitals able to give first-rate care where otherwise there would be no treatment options.

Madam Speaker, as we take the time today to honor the men and women who proudly serve this country aboard the USNS *Comfort*, let us also remember the broad scope of compassionate contributions that our servicemen and women are providing around the world in both non-hostile and hostile environments. Often times we forget that our military performs many humanitarian functions that other agencies and nations depend upon, be it logistical support or whole-scale nation-building. Their efforts and their sacrifice go beyond expressions of remorse and tangibly demonstrate our level of commitment to peace and prosperity for all.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, we have no further requests for

time. I yield back the balance of our time.

Mr. McMAHON. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, 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. McMAHON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1048, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

BILLY'S LAW

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3695) to authorize funding for, and increase accessibility to, the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, to facilitate data sharing between such system and the National Crime Information Center database of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to provide incentive grants to help facilitate reporting to such systems, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3695

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 "Help Find the Missing Act" or "Billy's Law".

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF THE NATIONAL MISSING AND UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS SYSTEM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—*The Attorney General, through the Director of the National Institute of Justice, is authorized to maintain public databases, known as the "National Missing and Unidentified Persons System" or "NamUs", to contain missing persons records and unidentified remains cases for purposes of assisting to identify missing people and solve cases of unidentified human remains. All functions, personnel, assets, liabilities, and administrative actions applicable to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System carried out by the National Institute of Justice on the date before the date of the enactment of this Act shall be transferred to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System authorized under this section as of the date of the enactment of this Act.*

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—*There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$2,400,000 for each of the fiscal years 2011 through 2016.*

SEC. 3. SHARING OF INFORMATION BETWEEN NCIC AND NAMUS.

(a) SHARING OF INFORMATION.—*Not later than the end of the 30-day period beginning on the date the online data entry format is updated*

under subsection (c), the Attorney General shall, in accordance with this section, provide for information on missing persons and unidentified human remains contained in the NCIC database (as defined in section 7) to be transmitted to, entered in, and otherwise shared with the NamUs databases (as defined in such section) and for such information contained in the NamUs databases to be transmitted to, entered in, and otherwise shared with the NCIC database.

(b) RULES ON CONFIDENTIALITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—*Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Attorney General, in consultation with the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (in this Act referred to as the "FBI"), shall promulgate rules pursuant to notice and comment that specify the information the Attorney General may provide from the NCIC files to the NamUs databases for purposes of this Act. Such rules shall—*

(A) *provide for the protection of law enforcement sensitive, confidential, and private information contained in the NCIC files;*

(B) *be promulgated only after the Director approves recommendations by the Advisory Policy Board of the Criminal Justice Information Services Division of the FBI;*

(C) *specify the circumstances in which portions of information may be withheld from transfer, entry, or sharing from the NCIC database to the NamUs databases; and*

(D) *provide that once an authorized agency provides an authorization to permit the transmission, entering, or sharing of information (or portions of information) from the NCIC database to the NamUs databases, such authorization shall be deemed to apply to any updates made to such information, unless otherwise specified by the agency.*

(2) SUBMISSIONS PRIOR TO ONLINE DATA ENTRY FORMAT UPDATE.—*With respect to information submitted to the NCIC database before the end of the 30-day period specified in subsection (a), the Attorney General may solicit from appropriate authorized agencies authorization to transmit, enter, or share such information.*

(c) UPDATES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—*Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall update the online data entry format for the NCIC database and NamUs databases to provide State criminal justice agencies, offices of medical examiners, and offices of coroners with the option to authorize the submission of new information and data that is reported to and entered into the NCIC database to simultaneously be submitted to and entered into the NamUs databases.*

(2) NCIC FORMAT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—*In the case of the NCIC database, an update described in paragraph (1) shall include—*

(i) *an update to the NCIC database online data entry format that States use in submitting missing persons and unidentified remains reports, including the addition of a new data field allowing States, on behalf of the authorized agency that originally submitted the data, to select whether or not to have the NCIC report, subject to the rules promulgated under subsection (b), shared with the NamUs databases; and*

(ii) *subject to subparagraph (B), a requirement that as a condition of participating in the NCIC database, States must update their missing persons and unidentified remains collection processes from local and tribal law enforcement, medical examiners, and coroners to enable the States to acquire information on whether or not the authorized agencies originally submitting data with respect to a missing person or unidentified remains have provided authorization to*

share the information with the NamUs databases.

(B) **EXCEPTION.**—Subparagraph (A)(ii) shall not apply with respect to any State that has in effect a State law providing for a methodology to authorize the sharing of information between the NCIC database and NamUs databases.

(d) **AMENDMENTS TO TITLE XXXVII OF THE CRIME CONTROL ACT OF 1990 TO REQUIRE REPORTS OF MISSING CHILDREN TO NAMUS.**—

(1) **REPORTING REQUIREMENT.**—Section 3701(a) of title XXXVII of the Crime Control Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 5779(a)) is amended by striking the period and inserting the following: “and, consistent with section 3 (including rules promulgated pursuant to section 3(b)) of the Help Find the Missing Act, shall also report such case, either directly or through authorization described in such section to transmit, enter, or share information on such case, to the NamUs databases (as defined in section 7 of such Act).”.

(2) **STATE REQUIREMENTS.**—Section 3702 of title XXXVII of the Crime Control Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 5780) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (2), by striking “or the National Crime Information Center computer database” and inserting “, the National Crime Information Center computer database, or the NamUs databases (as defined in section 7 of the Help Find the Missing Act)”;

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking “and the National Crime Information Center computer networks” and inserting “, the National Crime Information Center computer networks, and the NamUs databases (as so defined)”;

(C) in paragraph (4)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting “or the NamUs databases” after “National Crime Information Center”;

(ii) in subparagraph (A), by striking “and National Crime Information Center computer networks” and inserting “, National Crime Information Center computer networks, and the NamUs databases”.

(3) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply with respect to reports made before, on, or after the date of the enactment of this Act beginning on the last day of the 30-day period described in subsection (a).

SEC. 4. INCENTIVE GRANTS PROGRAM.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall establish a program to provide grants to qualifying law enforcement agencies (as defined in subsection (j)), offices of coroners, offices of medical examiners, and other authorized agencies to facilitate the process of reporting information regarding missing persons and unidentified remains to the NCIC database and NamUs databases for purposes of assisting in locating such missing persons and identifying such remains.

(b) **REQUIREMENTS.**—As a condition of a grant under this section, a grant recipient shall, with respect to each case reported to the agency or office of the recipient relating to a missing person described in a category under subsection (e) or relating to unidentified remains—

(1) not later than 72 hours after such case is reported to the agency or office and consistent with subsection (c), submit to the NCIC database and NamUs databases—

(A) in the case of a missing person described in a category under subsection (e), at least the minimum information described in subsection (f)(1); and

(B) in the case of unidentified remains, at least the minimum information described in subsection (f)(2); and

(2) not later than 60 days after the original entry of the report, verify and update any original report entered into the State law enforcement system, the NCIC database, or NamUs databases after receipt of the grant with any

additional information, including, to the greatest extent possible—

(A) information on the extent to which DNA samples are available, including the availability of such samples submitted to the National DNA Index System under subsection (b)(3);

(B) fingerprints, medical and dental records, and photographs of any distinguishing characteristics such as scars, marks, tattoos, piercings, and other unique physical characteristics;

(C) in the case of unidentified remains, photographs or digital images that may assist in identifying the decedent, including fingerprint cards, radiographs, palmprints, and distinctive features of the decedent's personal effects; and

(D) any other information determined to be appropriate by the Attorney General; and

(3) not later than 60 days after the original entry of the report, to the greatest extent possible, submit to the National DNA Index System of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, established pursuant to section 210304 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, (either directly or through use of NamUs victims assistance resources and DNA collection services) DNA samples and information relating to such case.

For purposes of paragraph (2), in the case of information a grant recipient authorizes to be transferred, entered, or shared under section 3 between the NCIC database and NamUs databases, any update to such information shall be simultaneously made with respect to both databases unless specified otherwise by the recipient.

(c) **SUBMISSION OF REPORTS.**—To satisfy subsection (b)(1), a recipient of a grant under this section shall submit information required under such subsection—

(1) separately to the NCIC database and NamUs databases; or

(2) in accordance with section 3, simultaneously to the NamUs databases when reporting to the NCIC database or to the NCIC database when reporting to the NamUs databases.

(d) **PERMISSIBLE USE OF FUNDS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The permissible uses of grants awarded under this section include the use of funds—

(A) to hire additional personnel, to acquire technology to facilitate timely data entry into the relevant databases;

(B) to conduct contracting activities relevant to outsourcing the processing of unidentified remains and the reporting of the resulting information to the NCIC database and NamUs databases;

(C) to train local law enforcement personnel, medical examiners, and coroners to use the NCIC database and NamUs databases;

(D) to assist States' transition into the new system under which information is shared between the NCIC database and NamUs databases; and

(E) for other purposes consistent with the goals of this section.

(2) **CLARIFICATION.**—In no case may a recipient of a grant under this section use funds to enter or help facilitate the entrance of any false or misleading information about missing persons or unidentified remains.

(e) **CATEGORIES OF MISSING PERSONS.**—The categories of missing persons described in this subsection are the following:

(1) A missing person age 21 or older who—

(A) is senile or is suffering from a proven mental or physical disability, as documented by a source deemed credible to an appropriate law enforcement entity; or

(B) is missing under circumstances that indicate, as determined by an appropriate law enforcement entity—

(i) that the person's physical safety may be endangered;

(ii) that the disappearance may not have been voluntary, such as abduction or kidnapping; or

(iii) that the disappearance may have been caused by a natural disaster or catastrophe (such as an airplane crash or terrorist attack).

(2) A missing person who does not meet the criteria described in paragraph (1) but who meets one of the following criteria:

(A) There is a reasonable concern, as determined by an appropriate law enforcement entity, for the safety of the missing person.

(B) The person is under age 21 and emancipated under the laws of the person's State of residence.

(f) **MINIMUM INFORMATION REQUIRED.**—

(1) **CONTENT FOR MISSING PERSONS.**—The minimum information described in this section, with respect to a missing person, is the following:

(A) The name, date of birth, city and State of residence, gender, race, height, weight, eye color, and hair color of the missing person.

(B) The date and location of the last known contact with the missing person.

(C) The category described in subsection (e) in which the missing person is classified.

(2) **CONTENT FOR UNIDENTIFIED HUMAN REMAINS.**—The minimum information described in this section, with respect to unidentified human remains, is the following:

(A) The estimated age, gender, race, height, weight, hair color, and eye color.

(B) Any distinguishing characteristics such as scars, marks, tattoos, piercings, and other unique physical characteristics.

(C) A description of clothing found on the decedent.

(D) City and State where the unidentified human remains were found.

(E) Information on how to contact the law enforcement agency handling the investigation and the unidentified human remains.

(F) Information on the extent to which DNA samples are available, including the availability of such samples submitted to the National DNA Index System under subsection (b)(3).

(g) **ADMINISTRATION.**—The Attorney General shall prescribe requirements, including with respect to applications, for grants awarded under this section and shall determine the amount of each such grant.

(h) **CONFIDENTIALITY.**—As a condition of a grant under this section, the recipient of the grant shall ensure that information reported under the grant meets the requirements promulgated by the Attorney General under section 3(b)(1).

(i) **ANNUAL SUMMARY.**—For each of the fiscal years 2012 through 2015, the Attorney General shall publish an annual statistical summary of the reports required by subsection (c).

(j) **QUALIFYING LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY DEFINED.**—For purposes of this Act, the term “qualifying law enforcement agency” means a State, local, or tribal law enforcement agency.

(k) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$10,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2011 through 2015.

SEC. 5. REPORT ON BEST PRACTICES.

Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall issue a report to offices of medical examiners, offices of coroners, and Federal, State, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies describing the best practices for the collection, reporting, and analysis of data and information on missing persons and unidentified human remains. Such best practices shall—

(1) provide an overview of the NCIC database and NamUs databases;

(2) describe how local law enforcement agencies, offices of medical examiners, and offices of coroners should access and use the NCIC database and NamUs databases;

(3) describe the appropriate and inappropriate uses of the NCIC database and NamUs databases; and

(4) describe the standards and protocols for the collection, reporting, and analysis of data and information on missing persons and unidentified human remains.

SEC. 6. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act and biennially thereafter, the Attorney General shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate a report describing the status of the NCIC database and NamUs databases.

(b) *CONTENTS.*—The report required by subsection (a) shall describe, to the extent available, information on—

(1) the process of information sharing between the NCIC database and NamUs databases; and

(2) the programs funded by grants awarded under section 4.

SEC. 7. DEFINITIONS.

For the purposes of this Act, the following definitions apply:

(a) *AUTHORIZED AGENCY.*—The term “authorized agency” means a government agency with an originating agency identification (ORI) number and that is a criminal justice agency, as defined for purposes of subpart A of part 20 of title 28, Code of Federal Regulations.

(b) *NAMUS DATABASES.*—The term “NamUs databases” means the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System Missing Persons database and National Missing and Unidentified Persons System Unidentified Decedents database maintained by the National Institute of Justice of the Department of Justice.

(c) *NCIC DATABASE.*—The term “NCIC database” means the National Crime Information Center Missing Person File and National Crime Information Center Unidentified Person File of the National Crime Information Center database of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, established pursuant to section 534 of title 28, United States Code.

(d) *STATE.*—The term “State” means any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

Madam Speaker, the Help Find the Missing Act, or Billy’s Law, will help families of missing persons find their loved ones by strengthening Federal databases about missing persons and unidentified remains.

Every year, tens of thousands of Americans go missing and are never found. In the subcommittee we heard moving testimony from Ms. Janice

Smolinski, whose son, Billy, went missing in 2004. While she has not found her son, she has dedicated her life to improving the system for others, including highlighting the need to strengthen and expand access to our missing persons databases. I thank her for her dedication to this worthy cause.

Billy’s Law will facilitate the sharing of information between the FBI’s NCIC databases and the NamUs databases recently established by the National Institute of Justice. Facilitating information-sharing between those two databases will assist the public, medical examiners, and coroners in looking for missing persons and identifying remains.

Billy’s Law also authorizes grants for personnel, technology, and training to help States submit data to NCIC and NamUs. These grants will strengthen the system by providing an incentive for States to provide critical information to the databases shortly after missing person cases are reported.

This bill is strongly supported by the Department of Justice. And I would like to commend our colleagues, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), for their hard work on this piece of legislation.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3695.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I’m proud to join my colleague, Mr. MURPHY, in supporting and sponsoring H.R. 3695, the “Help Find the Missing Act” or “Billy’s Law,” as we call it.

It’s my pleasure today to speak in support of a commonsense piece of legislation that probably should have been passed years ago. I would like to thank my colleague, Congressman MURPHY, for taking this worthy cause and asking me to work with him on it.

I’d also like to thank a citizen of our Nation, Janice Smolinski, the mother of Billy Smolinski, for whom this bill is named. Without her devotion and the time that she spent on this issue, Billy’s Law never would have happened. Her work, along with the response of her representative, Congressman MURPHY, to create this legislation is an example of Congress working the way our Founders intended it to.

Janice Smolinski talked to her congressman, Mr. MURPHY. He listened. He responded. He moved quickly, and thus this piece of legislation is brought to the House to solve this problem.

In the years since her son’s disappearance, Janice Smolinski has worked to improve our Nation’s reporting system for the missing so that other families do not have to suffer as she did. As we vote today on Billy’s Law, it is imperative for us to remember how important this bill is to people

like Janice Smolinski all over the country.

There is a great need to improve our Nation’s tracking of missing persons and identification of unknown and unidentified remains. This bill is a big step in fulfilling both of these goals.

Every year, tens of thousands of Americans disappear. They go missing, never to be seen by their loved ones again. In 2009, there were more than 100,000 missing persons records active in the FBI’s National Crime Information Center.

Simultaneously, medical examiners and coroners across the country are holding tens of thousands of unidentified remains. There are an estimated 40,000 sets of unidentified remains being held by coroners throughout the country.

But as of January 2009, the NCIC database contains only 7,000 records of unidentified remains. This means that medical examiners and coroners offices are not recording in the NCIC database many of the unidentified remains they hold. Consequently, it is likely that many missing person cases remain open for failure to connect missing person profiles with unidentified remains that are being held.

There are many Federal, State, local, and nonprofit databases designed to help, but these databases are not sufficiently accessible to the public, and they do not do a good job of sharing information with each other.

Billy’s Law addresses all of these concerns by increasing funding for a national, online repository and reporting system called NamUs, the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System. Billy’s Law provides that the FBI’s NCIC database share information on missing and unidentified persons with the NamUs database system.

The goal is to have corners, medical examiners, law enforcement agents, and the public all reporting information to and getting information from one centralized Web site, NamUs.

Billy’s Law also requires the Attorney General to establish a program to provide grants to qualifying medical examiners, coroners and law enforcement agencies for the purpose of facilitating better reporting of missing persons and unidentified remains to the NCIC and NamUs databases.

Having served as a prosecutor in Texas for over 8 years and a felony court judge for 22 years, I know firsthand the toll that violent crime puts on communities, but specifically on families. This pain is made even worse when a family of a victim is not able to determine what exactly happened to their missing loved one. Often, families have to wait for months or years until they can find closure. Some families, like the Smolinskis, never find out what happened to their loved one.

Shortly after I was elected to Congress, I started the Victims’ Rights

Caucus. This Caucus is a bipartisan group of Members of Congress, co-chaired by myself and Mr. COSTA from California, that supports legislation and advocates for policies that will help victims of crime in the United States and the families of victims. H.R. 3695 is one of these bills.

Billy's Law is supported by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the National Organization of Police Associations, and the National Association of Medical Examiners.

I urge all my colleagues to support this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1530

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the sponsor of Billy's Law, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY).

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. First of all, let me extend my sincerest thanks to the chairman of the subcommittee, Mr. SCOTT, for bringing this bill to the floor with such speed, and then let me extend additional thanks to the chairman of the full committee, Mr. CONYERS, and Ranking Members GOHMERT and SMITH for their assistance in bringing this bill to the floor today.

Madam Speaker, when I was home over the break, I told a lot of people that I saw that for all of the attention on the news about the things that Republicans and Democrats disagree with, this legislation, Billy's Law, is an example of the vast legislative underbrush that happens here that changes lives but don't necessarily get the big headlines, places where both parties work together to make this government work better and to make it more compassionate.

I'd like to thank Representative POE for sponsoring this bill with me. This House has no stronger advocate for the rights of victims and their families, and it has been my pleasure to work with him to move this legislation forward.

But above all, I'd like to extend my personal thanks to Jan Smolinski and her husband Bill, the parents of Billy Smolinski, for whom this legislation is named. Their story is tragic, but Jan's pursuit of justice, her desire to do something with her situation, to change it for all of the other families who have gone through the same thing, that is nothing less than heroic.

Madam Speaker, Billy Smolinski of Waterbury, Connecticut, went missing on August 24, 2004, at the age of 31. In their search for their son, Jan and her husband Bill encountered a national missing persons system that is simply broken. They were met with law enforcement that didn't understand how to handle an adult missing persons case, and then they ran into a national system of disconnected and inacces-

sible databases that didn't allow them to be true partners in the search for justice. To this day, they haven't found Billy.

Sadly, their story is not a unique one. Every year, thousands of Americans go missing, often never to be seen by their loved ones again. In fact, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, there are over 100,000 missing persons cases open at any time and approximately 4,400 unidentified human remains are found every single year. Now, those numbers are too high, but just as intolerable are the roadblocks that family members face when they're trying to help law enforcement find a missing loved one.

That is why I am here to urge my friends to join us in supporting Billy's Law, legislation that will begin correcting these problems that plague our Nation's missing persons system.

My colleagues have really gone over the basics of the law so I won't belabor the point. But this legislation for the first time provides statutory authorization for NamUs, which is the Web-based database created in 2007 by the Department of Justice. It's the only federally funded database of missing persons and unidentified remains information that is open and accessible to the public. But currently it's not a congressionally authorized program.

Second, the bill connects NamUs with the other major Federal database housed at the FBI, which is now only accessible to law enforcement. We protect information that needs to stay private, but this new connected database, which will also work with protocols that build in other information from State and local nonprofit databases, creates a complete and powerful national powerful database that families can use along with law enforcement.

And third, as has been stated, it sets up a competitive grants program to make sure that all the information that a coroner may have in California is posted onto a national database so a family searching for their missing loved one in Connecticut has that information in real time.

On January 21, Madam Speaker, Jan Smolinski testified at a hearing on the bill that Subcommittee Chairman SCOTT so graciously held. During her testimony, she poignantly remarked, "Uncertainty is a cancer that crushes the spirit of loved ones left behind, destroys marriages, and tears at the tissue of family bonds."

By creating a robust, user-friendly national missing persons and unidentified remains database, Billy's law will help heal these wounds by finally giving parents and family members like the Smolinskis the ability to be true partners with law enforcement in the search for their loved ones.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill. We owe it to the Smolinskis and to thousands of fami-

lies like them across the country to make sure their personal nightmares are not repeated.

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE) who is a cosponsor of this legislation and who has also worked in the past on similar legislation.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of Billy's Law. I want to thank the many tireless advocates of missing children everywhere, and I certainly want to commend Representative MURPHY for sponsoring this very important piece of legislation.

Every day thousands of people are reported missing. The good news is that many of them are quickly located by our heroes in the local law enforcement agencies. What happens to those who are not found in the first few very critical days after they're reported missing? In the past, the names were noted in files of local police agencies, but without any leads, investigators were left with few options and their names lingered on this list.

Madam Speaker, in 2005, a group of people that included Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies, medical examiners, forensic scientists, and other experts gathered in Philadelphia to discuss ways to solve missing persons cases. The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System is a result of that effort.

Local and State law enforcement agencies need a central database to which they can turn, and that is why I believe NamUs is so important. NamUs has also launched a DNA initiative, which is an effort to make sure we are using DNA technology in every way possible to track down missing persons. Billy's Law provides grants to local law enforcement agencies to improve their access to DNA technology and to NamUs.

In my district, Milton and Evelyn Nerenberg have spent years trying to find out what happened to their missing daughter, Audrey. Frustrated that their daughter, too, remains missing, the Nerenbergs came to me for help. They were concerned that the Federal Government was not doing enough to make sure that information gathered in central Florida, for example, where they lived, was being shared with the right people in other parts of the country. They also wanted to make sure that the DNA technology be made available to law enforcement agencies throughout our Nation as well as in Florida. Billy's Law will make it happen. It is very similar to the legislation I previously introduced and that was named after Audrey Nerenberg.

Important progress has been made in the past 5 years, but more must be done. Forty thousand missing persons, including Audrey Nerenberg from my district, their families will certainly benefit from this legislation.

I have worked in previous Congresses to improve the Federal Government's ability to locate missing persons, and as a cosponsor, I am very pleased to see Billy's Law come to the floor, and I will be proud to vote in favor of its passage.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POE of Texas. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank the chairman, Chairman SCOTT, for bringing this legislation to the House floor as quickly as he has done, and, of course, Mr. MURPHY from Connecticut, the excellent job he has done to bring this legislation to our attention and make sure that this House creates a system where people can find their loved ones.

As a parent, the worst thing that any parent could hear is the fact that their child has disappeared. That would bring terror and fear into any parent. As a parent of four kids, I know that. I think about that constantly.

When Janice Smolinski learned that her son, Billy, had disappeared, she, like every mother would do, was relentless in finding out as much as she could about his disappearance. Unfortunately, she met a lot of stone walls in the criminal justice system. She had put posters up all over her neighborhood. She called everybody she knew. She called the police, and she got on the Internet trying to find out ways she could locate Billy. She was relentless in that pursuit.

And then she came in contact with her Congressman. The old statement "call your Congressman," it worked, and it should have worked in this case and it worked well.

I commend her and other people like her who work to find their loved ones but also to make our system better. So when people that disappear, we are able to find out as much as we can about their disappearance and where they are because we're all in this together.

My grandmother used to say that there is nothing more powerful than a woman who has made up her mind. This is a perfect example of that. Janice Smolinski, a mother, a lady, has done everything she can to find Billy, and now it's time for Congress to do what it can to make sure that all of these different organizations that have information are connected through the Internet, through sophisticated technology, so that we can keep up with all of these children who turn up missing.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Speaker, I rise to voice my support of H.R. 3695, the Help Find the Missing Act, a.k.a. "Billy's Law."

Named after Billy Smolinski, a 31-year-old Connecticut man who went missing in 2004, this Act revamps our national systems for finding and identifying missing persons for the

21st century, and provides families with the updated tools and technology they need to find loved ones who have disappeared.

Right now, we have two databases for missing persons and unidentified remains in America—the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUS) and the FBI's National Crime Information Center, NCIC. And yet, neither share data with the other, and thus too much information slips through the bureaucratic cracks.

"Billy's Law" rectifies this glaring error by combining these two systems into one comprehensive database and funding it appropriately, one that families can use and even update with additional information on loved ones who have disappeared. This bill is an outgrowth of recommendations made in the wake of Connecticut's 2007 Law Enforcement and Missing Persons Act, and it is an easy fix that will redound to the benefit of families all across America in search of a missing loved one.

No one should have to deal with all the bureaucratic frustrations and red tape experienced by Billy's family as they searched for him. Put simply, "Billy's Law" removes a needless barrier between two stovepiped databases and brings our missing persons systems up-to-date with 21st century technology. I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and to give thousands of American families the tools and the peace of mind they deserve.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. I want to thank the gentleman from Connecticut and the gentleman from Texas for their work on this bill. I urge my colleagues to support the 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 Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3695, 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.

NATIONAL URBAN CRIMES AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 227) supporting the goals and ideals of National Urban Crimes Awareness Week, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 227

Whereas National Urban Crimes Awareness Week will be celebrated the second week in February 2010;

Whereas 48,430 violent crimes occurred in New York City in 2008, compared to 28,941 in non-New York City counties in the State of New York;

Whereas an estimated 1,382,012 violent crimes occurred nationwide in 2008;

Whereas over 6,000,000 people were victims of crime in 2008;

Whereas according to the 2008 National Crime Victimization Survey, African-Americans experienced higher rates than Whites of every violent crime except simple assault;

Whereas acts of violence and crime cause pain and disruption that can have lasting effects;

Whereas the number of crimes can be reduced if community members are taught crime prevention techniques and become more involved in crime prevention activities;

Whereas neighborhood crime contributes to community neglect and disintegration; and

Whereas numerous studies demonstrate that evidence-based prevention and intervention programs can reduce delinquency and serious juvenile crime: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) it is the sense of Congress that—

(A) National Urban Crimes Awareness Week provides a special opportunity to educate the people of the United States about urban violence and to take steps to encourage the prevention of urban violence, provide assistance, and support to crime victims;

(B) it is appropriate to properly acknowledge the more than 209,000 men and women who have been victims of urban violence in the United States each year, and to commend the efforts of survivors, volunteers, and professionals who work to prevent urban violence;

(C) national and community organizations and private sector supporters should be recognized and applauded for their work in promoting awareness about urban violent crimes, providing information and treatment to victims, families, and survivors, and increasing the number of successful prosecutions of its perpetrators;

(D) public safety, law enforcement, and health professionals should be recognized and applauded for their hard work and innovative strategies to increase the percentage of violent urban crime cases that result in the prosecution and incarceration of the offenders; and

(E) victim advocates and criminal justice professionals should be recognized, applauded, and encouraged for their work to establish effective programs as alternatives to incarceration, re-entry interventions for offenders who are completing sentences, and rehabilitation programs for offenders and victims alike; and

(2) Congress strongly recommends that national and community organizations, businesses in the private sector, colleges and universities, and the media—

(A) promote, through education and prevention measures, awareness of violent urban crimes and strategies to decrease the incidence of these crimes; and

(B) support the goals and ideals of National Urban Crimes Awareness Week.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

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