positioned to contribute to aviation security policy.

Before beginning, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that our thoughts and prayers are with the families of those that were lost on the Metrojet flight originating from Egypt recently.

The safety and security of the traveling public is vital, and the work of the Transportation Security Subcommittee, of which I am a member, is extremely important, as we address issues and vulnerabilities that affect the Nation's aviation sector.

As many of you will recall, Mr. Speaker, in 2012, then-TSA Administrator John Pistole unilaterally made changes to the prohibited items list allowed onto passenger planes to include small knives and sporting goods equipment. Almost immediately, there was an outcry against this decision from a broad range of stakeholders. Our committee heard from flight attendants, pilots, passenger groups, and others about the security and safety risks associated with this change.

Like many Americans, I was pleased that TSA ultimately decided to withdraw its changes to the prohibited items list. However, I believe TSA should consult the Aviation Security Advisory Committee, or ASAC, before implementing new security protocols. Enactment of H.R. 3144 would ensure that such consultation occurs.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3144 also includes language to ensure that there is continuity in the ASAC's operations even when there are changes to its membership. In general terms, given that most of our Nation's critical infrastructure is owned and operated by the private sector, it is important that DHS maintain close partnerships with the private sector to execute its missions and programs.

When it comes to aviation security, such partners are essential insofar as TSA cannot effectively carry outs its mission at our Nation's airports without buy-in from the air carriers, airport operators, labor unions, passenger groups, airport vendors, and technology companies.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge that this bill was approved unanimously in committee and thank our cosponsors; the chairman of our committee's Subcommittee on Transportation Security, Mr. KATKO; the chairman of the full committee, Mr. MCCAUL; and the ranking member of the full committee, Mr. THOMPSON. I am pleased that the committee has worked in a bipartisan fashion to advance this timely piece of legislation.

Together we send a strong message to TSA and the American flying public about our commitment to ensuring that sensible and effective security policies are in place at our Nation's airports. For these reasons, I urge Members to support H.R. 3144.

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I, once again, urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3144.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3144, 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.

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION ACT

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1073) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to secure critical infrastructure against electromagnetic threats, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1073

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 ''Critical Infrastructure Protection Act'' or the ''CIPA''.

SEC. 2. EMP PLANNING, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, AND PROTECTION AND PREPAREDNESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 121) is amended—

(1) in section 2 (6 U.S.C. 101), by inserting after paragraph (6) the following:

''(6a) EMP.—The term 'EMP' means—

''(A) an electromagnetic pulse caused by intentional means, including acts of terrorism; and

''(B) a geomagnetic disturbance caused by solar storms or other naturally occurring phenomena.'';

(2) in title V (6 U.S.C. 311 et seq.), by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 526. NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORKS AND EDUCATION.

''The Secretary, or the Secretary's designee, shall, to the extent practicable—

''(1) include in national planning frameworks the threat of EMP events; and

''(2) conduct outreach to educate owners and operators of critical infrastructure, emergency planners, and emergency response providers at all levels of government of the threat of EMP events.'';

(3) in title III (6 U.S.C. 181 et seq.), by adding at the end of the following:

''SEC. 318. EMP RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—In furtherance of domestic preparedness and response, the Secretary, acting through the Under Secretary for Science and Technology, and in consultation with other relevant agencies and departments of the Federal Government and relevant owners and operators of critical infrastructure, shall, to the extent practicable, conduct research and development to mitigate the consequences of EMP events.

''(b) SCOPE.—The scope of the research and development under subsection (a) shall include the following:

''(1) An objective scientific analysis of the risks to critical infrastructures from a range of EMP events.

''(2) Determination of the critical national security assets and vital civic utilities and infrastructures that are at risk from EMP events.

''(3) An evaluation of emergency planning and response technologies that would address the findings and recommendations of experts, including those of the Commission to Assess the Threat to the United States from Electromagnetic Pulse Attack.

''(4) An analysis of technology options that are available to improve the resiliency of critical infrastructure to EMP.

''(5) The restoration and recovery capabilities of critical infrastructure under differing levels of damage and disruption from various EMP events.''; and

(4) in section 201(d) (6 U.S.C. 121(d)), by adding at the end the following:

''(26)(A) Prepare and submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate—

''(i) a recommended strategy to protect and prepare the critical infrastructure of the American homeland against EMP events, including from acts of terrorism; and

''(ii) biennial updates on the status of the recommended strategy.

''(B) The recommended strategy shall—

''(i) be based on findings of the research and development conducted under section 318;

''(ii) be developed in consultation with the relevant Federal sector-specific agencies (as defined under Homeland Security Presidential Directive–7) for critical infrastructures;

''(iii) be developed in consultation with the relevant sector coordinating councils for critical infrastructures; and

''(iv) include a classified annex as needed.

''(C) The Secretary may, if appropriate, incorporate the recommended strategy into a broader recommendation developed by the Department to help protect and prepare critical infrastructure from terrorism and other threats if, as incorporated, the strategy complies with subparagraph (B).''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of such Act is amended—

(1) by adding at the end of the items relating to title V the following:

''Sec. 526. National planning frameworks and education.'';

and

(2) by adding at the end of the items relating to title III the following:

''Sec. 318. EMP research and development.''.

(c) DEADLINE FOR RECOMMENDED STRATEGY.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall submit the recommended strategy required under the amendment made by subsection (a)(4) by not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) REPORT.—The Secretary shall submit a report to Congress by not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act describing the progress made in, and an estimated date by which the Department of Homeland Security will have completed—

(1) including EMP (as defined in the amendment made by subsection (a)(1)) threats in national planning frameworks;

(2) research and development described in the amendment made by subsection (a)(3);

(3) development of the comprehensive plan required under the amendment made by subsection (a)(4); and

(4) outreach to educate owners and operators of critical infrastructure, emergency planners and emergency response providers at all levels of government regarding the threat of EMP events.

SEC. 3. NO REGULATORY AUTHORITY.

Nothing in this Act, including the amendments made by this Act, shall be construed to grant any regulatory authority.

SEC. 4. NO NEW AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

This Act, including the amendments made by this Act, may be carried out only by using funds appropriated under the authority of other laws.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which 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 Georgia?

There was no objection.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1073, the Critical Infrastructure Protection Act of 2015.

The threats to the Nation's critical infrastructure continue to evolve. Threats today come in all forms: physical, cyber, and electromagnetic pulse, or EMP, events.

H.R. 1073 is a commonsense piece of legislation because it would ensure that DHS plans and addresses threats to critical infrastructure from EMP events. Specifically, this bill would require the Department of Homeland Security to include EMP events in national planning frameworks. It would also ensure DHS conducts outreach and educates owners and operators of critical infrastructure, emergency planners, and emergency responders about the threat of EMP events. Finally, this legislation requires the Secretary to conduct research and development to mitigate the consequences of EMP events.

I would like to thank my colleague from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) for authoring this important legislation. I urge all Members to join me in supporting this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1073, the Critical Infrastructure Protection Act.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1073 would require the Department of Homeland Security to undertake research, planning, and educational activities to mitigate the potential consequences of electromagnetic pulses and geomagnetic disturbances on critical infrastructure such as public utilities and national security assets. As the Congressional Budget Office noted in its analysis, the Department is currently carrying out programs similar to those required by the bill.

Along those lines, I think it is important to identify the elements of EMP and GMD preparedness and response activities that are common to the existing preparedness and response efforts as set forth in the national planning frameworks. These national planning efforts identify roles and responsibilities for disaster prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery activities, and this bill will include consideration of EMPs.

It is also important to distinguish between EMP, or electromagnetic pulses, and GMD, or geomagnetic disturbances. There are significant differences in the nature of the threats, the science behind their impacts, and the range of options for potential solutions.

EMP weapons are most generally recognized as thermonuclear weapons that may be launched on missiles designed to explode in the upper atmosphere and produce intense, short-duration, targeted energy that can impact a wide range of technologies and industries. An EMP blast could disrupt and potentially destroy electronic devices in the affected area with consequences extending to critical infrastructures that rely on microprocessor-based electronic devices.

In contrast, geomagnetic fluctuations, or GMDs, result from solar weather activity. Severe GMD events may produce varying effects on the power system depending on orientation of the solar storm, latitude, transmission line characteristics, the geology of an affected area, and the design of the power system. The effects of GMD are believed to be primarily limited to reliability of the bulk power system, while the effects of an EMP could cross multiple infrastructures and technologies.

Given that any EMP is likely to be the result of an international attack or warlike activity on the United States or its neighbors, DHS may need to partner with the Department of Defense. Going forward, I urge Members to be mindful of the broad range of preparedness demands on DHS.

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS).

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I am sincerely grateful to all of those who have supported the Critical Infrastructure Protection Act. I am especially grateful to Chairman PETE SESSIONS for his cosponsorship and his committed partnership on this bill, as well as, of course, to Chairman MCCAUL and to the leadership team of this House for allowing this legislation to come to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is an especially appropriate time for us to pause and reflect on the tragedies that have occurred in France and to stand in solidarity with those people who are part of the free world and do the best they can to fight terrorism and to survive its effects. My prayers are with them, and it is ironic that today we are here dealing with legislation to try to help mitigate our own vulnerabilities to potential attacks that could come in the future.

□ 1645

Mr. Speaker, electromagnetic pulse, or EMP, can be catalyzed by nonnuclear intentional electromagnetic interference, a major solar storm, or a high-altitude nuclear blast. EMP is an invisible force of ionized particles with the potential to overwhelm and destroy our present electrical power grids, which are a vital component of nearly every other critical infrastructure we have.

Reducing America's vulnerability to naturally occurring or weaponized electromagnetic pulse is a timely and critical matter of national security. During the past several decades, America has spent billions of dollars hardening many of our critical defense assets, including our nuclear triad and our missile defense components, against natural or weaponized electromagnetic pulse.

However, the Department of Defense relies upon the largely unprotected civilian grid for 99 percent of its electricity needs in the continental United States, without which it cannot affect its mission.

Twelve years ago, in August of 2003, an electromagnetic pulse knocked out a large portion of the electric grid across the eastern United States. Fifty million people were affected after 21 power plants shut down in just 3 minutes. Office workers streamed into parking lots and many commuters were stranded inside their trains.

In a matter of moments, the things that make up our critical infrastructure, from the electric grid to water pumps, to cell phone service, to computer systems, were disrupted. Lives suddenly changed that day in New York City, Cleveland, Detroit, and all the way into Canada. In New York City alone, this short blackout was estimated to cost more than a half billion dollars.

There are at least 11 major government reports now that have all come essentially to the same conclusion regarding our vulnerabilities to electromagnetic pulse. Some of America's most enlightened national security experts, as well as many of our enemies or potential enemies, consider a well-executed weaponized electromagnetic pulse against America to be a ''kill shot''—let me say that again—a ''kill shot'' to America.

However, our civilian grid remains fundamentally unprotected against severe EMP, and for it to remain so is an open invitation to our enemies to exploit this dangerous vulnerability.

Indeed, the National Intelligence University recently translated an Iranian military doctrine called ''Passive Defense.'' This doctrine stresses that electrical grids are vital to the national existence of major powers in the

world like America. It includes a formula for calculating the value of electrical power plants and for prioritizing the targeting of electric grid components and other critical infrastructures. Mr. Speaker, this Iranian military doctrine referenced the use of nuclear-generated electromagnetic pulse as an effective weapon more than 20 times.

Now that the Islamic Republic of Iran begins to enjoy the bounty of their nuclear negotiations, it should be a wake-up call to all of us that the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism is contemplating the concept of nuclear-generated electromagnetic pulse as an asymmetric weapon against America.

Thankfully, Mr. Speaker, we are here this day to pass the Critical Infrastructure Protection Act, which, if signed into law, will represent the first time in history that Congress will be specifically addressing this dangerous threat of electromagnetic pulse.

This legislation will enhance the DHS threat assessments for EMP through research and reporting requirements. It will help the United States prevent and prepare for such an event by including large-scale blackouts into our critical existing national planning scenarios, including educational awareness for first responders to protect critical infrastructure. Most importantly, it requires a specific plan for protecting and recovering the electrical grid and other critical infrastructure from a dangerous electromagnetic pulse event.

Mr. Speaker, finally, there is a moment in the life of nearly every problem when it is big enough to be seen by reasonable people and still small enough to be addressed. Those of us in this Chamber and across America live in a time when there still may be opportunity for the free world to address and mitigate the vulnerability that naturally occurring or weaponized EMP represents to the mechanisms of our civilization. This is our moment.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the remarks by the gentleman from Arizona in reference to the solidarity in which we stand with the French people. As it has been stated now and called, this terrorist attack is their 9/11. I just wanted to be on the RECORD to acknowledge the comments of the gentleman from Arizona. We stand with the French people in solidarity.

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS).

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, my dear friend from Georgia, for the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1073, the Critical Infrastructure Protection Act.

Over the past decade, our Nation has seen an unprecedented expansion in the use of electronics, Mr. Speaker. These electronics have transformed our economy, our homes, our families, and, really, the way we do business and have become an integral part of our daily lives.

Unfortunately, this technology is also susceptible to new types of potential threats, threats that have been talked about on this floor by not only Mr. FRANKS, but also our friend, Mr. CARTER, and others.

Today electromagnetic pulses, known as EMPs, could dramatically disrupt electronic activity and severely damage our electrical grids and everything that stands under those grids. Examples of EMP threats include those generated from a geomagnetic solar flare, from a terrorist short-range missile, cybersecurity attacks, or from a physical assault on a utility or a power plant.

The Critical Infrastructure Protection Act that we are talking about today and that we hope to pass is an important first step towards protecting our Nation from potential catastrophic nationwide blackouts.

I would like to recognize Frank Gaffney, the president and founder of the Center for Security Policy. Frank has provided the leadership not only by meeting with me, but also working with Mr. FRANKS and hundreds of other Members to let us know not only about this important critical infrastructure policy need, but also to make sure that we educate and spread awareness to not only our constituency, but other Members of Congress, regarding the new types of potential threats and occurrences, such as an electromagnetic pulse attack, that could dramatically alter our way of life.

I would also like to recognize, as I have previously done, our leader in Congress on this issue, my dear friend, Arizona Congressman TRENT FRANKS. Mr. FRANKS and I have spoken about this issue for years. We have worked hard with the chairman of Homeland Security, as well as leadership in this House, to make sure that we accomplish this legislation now.

Ultimately, the Critical Infrastructure Protection Act is simply the first step towards getting the U.S. closer to protecting ourselves from a potentially catastrophic nationwide blackout. It is simply the first step, Mr. Speaker. I know this will begin a national dialogue, a dialogue that needs to take place and that has already been begun by such leaders as former Speaker Newt Gingrich and former Vice President Dick Cheney.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the House today for taking up this important legislation, ask that my colleagues pay attention to understand this bill, and vote for it because support and passage of H.R. 1073, the Critical Infrastructure Protection Act, is important to the American people and our way of life.

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

In closing, I would like to note that H.R. 1073 puts focus on EMP and GMD preparedness response in a reasonable manner. It does so in a way that does not come at the detriment of preparing for other more likely or more potentially lethal events.

I would also reiterate that there are activities already underway at DHS to improve preparedness activities for an EMP event. For example, it is my understanding that DHS is looking at including EMP as an annex to the Federal Interagency Operational Plans currently in development.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 1073.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I once again urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1073.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of H.R. 1073, the Critical Infrastructure Protection Act of 2015.

As a senior member of the House Committee on Homeland Security as well as the Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Investigations, I am well aware of the importance of our nation's critical infrastructure and for this reason I support H.R. 1073.

The bill amends the Homeland Security Act of 2002 by adding the definition of ''EMP'' to mean: (1) an electromagnetic pulse caused by intentional means, including acts of terrorism; and (2) a geomagnetic disturbance caused by solar storms or other naturally occurring phenomena.

Directs DHS to: (1) include in national planning frameworks the threat of EMP events; and (2) conduct outreach to educate owners and operators of critical infrastructure, emergency planners, and emergency response providers of the threat of EMP events.

The bill also directs DHS to conduct research and development to mitigate the consequences of EMP events, including: an objective scientific analysis of the risks to critical infrastructures from a range of EMP events; determination of the critical national security assets and vital civic utilities and infrastructures that are at risk from EMP events; an evaluation of emergency planning and response technologies that would address the findings and recommendations of experts, including those of the Commission to Assess the Threat to the United States from Electromagnetic Pulse Attack; an analysis of available technology options to improve the resiliency of critical infrastructure to EMP; and the restoration and recovery capabilities of critical infrastructure under differing levels of damage and disruption from various EMP events.

DHS will make recommendations to Congress on a strategy to protect and prepare the critical infrastructure of the nation against EMP events, and provide biennial updates on the status of developing a defense against EMP strategy.

Electricity and the national electric grid are of vital importance to our national and domestic security interest.

There were 3 strategic imperatives that dives the Federal approach to strengthen critical infrastructure security and resilience: refine and clarify functional relationships across

the Federal Government to advance the national unity of effort to strengthen critical infrastructure security and resilience; enable effective information exchange by identifying baseline data and systems requirements for the Federal Government; and implement an integration and analysis function to inform planning and operations decisions regarding critical infrastructure.

Effective security for our nation's critical infrastructure requires a national unity of effort based upon strategic guidance from the Secretary of Homeland Security.

I introduced H.R. 85, Terrorism Prevention and Critical Infrastructure Protection Act, which directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to work with critical infrastructure owners and operators and state, local, and territorial to take proactive steps to address All Hazards that would impact: national security; economic stability; public health and safety; and or any combination of these.

The Jackson Lee bill, just as H.R. 1703 is intended to do, would reduce vulnerabilities associated with potential terrorist attacks that target critical infrastructure by supporting a coordinated partnership among federal agencies; critical infrastructure owners and operators and local, state, and tribal authorities.

Last, Friday's terrible attacks in Paris only illustrates the inhumanity of those who are America's enemies—the enemies of all of those who cherish freedom.

I join my colleagues in the House in offering my deepest sympathies to the people of Paris especially to the families of those killed.

Our commitment to our national security should and must extend to the security needs of our allies in the struggle against violence and terrorism—France.

I ask my colleagues to join me in voting for H.R. 1703.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1073, 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.

DIGNIFIED INTERMENT OF OUR VETERANS ACT OF 2015

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1338) to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study on matters relating to the burial of unclaimed remains of veterans in national cemeteries, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1338

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 ''Dignified Interment of Our Veterans Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS STUDY ON MATTERS RELATING TO BURIAL OF UNCLAIMED REMAINS OF VETERANS IN NATIONAL CEMETERIES.

(a) STUDY AND REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(1) complete a study on matters relating to the interring of unclaimed remains of veterans in national cemeteries under the control of the National Cemetery Administration; and

(2) submit to Congress a report on the findings of the Secretary with respect to the study required under paragraph (1).

(b) MATTERS STUDIED.—The matters studied under subsection (a)(1) shall include the following:

(1) Determining the scope of issues relating to unclaimed remains of veterans, including an estimate of the number of unclaimed remains of veterans.

(2) Assessing the effectiveness of the procedures of the Department of Veterans Affairs for working with persons or entities having custody of unclaimed remains to facilitate interment of unclaimed remains of veterans in national cemeteries under the control of the National Cemetery Administration.

(3) Assessing State and local laws that affect the ability of the Secretary to inter unclaimed remains of veterans in national cemeteries under the control of the National Cemetery Administration.

(4) Developing recommendations for such legislative or administrative action as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(c) METHODOLOGY.—

(1) NUMBER OF UNCLAIMED REMAINS.—In estimating the number of unclaimed remains of veterans under subsection (b)(1), the Secretary may review such subset of applicable entities as the Secretary considers appropriate, including a subset of funeral homes and coroner offices that possess unclaimed veterans remains.

(2) ASSESSMENT OF STATE AND LOCAL LAWS.—In assessing State and local laws under subsection (b)(3), the Secretary may assess such sample of applicable State and local laws as the Secretary considers appropriate in lieu of reviewing all applicable State and local laws.

SEC. 3. LIMITATION ON AWARDS AND BONUSES PAID TO SENIOR EXECUTIVE EMPLOYEES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

Section 705 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146; 38 U.S.C. 703 note) is amended by striking the period at the end and inserting the following: '', of which, during fiscal year 2016, not more than an aggregate amount of $2,000,000 may be paid to employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs who are members of the Senior Executive Service.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks or to add any extraneous material they may have on H.R. 1338, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I do urge all Members to support H.R. 1338, the Dignified Interment of Our Veterans Act of 2015.

This very important bill, which was introduced by my good friend, Mr. SHUSTER of Pennsylvania, would help ensure that deceased veterans are treated with respect and with dignity.

H.R. 1338, as amended, would require that the Department of Veterans Affairs conduct a study on the serious problem of unclaimed remains of deceased veterans. VA will provide a dignified burial in national cemeteries for those who die with no family to claim their remains or who did not have enough money to cover burial expenses.

Unfortunately, the remains of deceased veterans may end up on the shelf at a funeral home or the shelf of a coroner's office, and VA may not be aware that the veteran's remains were not interred.

In 2013, Congress passed legislation in an attempt to ensure that all deceased veterans are treated with the honor that they had earned. The Dignified Burial and Other Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2012 directed VA to work with Veterans Service Organizations and assist States, cities, and funeral directors to identify the unclaimed remains of veterans and to arrange for their burials in one of our national cemeteries.

Unfortunately, the law has not resolved this issue and too many veterans may not be receiving a dignified burial. That is unconscionable. The men and women who have served our Nation in uniform have the right to expect that our Nation will make every effort to treat them with honor and deference even after they pass away.

This study would determine the scope of the problem and identify any obstacles associated with claiming or interring veteran remains.

Additionally, VA would also be required to make recommendations on how we can better ensure that our Nation's heroes are properly laid to rest.

I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1700

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of my friend Mr. SHUSTER's Dignified Interment of Our Veterans Act. This legislation will require the Department of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study on the unclaimed remains of veterans.

Our Nation continues to be challenged by local and privately owned cemeteries that fail to identify and provide the VA with uninterred veterans' remains. It is our intent that the VA look into this issue and come up with some solutions to assist privately and locally owned cemetery homes with the information and the support they need to transfer those remains to the VA's National Cemetery Administration.

Our Nation's veterans have earned a proper and honorable burial for their