

Judiciary Member Day: H.R. 2923 – Energy Security and Lightering Independence Act of 2021
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What: Judiciary Member Day
Where: 2141 RHOB
When: Friday October 22, 2021 @ 9 AM
Topic: Support of H.R. 2923

Chairman Nadler, Vice Chair Dean, and Ranking Member Jordan, thank you for hosting today’s Judiciary Committee Member Day hearing.

I testify in support of my Texas colleague Rep. Sylvia Garcia’s bill, H.R. 2923, the Energy Security and Lightering Independence Act of 2021. You may remember this bill from last Congress, when I introduced it as the Keeping America’s Energy Resources Moving Act of 2020.

This important, BIPARTISAN legislation would allow oil and gas lightering crewmembers to be granted visas for the length of their contracts, up to 180 days. This represents a substantial increase from the 29 days that their C1/D visas are currently limited to.

For those of you not from a coastal district, or who do not have the privilege to be representing the biggest port district in the United States, let me briefly explain what lightering crews do.

They help us to maintain our energy independence—certainly, a source of national pride, irrespective of partisan affiliation. Think about the lightering crews as the “last-mile delivery” team. Because tankers draft too deep to

enter our ports fully loaded with fuel, these smaller—“lighter”—vessels off-load the tankers and bring the fuel into port.

These lightering crews tend to be foreign-crewed and have contracts that last 90-180 days. Under current law, this means that—less than 1/5th into their longest deployment—they could be subject to deportation. This not only wastes the valuable time of our Immigration and Custom Enforcement personnel, but it seriously threatens our energy supply chain.

I respectfully urge this committee to consider H.R. 2923 and to get this much-needed legislation out of committee, so that it may come before the full House of Representatives for a vote.