Suspend the Rules and Pass the Bill, H.R. 5490, With an Amendment

(The amendment strikes all after the enacting clause and inserts a new text)

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5490

To establish an interagency Task Force to dismantle and shut down transnational criminal syndicates perpetuating mass online scam operations against Americans.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 18, 2025

Mr. SHREVE (for himself, Mr. MOOLENAAR, and Mr. RULLI) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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A BILL

To establish an interagency Task Force to dismantle and shut down transnational criminal syndicates perpetuating mass online scam operations against Americans.

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 ''Dismantle Foreign Scam Syndicates Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) During the COVID–19 pandemic, criminal organizations from the People's Republic of China (PRC) active in Southeast Asia pivoted to a new and potent form of financial scam involving elaborate fraudulent online cryptocurrency investment schemes.

(2) The most common form of such financial scam is known as ''pig butchering'', Chinese criminal slang that describes how scammers develop a virtual relationship inducing them to invest ever larger sums into phony platforms, serving to 'fatten' their victims for the slaughter.

(3) Crime syndicates use the forced labor of hundreds of thousands of victims of human trafficking to perpetrate such scams, and victims from at least 66 different countries have been trafficked into scam compounds.

(4) These so-called ''scam centers'' are most prevalent across Burma, Laos, and Cambodia, where PRC criminal organizations often operate with the acquiesce or blessing of local officials and governments.

(5) Since 2021, these scams have increasingly targeted Americans, robbing thousands of their life

savings and enriching and entrenching transnational criminal and corrupt leaders.

(6) According to the Department of Treasury, Americans lost at least $10,000,000,000 from these operations in 2024 alone, a 33 percent increase from the previous year.

(7) Global losses are estimated to be between $40 and $65 billion annually, but the amount of losses is likely higher as many instances go unreported.

(8) The proliferation of online scam centers has been enabled by troubling links among the PRC, PRC criminal scam syndicates, and corrupt local politicians in Southeast Asia.

SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It shall be the policy of the United States to—

(1) comprehensively combat the transnational organized criminals operating human trafficking compounds primarily in Southeast Asia to perpetrate large-scale online scams against the American people; and

(2) bolster international law enforcement cooperation with nations in Southeast Asia to combat transnational crime, including online scam centers,

human trafficking, narcotics trafficking, and money laundering.

SEC. 4. TASK FORCE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall establish an interagency Task Force responsible for leading a whole-of-government effort to dismantle and shut down transnational criminal syndicates perpetuating mass online scam operations against Americans through the operation of large-scale scam compounds fueled by the forced labor of victims of trafficking in persons.

(b) DUTIES.—The Task Force shall—

(1) not later than 240 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, develop and submit to the appropriate congressional committees a comprehensive United States Government strategy to shut down online scam centers, prevent their further proliferation, disrupt and dismantle transnational criminal entities and human traffickers involved in operating such centers, and hold accountable corrupt officials, state, and non-state actors enabling such entities and traffickers; and

(2) coordinate and oversee implementation of such strategy.

(c) LEADERSHIP AND COMPOSITION.—The Task Force shall—

(1) be chaired by the Secretary of State (or the Secretary's designee);

(2) meet on a regular basis at the call of the Chair; and

(3) be comprised of the heads (or the heads' designees) of—

(A) the Department of State, including the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, and the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons;

(B) the Department of Justice, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation;

(C) the Department of Homeland Security, including the U.S. Secret Service and Homeland Security Investigations; and

(D) the Department of the Treasury, including the Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence.

(d) FURTHER COMPOSITION.—The heads (or the heads' designees) of the following entities are authorized to be members of the Task Force:

(1) The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

(2) The Federal Trade Commission.

(3) The Federal Communications Commission.

(4) Any other department, agency, or entity the President determines to be relevant.

(e) INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY.—The intelligence community is authorized to provide support to the Task Force.

(f) INFORMATION SHARING.—To ensure proper coordination and effective interagency action, each Federal department or agency represented on the Task Force shall fully share—

(1) all relevant data with the Task Force; and

(2) all information regarding the department or agency's plans, before and after final agency decisions are made, on all matters relating to actions regarding combating online scams.

(g) CONSULTATION.—The Task Force or representatives thereof should—

(1) consult quarterly with United States State and local law enforcement entities and stakeholder organizations with firsthand expertise in reporting and combatting online scam operations, investment fraud schemes known as ''pig butchering scams'',

and other kinds of cyberscams, and recovering stolen crypto assets, and incorporate their feedback and recommendations to the maximum extent feasible;

(2) consult regularly with U.S. non-governmental organizations with expertise in countering trafficking in persons or anti-corruption, as appropriate;

(3) consult with relevant private sector actors for the purpose of better understanding how to disrupt foreign scam compounds, operations, and syndicates; and

(4) engage civil society organizations in the region to better understand the complexity of the problem in each country and the broader economic, political, and governance challenges that are exacerbating it.

(h) SUNSET.—The Task Force shall terminate on the date that is five years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 5. ELEMENTS OF COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The strategy required by section 4(b)(1) shall incorporate the following objectives:

(1) Bringing pressure to bear on foreign governments, in coordination with allies and partners to the greatest extent possible, that are complicit in,

tolerant of, or uncooperative in combatting online scam operations.

(2) Investigating the People's Republic of China's (PRC) involvement in the origin and perpetuation of online scam operations, including through links between Chinese Communist Party officials and criminal organizations, deepening regional security influence, and selective crackdowns that incentivize the targeting of Americans.

(3) Investigating the Burmese military's involvement in allowing, neglecting, and profiting from online scam operations in Burma, and the importance of resolving the instability and violence in Burma to stop the unfettered operation of scam centers in Burma.

(4) Highlighting PRC complicity in and instrumentalization of online scam operations for the international community to hold the PRC accountable.

(5) Reducing the power, influence, and scope of transnational criminal organizations and operations in Southeast Asia and wherever else they may propagate.

(6) Building the capacity of trusted foreign law enforcement partners to degrade, disrupt, and shut

down online scam centers and prevent their proliferation, including through training in digital forensics, anti-money laundering, and border patrol.

(7) Building the capacity of trusted foreign law enforcement partners to screen for and protect victims of trafficking in persons in a trauma-informed manner, prosecute traffickers, and prevent trafficking into online scam centers, including through public awareness campaigns.

(8) Imposing sanctions or other relevant designations, comprehensively and in coordination with allies and partners to the greatest extent possible, on the perpetrators and enablers of online scams, using relevant malicious cyber activity, transnational organized crime, corruption, human rights, and trafficking in persons authorities.

(9) Advocating for the thorough review of countries implicated in scam operations at the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) or FATF-style regional bodies.

(10) Harnessing offensive cyber capabilities to degrade online scam centers' operations.

(11) Recovering and returning stolen assets of defrauded United States persons.

(12) Integrating data collection, analysis, and response mechanisms across Federal, State, and local agencies, including by assessing if any existing relevant Fusion Centers could be leveraged to combat online scam centers.

(13) Convening a coalition of like-minded foreign allies and partners to combat online scam centers, including through the establishment of similar task forces or working groups, the compilation and sharing of data, and collaboration regarding the indictment of key actors and enablers.

(b) MEASURABLE INDICATORS.—The Task Force shall develop measurable indicators of the success of the strategy required by section 4(b)(1), which may include persons sanctioned, arrest warrants or indictments issued, arrests made, U.S. losses mitigated, and the number of victims of trafficking in persons rescued, and known scam centers reduced, in comparison to the previous year.

SEC. 6. ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 360 days after the date of the submission of the strategy required by section 4(b)(1), and annually thereafter for five years, the Task Force shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that includes, for the previous year, the following:

(1) A list of all foreign persons sanctioned by the United States under section 7(a) or any other relevant authority in the previous year for benefiting from or being responsible for, complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, online financial scams against United States nationals from Southeast Asia.

(2) For the foreign persons listed in paragraph (1), an assessment and review of their ongoing involvement in the operation of online scam centers, including an identification of entities in particular from within the People's Republic of China that aid or abet such foreign persons.

(3) An estimate of how much money was stolen from United States nationals through scams emanating from online scam centers in Southeast Asia, including as a percentage of the estimated total amount stolen globally.

(4) An estimate of how much of the stolen money described in paragraph (3) was intercepted, seized, or returned as a result of United States Government action.

(5) An estimate of how many victims of trafficking in persons were employed in online scam centers in Southeast Asia.

(6) A list of known online scam centers in Southeast Asia.

(7) A description of if, where, and how online scam centers and operations have proliferated outside of Southeast Asia across other regions of the world.

(8) Recommendations on the kinds of programs the Department of State should support in order to effectively implement the strategy described in subsection (c), including current and recommended funding allocations.

(9) Any other measures the Task Force determines appropriate to include.

(b) FORM.—Each report submitted pursuant to subsection (a) shall be unclassified but may include a classified annex.

(c) CONSULTATION.—The Task Force shall consult regularly with the appropriate congressional committees on its efforts to implement the strategy required by section 4(b)(1), including potential updates. Such consultations should include descriptions of the Task Force's periodic consultations with local law enforcement agencies and civil society organizations and any incorporated recommendations, as well as recommendations for strengthening the Task Force's capability to effectively shut down online

scam centers, dismantle criminal scam organizations, and recoup stolen United States assets.

SEC. 7. IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President may impose the sanctions described in subsection (b) with respect to any foreign person that the President determines—

(1) owns, controls, or directs a significant scam compound operation or enabling service, including recruitment fraud, human trafficking, cyber-enabled fraud, or money-laundering;

(2) provides significant financial or technological support to, or knowingly provides significant goods or services in support of, the activities of international scam compounds or enabling services, including recruitment fraud, human trafficking, cyber-enabled fraud, or money-laundering; or

(3) is a government official who knowingly enables or garners financial or other material benefit from the operation of scam compounds in their governing jurisdictions.

(b) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—The sanctions described in this subsection are the following:

(1) ASSET BLOCKING.—Notwithstanding the requirements of section 202 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701),

the President may exercise of all powers granted to the President by that Act to the extent necessary to block and prohibit all transactions in all property and interests in property of the foreign person if such property and interests in property are in the United States, come within the United States, or are or come within the possession or control of a United States person.

(2) VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—An alien who the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Homeland Security (or a designee of one of such Secretaries) knows, or has reason to believe, is described in subsection (a) is—

(i) inadmissible to the United States;

(ii) ineligible for a visa or other documentation to enter the United States; and

(iii) otherwise ineligible to be admitted or paroled into the United States or to receive any other benefit under the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

(B) CURRENT VISAS REVOKED.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The issuing consular officer, the Secretary of State, or the

Secretary of Homeland Security (or a designee of one of such Secretaries) shall, in accordance with section 221(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1201(i)), revoke any visa or other entry documentation issued to an alien described in subparagraph (A) regardless of when the visa or other entry documentation is issued.

(ii) EFFECT OF REVOCATION.—A revocation under clause (i)—

(I) shall take effect immediately; and

(II) shall automatically cancel any other valid visa or entry documentation that is in the alien's possession.

(c) EXCEPTIONS.—

(1) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS.—Sanctions under subsection (b)(2) shall not apply with respect to the admission of an alien if admitting or paroling the alien into the United States is necessary to permit the United States to comply with the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed

at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into force November 21, 1947, between the United Nations and the United States, or other applicable international obligations.

(2) EXCEPTION RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE.—Sanctions under this section may not be imposed with respect to transactions or the facilitation of transactions for—

(A) the sale of agricultural commodities, food, medicine, or medical devices;

(B) the provision of humanitarian assistance;

(C) financial transactions relating to humanitarian assistance; or

(D) transporting goods or services that are necessary to carry out operations relating to humanitarian assistance.

(3) EXCEPTION FOR INTELLIGENCE, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND NATIONAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.—Sanctions under this section shall not apply to any authorized intelligence, law enforcement, or national security activities of the United States.

(4) EXCEPTION FOR SAFETY OF VESSELS AND CREW.—Sanctions under this section shall not apply with respect to a person providing provisions to a

vessel otherwise subject to sanctions under this section if such provisions are intended for the safety and care of the crew aboard the vessel, the protection of human life aboard the vessel, or the maintenance of the vessel to avoid any environmental or other significant damage.

(5) EXCEPTION.—Sanctions under this section shall not apply with respect to a person determined by the President to be a victim of trafficking in persons within an online scam center, in accordance with section 102(b)(19) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7101(b)(19)).

(6) EXCEPTION RELATING TO IMPORTATION OF GOODS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The authorities and requirements to impose sanctions authorized under this section shall not include the authority or requirement to impose sanctions on the importation of goods.

(B) GOOD DEFINED.—In this paragraph, the term ''good'' means any article, natural or manmade substance, material, supply or manufactured product, including inspection and test equipment, and excluding technical data.

(d) IMPLEMENTATION; PENALTIES.—

(1) IMPLEMENTATION.—The President may exercise all authorities provided to the President under sections 203 and 205 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1702 and 1704) to carry out this section.

(2) PENALTIES.—The penalties provided for in subsections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1705) shall apply to a person that violates, attempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a violation of regulations promulgated to carry out this section to the same extent that such penalties apply to a person who commits an unlawful act described in section 206(a) of that Act.

(e) WAIVER.—The President may waive the application of sanctions imposed with respect to a foreign person under this section if the President certifies to the appropriate congressional committees not later than 15 days before such waiver is to take effect that the waiver is important to the national security interests of the United States.

SEC. 8. PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING, INCLUDING FORCED CRIMINALITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State is authorized to carry out programs, out of the funds authorized to be appropriated by section 10 and in accordance with

section 106(a) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7105(a)), to provide trauma-informed care, shelter, reintegration, and support services for victims of trafficking in persons within online scam centers.

(b) DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION.—The Task Force shall ensure programs authorized by subsection (a) are designed and implemented in a manner that prevents revictimization and gains information and evidence critical to understanding online scam centers' operations and prosecuting scammers.

SEC. 9. SATELLITE IMAGERY ACCESS TO MONITOR HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES RELATED TO SCAM CENTERS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

(a) ACCESS TO SATELLITE IMAGERY.—The Secretary of State is authorized to provide to nongovernmental organizations and research institutions access to current and archival high-resolution satellite imagery for the purposes of monitoring and documenting human rights abuses related to the operation of online scam centers in Southeast Asia.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report that includes—

(1) any terms and conditions applicable with respect to the access described in subsection (a); and

(2) a list of each organization or institution that has been provided access pursuant to subsection (a).

SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

The Secretary of State shall use amounts otherwise authorized to be appropriated to carry out section 481 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2291) to develop, coordinate, and implement the strategy of the Task Force required by section 4(b)(1).

SEC. 11. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act—

(1) the term ''appropriate committees of Congress'' means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate; and

(2) the term ''intelligence community'' has the meaning given that term in section 3 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003).