

[Floor Situation](#) | [Summary](#) | [Background](#) | [Cost](#) | [Staff Contact](#)

[H.R. 515, International Megan’s Law to Prevent Child Exploitation and Other Sexual Crimes Through Advanced Notification of Traveling Sex Offenders \(Senate Amendment\)](#)

FLOOR SITUATION

On Monday, February 1, 2016, the House will consider the Senate Amendment to [H.R. 515](#), the International Megan’s Law to Prevent Child Exploitation and Other Sexual Crimes Through Advanced Notification of Traveling Sex Offenders, under suspension of the rules. H.R. 515 was introduced on January 22, 2015 by Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ) and passed the House by voice vote on January 26, 2015. The Senate passed the bill, with an amendment, on December 17, 2015.

SUMMARY

H.R. 515 formally recognizes “Operation Angel Watch”, an ongoing effort within the Department of Homeland Security’s Child Exploitation Investigations Center. At present, Operation Angel Watch works to identify the international travel plans of registered child-sex offenders, to determine whether notification of such travel to destination countries is warranted. H.R. 515 codifies these activities within a newly-named “Angel Watch Center,” and streamlines the Center’s receipt of travel information.

H.R. 515 requires the Center to establish a complaint review process and correction procedure to receive complaints of individuals whose information was erroneously sent to destination countries and correct the record.. The bill also stresses the importance of negotiating reciprocal sex offender travel information agreements with foreign countries, so that foreign governments notify the U.S. when a known child-sex offender is seeking U.S. entry.

The Senate Amendment authorizes \$6 million for each of the fiscal years 2017 and 2018 to carry out the Act; provides for increased collaboration and information sharing between the Center, federal law enforcement agencies, foreign countries, and the public; requires sex offenders to report to law enforcement agencies regarding their intent to travel internationally and makes failure to do so a federal crime; requires the State Department to add a unique passport identifier to the passports of

sex offenders who have offended against a child and have a current registration requirement; and makes various administrative changes to the House-passed bill.

BACKGROUND

An estimated 1.8 million children throughout the world are victims of child sex trafficking and pornography each year.¹ Through the child sex tourism industry, individuals travel to foreign countries specifically to engage in sexual activity with children, subjecting them to exploitation and sex trafficking.² “Sex tourists from the United States who target children form a significant percentage of child sex tourists in some of the most significant destination countries for child sex tourism.”³

In 1996, Megan’s Law was enacted to encourage states to identify the locations of sex offenders and provide a means to monitor their activities.⁴ In 2006, the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act established a comprehensive national system for the registration and notification to the public and law enforcement officers of convicted sex offenders.

Operation Angel Watch is a computer system developed by the Department of Homeland Security and operated by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to identify and stop child predators who attempt to travel internationally to countries known as destinations for child sex tourism.⁵ In fiscal year 2014, ICE provided notice of travel from the U.S. of approximately 2,300 convicted child sex offenders to over 120 countries. This information exchange effort, managed by ICE’s Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) as Operation Angel Watch, is in support of ICE’s role in the criminal investigations of U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents traveling to a foreign country for the purpose of engaging in unlawful sexual conduct with someone under 18 years of age. On June 26, 2015, the U.S. entered into an agreement with the U.K. National Crime Agency (NCA) to provide information on the travel of convicted child sex offenders between the two countries.⁶

H.R. 515 codifies Operation Angel Watch practices within ICE and expands safeguards in an attempt to ensure children in foreign countries are protected from child-sex offenders traveling abroad. H.R. 515 is similar to [H.R. 4573](#), the *International Megan’s Law to Prevent Demand for Child Sex Trafficking*, which passed the House on May 20, 2014, by voice vote. The Senate did not act on the House-passed bill in the 113th Congress.

According to the bill sponsor, “[the bill] will protect children from child sex tourism by notifying destination countries when convicted pedophiles plan to travel. And to protect American children, the bill encourages the President to use bilateral agreements and assistance to establish reciprocal notification—so that we will know when convicted child-sex offenders are coming here.”⁷

¹ H.R. 4573, Sec. 2(5).

² Id. at Sec. 2(6).

³ Id. at Sec. 2(7).

⁴ Id. at Sec. 2(3).

⁵ See DHS Website, [“Written testimony of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement \(ICE\) Director John Morton for a House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Homeland Security hearing on The President’s Fiscal Year 2013 budget request for ICE.”](#) March 8, 2012.

⁶ See ICE Website, [“ICE, UK National Crime Agency enhance joint efforts to combat child exploitation.”](#) June 26, 2015.

⁷ See Rep. Chris Smith letter to the Speaker, [“H.R. 515 International Megan’s Law to Prevent Demand For Child Sex Trafficking.”](#)

COST

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimate is not available; however, the bill authorizes the appropriation of \$12 million to implement the Act during the fiscal year 2016 to 2017 period.

STAFF CONTACT

For questions or further information please contact [John Huston](#) with the House Republican Policy Committee by email or at 6-5539.