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House of Representatives

STOP Organ Trafficking Act

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey... Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman ROYCE again for bringing this important bill to the floor, and to ELIOT ENGEL for his leadership and Mr. DEUTCH, and especially to Mr. TROTT, the sponsor of H.R. 3694, the Strategy To Oppose Predatory Organ Trafficking Act. This legislation recognizes and seeks to more effectively combat what is a growing manifestation of trafficking in persons for the sole purpose of organ removal, often for great profit for the traffickers.

Mr. TROTT's legislation requires the Department of State to develop a robust strategy to combat this heinous practice. We have long heard rumors and horror stories of migrants held captive in sub-Saharan Africa and the Sinai Peninsula, their organs taken and their bodies dumped because their families could not afford the ransom.

Twenty years ago, I chaired a human rights hearing in my subcommittee with a Chinese security official who testified that he and his other security agents were executing prisoners—with doctors, of course, there and ambulances—in order to steal their organs for transplant. Since then, this horrific practice has skyrocketed.

Recent evidence from researchers Ethan Gutmann and David Matas shows that organ transplants in China have increased almost exponentially, not decreased. There is a bizarre availability of organs in Chinese military hospitals and China's transplant apparatus that can often issue a tissue match and find an organ transplant within 2 weeks for any foreign tourist with cash.

This initiative by Mr. TROTT will require the State Department to do a more thorough analysis of trafficking in persons for the purpose of organ removal in China and elsewhere around the world, informing a strategy to stop this crime against humanity.

Any American, Mr. Speaker, traveling to China for an organ transplant in 2016 should now be on notice that they may be participating in human trafficking of a vulnerable person or of a prisoner. Americans must not turn a blind eye to the ambiguous origins of a proffered organ. H.R. 3694 will help ensure that Americans are certain that they are receiving transplants only in countries that prohibit and actively suppress organ harvesting from trafficking victims.

I thank the gentleman for his legislation.