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Cargo Theft - Bill in Congress Proposes $100 Million Solution

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Applause can be heard from diverse sectors of private industry as the U.S. Congress redoubles its resolve against threats in the supply chain. New bills introduced in recent months target supply chain challenges at home and abroad. The vital importance of domestic manufacturing, warehousing, transportation, and logistics to our national security stands front and center.

The Safeguarding our Supply Chains Act (H.R. 8834) was introduced by Representative David Valadao (R-22) on June 25, 2024. The bill has received wide-ranging commendations from trade associations, including the American Trucking Association, the Association of American Railroads, and the Retail Industry Leaders Association. It is intended to identify and defeat organized crime operations behind the statistical rise in cargo thefts.

The bill commits $100 million in appropriations between 2025 and 2029 to carry out its mission by fostering stronger coordination between federal agencies, law enforcement, and private sector. A new Supply Chain Crime Coordination Center will be established within Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), a division of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The bill explains that the Center will “collect and analyze data related to supply chain fraud and theft; and identify regions in the United States, modes of transportation, distribution networks, and retail stores that are experiencing high volumes of organized crime.”

The bill will also create a new Supply Chain Fraud and Theft Task Force. This Task Force will be led by HSI and the Federal Bureau of Investigations, although it will have a diverse membership, including law enforcement, carriers, and others in the private sector. The Task Force must be formed quickly within 120 days after enactment. Its stated mission is to “address supply chain fraud and theft throughout the rail, motor carrier, and intermodal systems, as well as detect, disrupt, and defer organized theft groups that are targeting all stages of the supply chain” through five targeted activities: (1) facilitating collaboration between stakeholders; (2) enhancing information sharing; (3) tracking trends on organized crime; (4) establishing private sector relationships; and (5) leveraging HSI and FBI systems to secure the information sharing on organized crime. The Task Force will issue a report to the U.S. Congress within 180 days of its formation and annually thereafter detailing its activities and their impact on supply chain challenges.

America’s place in the global supply chain and the impact that geopolitics play in our national security interests are the subject of another new bill. The Promoting Resilient Supply Chains Act of 2024 (S. 4375) was introduced in the Senate by Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) on May 21, 2024. This bill is similar to corresponding efforts introduced earlier in the House. It tasks the Department of Commerce with forming a Supply Chain Resiliency and Crisis Response

program for identifying and addressing vulnerabilities in domestic manufacturing capacity for critical industries and emerging technologies. The bill recognizes that those potential vulnerabilities may take the form of warehousing, transportation, and distribution operations supporting domestic manufacturing.

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