because they were legally determined to be mentally ill or involuntarily committed to a mental institution. The VA will not transfer information on veterans who just were treated for posttraumatic syndrome or who have a VA disability rating based on some mental health problem that does not reach the legal threshold of mental illness within the State.

In addition, I recognize that mental illness is not necessarily a permanent impediment. Since the State made the initial determination of mental illness, that State should be able to remove that determination. H.R. 2640 contains a section to address this section.

If a State elects to receive funds authorized by H.R. 2640, it must establish a procedure to review and, if appropriate, reverse mental health status. A veteran or any other individual will be able to apply to a State court, board, commission or any other lawful authority. That authority would review the person's situation. It is up to the State to set up and determine how the procedure will operate in accordance with due process. I expect that a State would use the same process that it uses to make the initial determination or commitment.

H.R. 2640 does not change how a person is found to be disqualified from obtaining or possessing a gun. The language and procedures of the Gun Control Act of 1968 remain in effect. The bill does, however, insist that NICS receives only records on disqualified persons, whether a veteran or nonveteran.

H.R. 2640 would also allow States to establish procedures that permit a person disqualified on the basis of legal mental illness to prove to the State that he or she no longer poses a danger to society.

I believe that H.R. 2640 is fair and it is balanced. I am hoping the other body will soon approve the bill so that the States will be encouraged to provide information that improves the background check system on gun purchases. This was a bill that was worked out together here in the House. It had strong bipartisan support. If the bill had been placed when it was first passed in the year 2002, there is a possibility that Mr. Cho from Virginia Tech would not have been able to obtain a gun and commit the unfortunate murders that he did.

Mr. Speaker, it is common sense that when you work with the NRA, and certainly those that consider me a fair person on reducing gun violence in this country, that we need to get the other body to pass this bill so we can save lives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

MAKING TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS BETTER FOR THE FUTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, as the United States enters a new era of trade liberalization, where foreign competition and an evolving international market challenge the historic preeminence of America's manufacturing base, Congress must be vigilant in upholding its commitment to working people and update the safety-net programs that were created to help America's families stay afloat during challenging and troubling economic times.

As the growing global economy continues to reduce barriers to trade, domestic employers are forced to respond to new opportunities and challenges alike. The Trade Adjustment Assistance programs collectively assist in the transition involved in overcoming these challenges.

Today, Mr. Speaker, the House passed landmark legislation to extend these critical safety-net programs to American workers and employers who have suffered from foreign trade. The reauthorization of these programs represents an opportunity for significant reform and enhancement and will serve as one of the milestones that can be a foundation for strengthening U.S. trade policy.

Since 1975, over 3 million American workers have been certified for assistance under the TAA for Workers program, and more than 2 million workers have directly received assistance. In the last 10 years, the TAA for Firms program has saved more than 60,000 jobs. In my district in western Pennsylvania, more than 20 companies have gone through the program and, as a result, have been able to save and even create new jobs for local workers.

Clearly, the TAA programs as a group have an impressive record of success. And the bill that we voted on today, although not designed exactly as I would have preferred, is a strong step forward in strengthening these programs so that they are more efficient, more robust, more flexible and more user friendly.

H.R. 3920 would move to overhaul and reauthorize the TAA for Workers, Firms and Farmers programs for an additional 5 years, through 2012. Importantly, the measure would speed the delivery of benefits by establishing an automatic industry certification system for workers negatively impacted by trade.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the TAA certification process has been a bureaucratic nightmare of red tape that has plagued the program for a long time. H.R. 3920 would replace the current sluggish and Byzantine system which requires the Department of Labor to individually approve the petitions for assistance for these workers. The establishment of an automatic industry certification alone will be a dramatic improvement on current law.

In addition, the bipartisan measure would extend eligibility to service workers, such as engineers, boost health care benefits, and improve wage insurance programs. In fact, many of these provisions rather closely mirror legislation that I introduced early this year, H.R. 910, the American Competitiveness and Adjustment Act.

As cochair of the TAA Coalition, I have long advocated for the strengthening and streamlining of these critical safety-net programs, and I am proud to have been a part of today's House action, which has been years in the making.

By expanding and clarifying benefits, cutting through mountains of red tape and channeling the right resources toward retraining, H.R. 3920 represents the most important restructuring of TAA since the program's inception. In my view, the Congress has a fundamental obligation to American employers and workers to devote the time necessary to make significant improvements to the program this year.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to advance these commonsense improvements to vastly accelerate and enhance the opportunities afforded workers displaced by trade, as well as augment the competitiveness of American employers before they are forced to furlough workers.

TAA has proven to be a lifeline for American workers displaced by trade. It has prevented thousands of American companies from surrendering to the often increased pressure of the international marketplace, despite their innate ability to compete on a level playing field and to succeed in doing so.

House passage of this bill clears the first hurdle in helping to make TAA better for the future.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the Senate to act swiftly on this critical issue. American workers, employers and indeed our economy cannot wait.

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DEMOCRATS HONOR FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HALL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HALL of New York. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor in defense of fiscal responsibility. After 6 years of disastrous management and record deficits, the new Democratic House has restored fiscal sanity to the Federal Government. We have reinstated PAYGO, or pay as you go, and passed a budget that will balance Federal spending.

As the Speaker knows, PAYGO requires the House to live by the same rules that American families live by. Like them, if we want to spend more money on something, we know we have