

helps veterans in New Jersey and in communities all across America.

Veterans are often frustrated, as they ask for help from a county service officer, that this person acting on their behalf cannot directly access even the most basic information about the status of their claim. However, while looking to remedy that complication and broaden access to case-tracking information, consideration must also be given to the protection of veterans' private information. That is the balance that this bill strikes.

Mr. Speaker, I support section 3 of H.R. 1405, along with all the other provisions contained within the bill, and I encourage all Members to join me in support of the legislation.

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ), who brings incredible expertise and compassion to the committee as a decorated veteran himself.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the chairman and the ranking member of the full committee and the subcommittees for doing exceptional work, for putting our veterans first, for bringing a package of commonsense legislation to honor our Nation's veterans, and doing it in the best and smartest manner we can. If the entire Congress functioned like the VA Committee, I think the American public would be far better served.

There is a provision in this bill that is very simple. It recognizes the service and sacrifice of members of the National Guard and Reserves. These are the men and women of our Reserve component. They take the same oath of office. They do the same training. They and their family sacrifice their time and energy and stand at the ready at all times. They assist flood victims in Colorado and Minnesota, fight fires across the Western United States, and stand ready to fight and defend this Nation at a moment's notice. They truly are the minutemen.

I would guess that the vast majority of Americans and maybe even Members of this body don't recognize that you can serve 20 years doing that, and if you are not called to a specific title X service, you cannot be considered a veteran. You can go to the VA hospital, you can go use the GI Bill, you can be buried in a veterans' cemetery, but you are technically a military retiree.

This may seem like a small thing, but it is not. The title of "veteran" means more than just a license plate you get from your State. It is something your neighbors know about. These people don't and should not have to explain that they are technically not a veteran.

This piece of legislation—and I thank, again, the people who made this possible—simply corrects that. Very seldom do we get a chance to do this. It doesn't add any cost, and it does the right thing. So it is not an added benefit—which was earned, by the way. It simply corrects this, puts it in line,

and honors. If you serve 20 or more years in uniform, you stand ready, you train people who went to war, we are going to give you the dignity and the honor of calling you a veteran.

So I ask my colleagues to support this important package of legislation. This one small piece is the right thing to do. It is many, many years overdue. I ask for the support of H.R. 1405.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JOHNSON), a former member of the VA Committee and a 26-plus year veteran of the United States Air Force.

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. I thank the chairman for recognizing me.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support today of H.R. 1405, which, in addition to improving the disability claims appeals process for veterans, contains language from H.R. 894, legislation I introduced to provide necessary reforms to the Department of Veterans Affairs' Fiduciary Program.

In response to an investigation by the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, which I chaired in the last Congress, this legislation includes significant changes that will strengthen the VA's standards for administering the Fiduciary Program and increase protection for vulnerable veterans.

Requiring background checks and lowering the fee a fiduciary can charge would increase scrutiny over fiduciaries and help root out potential predators. It also adds a layer of protection for veterans with fiduciaries by allowing veterans to petition to have their fiduciary removed and replaced. Importantly, it would also enable veterans to appeal their incompetency status at any time. That is a right not currently granted to veterans.

I would like to thank Chairman RUNYAN and Ranking Member TITUS of the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee for their support of this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to join us in support of H.R. 1405, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1405, as amended, is yet another bipartisan bill that has been advanced out of our committee. I, again, thank all the members for their collaborative work on this bill, and I urge my colleagues to join us in passing H.R. 1405, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1405. This straightforward legislation contains several provisions relating to veterans benefits, and also includes a cut in bonuses at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Under current practice, the VA pays out about \$400 million in bonuses to its workers each year. Recently we have seen these bonuses too often go to people whose work does not merit a reward, and to the contrary, may even merit reprimand.

This practice has been evident at the Atlanta VA Medical Center, where despite the

fact that four unexpected deaths were attributed to mismanagement and lack of oversight, tens of thousands of dollars in bonuses were awarded to top level executives at the facility. It is past time that we stop rewarding people for simply showing up to work—bonuses should be the exception, not the norm. Furthermore, at a time when so many of our soldiers are returning from war, and in light of the deaths in Atlanta, I believe the VA should prioritize veterans' health and well-being above all else.

H.R. 1405 takes a positive step in ensuring that more discretion is used when providing bonus payments to employees at the VA. The legislation caps financial awards at the VA to no more than \$345 million for fiscal years 2014 to 2018. It is time we stop rewarding lackluster work and focus instead on providing the best possible care for our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in showing our gratitude for our nation's veterans by supporting H.R. 1405.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1405, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include a notice of disagreement form in any notice of decision issued for the denial of a benefit sought, to improve the supervision of fiduciaries of veterans under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VETERANS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2013

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2011) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for a two-year extension of the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2011

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 "Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education Improvement Act of 2013".

SEC. 2. TWO-YEAR EXTENSION OF VETERANS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

Section 3692 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by inserting "31," after "30,"; and

(B) by striking "and the Persian Gulf War" and inserting "the Persian Gulf War, and the post-9/11 operations in Iraq and Afghanistan"; and

(2) in subsection (c), by striking "December 31, 2013" and inserting "December 31, 2015".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material they may have on H.R. 2011.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, having the right skills is one of the keys to finding a good job, and America's taxpayers are now providing the most valuable GI Bill benefit to veterans and dependents since World War II.

To assist VA and the Congress in making sure that veterans' educational assistance benefits are meeting the needs of our veterans, title 38 has established a committee to advise the Secretary on the needs of veteran students. The committee's statutory term will expire on December 31 of this year. H.R. 2011 would extend that term for 2 years. I thank Mr. DELANEY for bringing his bill forward to our committee.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 2011, the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education Improvement Act of 2013. The Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education provides advice to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on the administration of education and training programs for veterans and servicemembers, Reservists and Guard personnel, and dependents of veterans. The Advisory Committee is composed of veterans and persons who are eminent in their respective fields of education, labor, and management and are representatives of institutions and establishments furnishing education to veterans.

Besides providing advice to the Secretary, the Advisory Committee recommends new educational benefits and services. It also plays a key role in the long-range planning and development of existing education benefit programs for our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, as our post-9/11 GI Bill continues to evolve and be fully understood by the VA, colleges, veterans, and their dependents, the Advisory Committee is crucial to full implementation and resolving lingering issues. The authority for the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education is slated to end on December 31, 2013. H.R. 2011 would extend this authority for 2 years so that the Advisory Committee can continue its important work in ensuring that veterans receive the full value of their educational benefits.

I wish to thank Representative DELANEY of Maryland for introducing this bill and Chairman MILLER for bringing it to the floor today. I wish also to thank Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity Chairman FLORES and Ranking Member TAKANO for their hard work on this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from the 16th District of Ohio (Mr. RENACCI).

Mr. RENACCI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the time.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today with many of my colleagues who worked together as part of a bipartisan working group, including Mr. CARNEY, Mr. HECK, Mr. DELANEY, and others, in strong support of H.R. 2011, the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education Improvement Act. It was my great pleasure to join my good friend, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. DELANEY), in introducing this legislation.

America's veterans sacrifice dearly for this country, and I believe it is our obligation to help them once their service is complete.

The Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education was created in 1972 to advise the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on education and job training programs. Our legislation will not only continue the work of this valuable committee by reauthorizing it for 2 years, but it will also expand the committee to include representatives for those that served after September 11, 2001.

Every military conflict has its own unique atrocities and every generation of veterans faces a unique set of obstacles as they rejoin the civilian job market. For this reason, it is critical that we include members to represent those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As a Member of Congress, I believe there is no greater cause than protecting and caring for our service men and women. I ask my colleagues to support H.R. 2011. Doing so will ensure that our troops receive the most effective education and training opportunities available.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. DELANEY).

Mr. DELANEY. I want to thank the ranking member for yielding. I also want to thank Chairman MILLER and the rest of the Veterans' Affairs Committee for their support during this committee process.

The Veterans Affairs Committee does some of the most important work here in Congress and has long been applauded as a place where both parties work together. In that vein, our bill, H.R. 2011, the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education Improvement Act, is bipartisan legislation which I was pleased to introduce with my colleague from Ohio, Congressman RENACCI. H.R. 2011 is commonsense legislation designed to improve the VA's education

and job training programs, and I am proud that it is being considered on the House floor today.

Mr. Speaker, one of the real privileges of our work in Congress is getting to meet so many dedicated servicemen and veterans and learn about the incredible work they have done to keep our country safe and defend our way of life. Likewise, in our district work, one of the most essential services in our offices is to provide help to veterans so that they can earn the benefits that they deserve. When we travel across our districts, what we see is the deep appreciation the American people have for her veterans. There is a reverence for their heroism and gratitude for their service.

Mr. Speaker, the American people feel strongly that our veterans deserve to be repaid for their service. I believe that one of the most significant commitments that we can make to these servicemen is their education.

Going back to 1944, with the first GI Bill, we have joined together as a Nation and said that when our veterans come home, they are going to be able to receive the education they need. In today's high-tech global economy, that commitment is more important than ever. The veterans' unemployment rate is too low, especially for post-9/11.

To give our veterans the best chance to succeed, we need to make sure that they have a choice in the VA, we need to make sure that our current benefit programs are working, and we need to make sure that our veterans' education programs are adapting to an ever-changing world.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation does two very important things.

□ 1745

First, it reauthorizes the Veterans Advisory Committee on Education through 2015. Absent congressional action, the Veterans Advisory Committee on Education will sunset this December.

Second, this legislation updates the U.S. Code to ensure that the committee includes post-9/11 veterans. There are over 2 million post-9/11 veterans in the United States, and their perspectives need to be heard on the committee and at the VA.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to note that H.R. 2011 is supported by numerous important veterans organizations, including the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, the Military Officers Association of America, the Student Veterans Association, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I can't think of better endorsements than these.

Helping our veterans transition to civilian life is one of the most critical challenges facing our country. These men and women are truly our country's heroes, and they deserve a world-class education. Our constituents feel strongly that this is something that we get right.

I thank the ranking member for his time, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. So if my good friend Mr. MICHAUD is ready to close, so am I.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I also have no further requests for time.

I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 2011, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I, too, Mr. Speaker, ask my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 2011, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2011.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 47 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MEADOWS) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 2189, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 2011, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

ESTABLISHING COMMISSION OR TASK FORCE TO EVALUATE BACKLOG OF DISABILITY CLAIMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2189) to establish a commission or task force to evaluate the backlog of disability claims of the Department of Veterans Affairs, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 404, nays 1, not voting 25, as follows:

[Roll No. 561]

YEAS—404

Amash	DeFazio	Huelskamp
Amodei	DeGette	Huffman
Andrews	Delaney	Huizenga (MI)
Bachmann	DeLauro	Hultgren
Bachus	DelBene	Hunter
Barber	Denham	Hurt
Barletta	Dent	Israel
Barr	DeSantis	Issa
Barrow (GA)	DesJarlais	Jackson Lee
Barton	Deutch	Jeffries
Bass	Diaz-Balart	Jenkins
Beatty	Dingell	Johnson (GA)
Becerra	Doggett	Johnson (OH)
Benishek	Doyle	Johnson, E. B.
Bentivoglio	Duckworth	Johnson, Sam
Bera (CA)	Duffy	Jones
Bilirakis	Duncan (SC)	Jordan
Bishop (GA)	Duncan (TN)	Joyce
Bishop (NY)	Edwards	Kaptur
Bishop (UT)	Ellison	Keating
Black	Ellmers	Kelly (IL)
Blackburn	Engel	Kelly (PA)
Blumenauer	Enyart	Kennedy
Bonamici	Eshoo	Kildee
Boustany	Esty	Kilmer
Brady (PA)	Farenthold	King (IA)
Brady (TX)	Farr	King (NY)
Braley (IA)	Fattah	Kingston
Bridenstine	Fincher	Kinzinger (IL)
Brooks (AL)	Fitzpatrick	Kirkpatrick
Brooks (IN)	Fleischmann	Kline
Broun (GA)	Fleming	Kuster
Brown (FL)	Flores	Labrador
Brownley (CA)	Forbes	LaMalfa
Buchanan	Fortenberry	Lamborn
Bucshon	Foster	Lance
Burgess	Fox	Langevin
Bustos	Frankel (FL)	Lankford
Calvert	Franks (AZ)	Larsen (WA)
Camp	Frelinghuysen	Larson (CT)
Cantor	Fudge	Latham
Capito	Gabbard	Latta
Capps	Gallagher	Lee (CA)
Capuano	Garamendi	Levin
Cárdenas	Garcia	Lewis
Carney	Gardner	Lipinski
Carson (IN)	Garrett	LoBiondo
Carter	Gerlach	Loeb
Cartwright	Gibbs	Lofgren
Cassidy	Gibson	Long
Castor (FL)	Gingrey (GA)	Lowenthal
Castro (TX)	Gohmert	Lowey
Chabot	Goodlatte	Lucas
Chaffetz	Gosar	Luetkemeyer
Chu	Gowdy	Lujan Grisham
Cicilline	Granger	(NM)
Clarke	Graves (GA)	Luján, Ben Ray
Clay	Grayson	(NM)
Cleaver	Green, Al	Lummis
Clyburn	Green, Gene	Lynch
Coble	Griffin (AR)	Maffei
Coffman	Griffith (VA)	Maloney,
Cohen	Guthrie	Carolyn
Cole	Hahn	Maloney, Sean
Collins (GA)	Hall	Marchant
Collins (NY)	Hanabusa	Marino
Conaway	Hanna	Massie
Conyers	Harper	Matheson
Cook	Harris	Matsui
Costa	Hartzler	McCarthy (CA)
Cotton	Hastings (FL)	McClintock
Courtney	Hastings (WA)	McCollum
Cramer	Heck (NV)	McDermott
Crawford	Heck (WA)	McGovern
Crenshaw	Hensarling	McHenry
Crowley	Himes	McIntyre
Cuellar	Hinojosa	McKeon
Culberson	Holding	McKinley
Cummings	Holt	McMorris
Daines	Honda	Rodgers
Davis (CA)	Horsford	McNerney
Davis, Danny	Hoyer	Meadows
Davis, Rodney	Hudson	Meehan

Meeks	Ribble	Smith (WA)
Meng	Rice (SC)	Southerland
Messer	Richmond	Stewart
Mica	Rigell	Stivers
Michaud	Roby	Stockman
Miller (FL)	Roe (TN)	Swalwell (CA)
Miller (MI)	Rogers (AL)	Takano
Miller, Gary	Rogers (KY)	Terrill
Miller, George	Rogers (MI)	Thompson (CA)
Moore	Rohrabacher	Thompson (MS)
Mullin	Rokita	Thompson (PA)
Mulvaney	Rooney	Thornberry
Murphy (FL)	Ros-Lehtinen	Tiberi
Murphy (PA)	Roskam	Tierney
Nadler	Ross	Tipton
Napolitano	Rothfus	Titus
Neal	Roybal-Allard	Tonko
Negrete McLeod	Royce	Tsongas
Neugebauer	Ruiz	Turner
Nolan	Runyan	Upton
Nugent	Ruppersberger	Valadao
Nunes	Ryan (OH)	Van Hollen
Nunnelee	Ryan (WI)	Vargas
O'Rourke	Salmon	Veasey
Olson	Sánchez, Linda	Vela
Palazzo	T.	Velázquez
Pallone	Sanchez, Loretta	Visclosky
Pascarella	Sarbanes	Wagner
Paulsen	Scalise	Walberg
Pearce	Schakowsky	Walden
Pelosi	Schiff	Walorski
Perlmutter	Schneider	Walz
Perry	Schock	Wasserman
Peters (CA)	Schrader	Schultz
Peters (MI)	Schweikert	Waters
Peterson	Scott (VA)	Watt
Petri	Scott, Austin	Waxman
Pingree (ME)	Scott, David	Weber (TX)
Pittenger	Sensenbrenner	Webster (FL)
Pitts	Serrano	Welch
Pocan	Sessions	Wenstrup
Poe (TX)	Sewell (AL)	Westmoreland
Polis	Shea-Porter	Whitfield
Pompeo	Sherman	Williams
Posey	Shimkus	Wilson (SC)
Price (GA)	Shuster	Wittman
Price (NC)	Simpson	Wolf
Quigley	Sinema	Womack
Radel	Sires	Woodall
Rahall	Slaughter	Yarmuth
Rangel	Smith (MO)	Yoder
Reed	Smith (NE)	Yoho
Reichert	Smith (NJ)	Young (IN)
Renacci	Smith (TX)	

NAYS—1

Sanford

NOT VOTING—25

Aderholt	Herrera Beutler	Payne
Butterfield	Higgins	Rush
Campbell	Kind	Schwartz
Connolly	McCarthy (NY)	Speier
Cooper	McCaul	Stutzman
Graves (MO)	Moran	Wilson (FL)
Grijalva	Noem	Young (AK)
Grimm	Owens	
Gutiérrez	Pastor (AZ)	

□ 1854

Messrs. ROHRABACHER and BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico changed their vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: “A bill to improve the processing of disability claims by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.”

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VETERANS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2013

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the