

amended to ban the transplantation of organs infected with the HIV virus. Today—more than two decades after this ban was put in place—an HIV-positive diagnosis is no longer a death sentence. More and more HIV-positive Americans are living longer with antiretroviral treatment and finding themselves on waitlists for organs along with tens of thousands of others. Organ transplantation also now occurs using Hepatitis C-positive organs for transplant in patients who have the Hepatitis C virus. This development is notable given similarities in the transmission modes of the HIV and Hepatitis C viruses.

The HOPE Act updates the National Organ Transplant Act to reflect the current medical and scientific understanding of HIV/AIDS. The bill creates a pathway for future HIV-positive to HIV-positive organ donation—beginning first with research. The Secretary of Health and Human Services is directed to develop research criteria for HIV-positive to HIV-positive organ donation. The Secretary is also required to conduct an annual review of research results and—if she deems the research findings warrant this action—direct the Organ Procurement and Transplant Network to revise standards for organ transplantation with HIV-infected organs. S. 330 also amends the Federal criminal code to specify that organ donation consistent with the HOPE Act would not violate the current prohibition in Federal law.

I believe this measure represents an important step forward in updating our organ transplant procedures to reflect the current state of the science. Importantly, S. 330 could also increase organs available for donation—saving hundreds of lives each year.

I want to commend Congresswoman CAPPS and Congressman HARRIS for their leadership on this critical issue in the House. I also want to acknowledge the contributions of Senators BOXER and COBURN, the sponsors of the legislation we are considering today.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the HOPE Act and sending this commonsense, bi-partisan measure to the President.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 330.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VETERANS' COMPENSATION COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 2013

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 893) to provide for an increase, effective December 1, 2013, in the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 893

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’ Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2013”.

SEC. 2. INCREASE IN RATES OF DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION.

(a) RATE ADJUSTMENT.—Effective on December 1, 2013, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall increase, in accordance with subsection (c), the dollar amounts in effect on November 30, 2013, for the payment of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation under the provisions specified in subsection (b).

(b) AMOUNTS TO BE INCREASED.—The dollar amounts to be increased pursuant to subsection (a) are the following:

(1) WARTIME DISABILITY COMPENSATION.—Each of the dollar amounts under section 1114 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR DEPENDENTS.—Each of the dollar amounts under section 1115(i) of such title.

(3) CLOTHING ALLOWANCE.—The dollar amount under section 1162 of such title.

(4) DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION TO SURVIVING SPOUSE.—Each of the dollar amounts under subsections (a) through (d) of section 1311 of such title.

(5) DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION TO CHILDREN.—Each of the dollar amounts under sections 1313(a) and 1314 of such title.

(c) DETERMINATION OF INCREASE.—Each dollar amount described in subsection (b) shall be increased by the same percentage as the percentage by which benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) are increased effective December 1, 2013, as a result of a determination under section 215(i) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)).

(d) SPECIAL RULE.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may adjust administratively, consistent with the increases made under subsection (a), the rates of disability compensation payable to persons under section 10 of Public Law 85-857 (72 Stat. 1263) who have not received compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code.

(e) PUBLICATION OF ADJUSTED RATES.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish in the Federal Register the amounts specified in subsection (b), as increased under subsection (a), not later than the date on which the matters specified in section 215(i)(2)(D) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)(2)(D)) are required to be published by reason of a determination made under section 215(i) of such Act during fiscal year 2014.

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 within which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on S. 893.

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

There was no objection.

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

As chairman of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, I rise today in

support of S. 893, the Veterans’ Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2013.

Mr. Speaker, it is entirely appropriate that we consider this legislation today after we honored America’s veterans yesterday.

This is critically important legislation that authorizes a cost-of-living increase for disabled veterans in receipt of disability compensation payments from VA, veterans’ clothing allowance payments, and other compensation for survivors of veterans who die as a result of their service to this country. The amount of the increase is determined by the consumer price index, which also controls the cost-of-living adjustment for Social Security beneficiaries. That increase is scheduled to be 1½ percent.

I want to thank Congressman RUNYAN of New Jersey, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, for introducing H.R. 569, which was the companion bill to this piece of legislation.

I urge all my colleagues to support S. 893, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Yesterday was Veterans Day. Its origin began 95 years ago on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. The armistice was signed marking the end of World War I. The next year we saw the first commemoration of Armistice Day, which became Veterans Day in 1954. Every Veterans Day since then has been a day of remembrance and commemoration for all of our veterans.

Today, we have the opportunity to put the thoughts and feelings of Veterans Day into practical action. Today, with the agreement of the House, we will ensure that veterans continue to receive the support they need.

On October 28, the Senate passed S. 893, the Veterans’ Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2013, which provides that veterans receive a projected 1.5 percent cost-of-living adjustment beginning in January.

This bill directs the VA to increase the rate of basic compensation for disabled veterans and the rate of dependency and indemnity compensation for their survivors and dependents.

Since 1976, Congress has acted annually to increase these benefits by an amount estimated to keep pace with inflation. This year’s increase is the same as that provided to Social Security recipients.

Without this annual COLA increase, veterans, their families, and survivors would see the value of their hard-earned benefits slowly erode.

□ 1745

Many of the millions of veterans and survivors who receive monthly benefits depend upon these payments in order to make ends meet. For some, it is their only source of income.

Providing for a cost-of-living increase is an important thing that we

all can do to help veterans and ensure that the value of their benefits does not decrease over time due to inflation. It is a way that we can, the day after Veterans Day, thank our veterans again for their service and their sacrifice. I urge my colleagues to support S. 893.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. RUNYAN), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

Mr. RUNYAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman MILLER for yielding me this time.

I rise today in strong support of S. 893, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2013. This bill is a companion bill to H.R. 569, which I introduced earlier this year in the House of Representatives. H.R. 569 was included in H.R. 357, which passed the House Veterans' Affairs Committee earlier this year.

S. 893 provides a cost-of-living adjustment to veterans' disability compensation, survivors' dependency and indemnity compensation, and other benefits.

Mr. Speaker, many disabled veterans depend on these benefits to make ends meet, and this bill will assist these veterans as the cost-of-living continues to increase.

While I am very supportive of this bill, I would like to once again state that it is unfortunate that we have to be here to pass this bill each and every year. That is why I introduced H.R. 570, the American Heroes COLA Act, which would authorize a COLA every year without congressional action. This would ensure that the COLA for the most deserving Americans is not tied to action or inaction in Washington.

The House passed H.R. 570 earlier this year, and I remain hopeful that our colleagues in the Senate will follow suit so we can provide this needed benefit to veterans and their families without having to wait on Congress to act.

Once again, I thank Chairman MILLER and the House leadership for bringing this important legislation to the floor. I urge all of my colleagues to fully support S. 893.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS).

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman MILLER and thank Ranking Member MICHAUD for yielding me this time.

As the ranking member of the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee, I rise today in strong support of S. 893 to provide a COLA increase for disabled veterans.

In the wake of Veterans Day, let us take a lesson from President Kennedy's admonition that we should show our respect for our heroes not just through words, but through actions. This legislation is an opportunity for us to take such action. With its passage, Congress

can show tangible support for our Nation's heroes.

Unlike with Social Security recipients, Congress is required to adjust veterans' COLAs every year. S. 893 would make that important adjustment for next year. That's a good thing that I support, but I would also urge the Senate in the meantime to pass H.R. 570, the American Heroes COLA Act, that would allow for an automatic COLA increase so that veterans' benefits are not subject to any congressional delay. Making the adjustment automatic would remove this important benefit from the capriciousness of partisan politics or personal grandstanding.

This bill was introduced in a bipartisan fashion by our subcommittee chairman, JON RUNYAN, and me. It was unanimously approved by the House in May and is awaiting action down the hall. So, while we await the passage of that automatic increase, passing S. 893 is an important step forward. I support it. It will ensure that our Nation's heroes receive all the benefits they have earned, and I encourage my colleagues to support it as well because this will be a true recognition of the veterans whose service and sacrifice we honored yesterday.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BENISHEK), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Health.

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 893, legislation to provide a 2014 cost-of-living adjustment to disabled veterans and their survivors. With prices going up for groceries, gas, and utilities, an increase is needed for our veterans and their families in northern Michigan.

However, without this legislation, there would be no COLA. As a doctor who served at the VA hospital in Iron Mountain for 20 years and the father of a Navy veteran, I am disappointed that our veterans are once again put at risk of being held hostage to Washington politics. Those who serve our Nation should never have to wonder whether or not Congress will provide them with the benefits they have earned.

In May, the House passed the American Heroes COLA Act, introduced by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. RUNYAN). This legislation will permanently tie the COLA to the consumer price index, the same as Social Security disability.

I urge the Senate to immediately act on the American Heroes COLA Act and join the House of Representatives in a clear statement that our veterans must not be used as pawns in Washington political games. I urge support of S. 893.

MR. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, so I urge my colleagues to support S. 893 and send this important bill to the President today.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I too ask all of my colleagues to support S. 893.

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, S. 893.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REALIGNMENT OF SOUTHERN JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2871) to amend title 28, United States Code, to modify the composition of the southern judicial district of Mississippi to improve judicial efficiency, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2871

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. REALIGNMENT OF SOUTHERN JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI.

Section 104(b) of title 28, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“Southern District

“(b) The southern district comprises four divisions.

“(1) The Northern Division comprises the counties of Copiah, Hinds, Holmes, Issaquena, Kemper, Lauderdale, Leake, Madison, Neshoba, Newton, Noxubee, Rankin, Scott, Simpson, Sharkey, Smith, Warren, and Yazoo.

Court for the Northern Division shall be held at Jackson.

“(2) The Southern Division comprises the counties of George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Pearl River, and Stone.

Court for the Southern Division shall be held at Gulfport.

“(3) The Eastern Division comprises the counties of Clarke, Covington, Forrest, Jasper, Jefferson Davis, Jones, Lamar, Lawrence, Marion, Perry, Wayne, and Walthall.

Court for the Eastern Division shall be held at Hattiesburg.

“(4) The Western Division comprises the counties of Adams, Amite, Claiborne, Franklin, Jefferson, Lincoln, Pike, and Wilkinson. Court for the Western Division shall be held at Natchez.”.

SEC. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act and the amendment made by this Act shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2871.

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