

death of a person eligible for burial in a national cemetery by reason of paragraph (1), (2), (3), or (7) of section 2402(a) of title 38, United States Code, occurring before, on, or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) 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 have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material on H.R. 4757, as amended.

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.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge all of our colleagues to support H.R. 4757, as amended. This bill would expand two different honors for our Nation's heroes, guaranteeing that their service would never be forgotten.

First, the bill would expand eligibility for a Presidential Memorial Certificate to members of the National Guard or Reserve. Mr. Speaker, Presidential Memorial Certificates are engraved certificates that are signed by the President and sent to a deceased servicemember's family, honoring their loved one's service and sacrifice to our country. My bill would ensure that all service is recognized and cherished because all servicemembers take the exact same oath to support and to defend the Constitution of the United States.

Second, H.R. 4757, as amended, would allow the VA to furnish a headstone, marker, or medallion signifying that the deceased was awarded the Medal of Honor. We all know that veterans who were awarded the Medal of Honor, the highest award for valor, deserve to have their service recognized both in life and after they pass. This bill would make it easier for visitors at any cemetery to pay their respects to Medal of Honor recipients by allowing them to quickly identify our national heroes.

Moreover, these headstones, markers, or medallions will also continue to inspire the next generation of Americans who will be serving our country. I hope that in 100, 200, or even 1,000 years from now future Americans will still take the time to find the graves of these incredibly brave men and women and give thanks that they are living in the greatest Nation in the history of this world. This legislation would help us fulfill our duty as a nation to encourage continued respect and admiration for those that have gone on before us.

I urge all my colleagues to support H.R. 4757, as amended.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise to offer my unqualified support for H.R. 4757, Chairman MILLER's bill that updates current law to ensure our Nation's heroes are accorded the recognition they deserve, particularly those afforded the Nation's highest honor for valor, the Medal of Honor.

First, H.R. 4757 directs the VA to provide, upon request, a distinctive headstone, marker, or medallion to Medal of Honor recipients who are buried in private cemeteries. This bill is necessary because current law actually prohibits the Secretary from furnishing these honors to recipients not buried in national cemeteries.

Second, while the VA sends a Presidential Memorial Certificate that expresses the Nation's recognition and gratitude of military service to family members of a deceased veteran, current law limits Presidential Memorial Certificates to the families of those who served in regular armed services or National Guard and Reserve members who were called to Active Duty. H.R. 4757 very rightly expands eligibility for a Presidential Memorial Certificate to members of the Reserve component of the Armed Forces and the Army National Guard or the Air National Guard eligible for interment or inurnment in national cemeteries.

Finally, current law only allows VA to pay for the cost of transporting the remains of a deceased veteran to the nearest open national cemetery. If it is the family's choice instead to be buried in a State or tribal veteran's cemetery, H.R. 4757 authorizes VA to pay the costs associated with transporting the remains of an eligible deceased veteran to that cemetery nearest to the deceased veteran's last residence.

Mr. Speaker, honoring the memory of deceased veterans is our greatest responsibility at the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and I am pleased to support Chairman MILLER's legislation which refines and improves on the ways we are doing that. I encourage my colleagues to support this important legislation and join me in passing H.R. 4757, as amended.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I, too, urge all my colleagues to support H.R. 4757, as amended.

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. 4757, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. 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.

PROTECTING VETERANS' EDUCATIONAL CHOICE ACT OF 2016

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5047) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Labor to provide information to veterans and members of the Armed Forces about articulation agreements between institutions of higher learning, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5047

*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 "Protecting Veterans' Educational Choice Act of 2016".

SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING.

(a) INFORMATION.—Department of Veterans Affairs counselors who provide educational or vocational counseling services pursuant to section 3697A of title 38, United States Code, shall provide to any eligible individual who requests such counseling services information about the articulation agreements of each institution of higher learning in which the veteran is interested.

(b) CERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY.—When the Secretary of Veterans Affairs provides to a veteran a certification of eligibility for educational assistance provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Secretary shall also include detailed information on such educational assistance, including information on requesting education counseling services and on articulation agreements.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term "institution of higher learning" has the meaning given such term in section 3452(f) of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term "articulation agreement" has the meaning given such term in section 486A of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (Public Law 89-329; 20 U.S.C. 1093a).

(d) DEADLINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall implement this section not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) 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 have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material and other items to H.R. 5047.

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.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5047, the Protecting Veterans' Educational Choice Act of 2016, would further protect student veterans by requiring that, when the Department of Veterans Affairs

provides educational counseling or a certificate of eligibility to veterans or servicemembers who are eligible for VA education benefits, the Department also provide information on articulation agreements at institutions of higher learning.

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The Post-9/11 GI Bill has benefitted more than 1.5 million servicemembers, veterans, and their dependents since its inception in 2009. While many of these beneficiaries complete their entire program of education at one school, we often see individuals who transfer to another school in the middle of their program due to a plethora of circumstances. If they do transfer schools, their previously earned credits can play a large role in determining the length of time it may take for students to complete their program at the new school that they have chosen to go to, and in some cases not all earned credits will transfer. Often, the transferability of certain credits between different institutions of higher learning is not always on an individual's radar when they apply for a certain school or a certain program, and a veteran may or may not have understood how credits transfer when they first initiated their education career.

H.R. 5047 would simply provide our student veterans with additional information as they apply to and attend schools by requiring VA to provide information on articulation agreements at a particular school and that school's agreements with another institution. Our veterans and their dependents deserve full transparency as they set out to use their hard-earned benefits. I thank my colleague, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JODY B. HICE) for introducing this bipartisan legislation which has my complete support.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5047, the Protecting Veterans' Educational Choice Act of 2016. I thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JODY B. HICE) for introducing this commendable legislation.

This bill would require the VA to include information about the educational services available to all veterans seeking to use their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, and it would require VA counselors who provide educational or vocational counseling to inform the veterans about the articulation agreements that exist between schools that govern the transfer of credits. Articulation agreements refer to formal agreements between two or more institutions of higher learning, documenting the credit transfer policies for a specific academic program.

Student veterans have an important decision to make when they choose a college or university to attend with their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits. It is essential that they understand at the

outset whether they could transfer their credits to another college or university down the line.

We have seen too many examples of student veterans depleting their limited GI Bill benefits to attend for-profit colleges, only to find out later that their opportunities to transfer to schools without losing time, money, and credit hours are severely limited.

Ensuring that student veterans know in advance whether a school will give them credit for completed courses if they choose to transfer will help veterans avoid choosing schools where their credits will not transfer, thus saving them both time and their hard-earned Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits.

I thank Representative HICE for introducing this important piece of legislation, which I am proud to cosponsor and support.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from the 10th District of Georgia (Mr. JODY B. HICE), the sponsor of this particular piece of legislation, the gentleman from the great community of Monroe.

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, obviously I rise in strong support of this bill, H.R. 5047, the Protecting Veterans' Educational Choice Act of 2016.

Let me just extend a very sincere and heartfelt thank you to Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member TAKANO—who, by the way, is an original cosponsor of this bill—for their support of this bill and overall wide support for this bill. I appreciate the comments that both of my colleagues have made pertaining to this bill.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill, I believe without question, is the most generous educational benefit that our Nation has ever passed. As has already been mentioned, over a million student veterans have benefitted tremendously from that particular piece of legislation. Some of the benefits include help to cover cost of tuition, books, supplies, even housing. Yet, in spite of all this, we still find that many of our veterans find themselves still having to take out student loans. Part of the reason for that is, as has been discussed by my colleagues, many of these veterans, as they are going to various schools somewhere in the midst of the process, discover that the credits that they have received from this school won't transfer over here; and somewhere in the middle of that timeframe, much of their GI Bill has already been spent, and so they find themselves in an extremely difficult and awkward position.

I won't reiterate the details of this bill because it has already been done, but the basics of this addresses that problem, Mr. Speaker. It does not have anything to say regarding what school a veteran chooses. They are free to go to whatever school they want to, but what this bill says is up front they

need to be aware of whether or not their credits will transfer to another school. They don't need to find that out on the back end. They need to be fully informed on the front end as they are making these career and educational choices.

I think it is a shame for many of our veterans to feel that they have misused their GI benefits because they weren't informed enough from the beginning of this process. It is incumbent upon Congress, I believe, to ensure that our veterans have as much information as they need at the front end of their educational choices that will best benefit them and their families.

Again, I strongly thank the chairman and the ranking member for their support. I believe this bill is going to go a long way in addressing this problem. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5047.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this legislation. I have no other speakers. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 5047.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I, too, would encourage all Members to support H.R. 5047.

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. 5047.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. 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.

#### WORKING TO INTEGRATE NETWORKS GUARANTEEING MEMBER ACCESS NOW ACT

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5166) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide certain employees of Members of Congress and certain employees of State or local governmental agencies with access to case-tracking information of the Department of Veterans Affairs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5166

*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 "Working to Integrate Networks Guaranteeing Member Access Now Act" or the "WINGMAN Act".

#### SEC. 2. PROVISION OF ACCESS TO CASE-TRACKING INFORMATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 59 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following: