The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfin-
ished business is the question on

The question is on the Speaker’s ap-
proval of the Journal.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic de-
vice, and there were—yeas 224, nays
183, answered “present” 1, not voting
25, as follows:

(Roll No. 667)

YEAS—224

Abraham
Adams
Adler
Allen
Arrington
Bacon
Bankos
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barton
Beatty
Bilirakis
Bischu
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blumenthal
Bonamici
Bost
Brady (TX)
Braun
Bragg
Brat
Buck
Budd
Burgess
Burts
Byrne
Butterfield
Bucshon
Brooks (IN)
Brooks (AL)
Bratton
Brady (KY)

KNOW as above recorded.

The result of the vote was announced
by Mr. KIND changed his vote from
October 1

SEC. 2. INVESTIGATION OF MEDICAL CENTERS

(a) In general.—The Secretary of
Veterans Affairs may contract with a
nonprofit organization that accredits health care or-
 ganizations and programs in the United States to
investigate medical centers of the Depart-
ment of Veterans Affairs.

(b) Authority of Directors.—

(1) In General.—Subject to coordination
under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall dele-
gate the authority under subsection (a) to
contract for an investigation at a medical center
of the Department to the Director of the
Veterans Integrated Service Network in
which the medical center is located or the
Director of such medical center.

(2) Coordination.—Before entering into
a contract under paragraph (1), the Director of
the Veterans Integrated Service Network or the
Director of such medical center, as the case
may be, shall notify the Secretary of
Veterans Affairs, the Inspector General of the
Department of Veterans Affairs, and the
Comptroller General of the United States for
purposes of coordinating any investigation
conducted pursuant to such contract with
any other investigations that may be on-
go.

(c) Rule of Construction.—Nothing in
this section may be construed—

(1) to preclude the Director of the Inspector
General of the Department of Veterans Af-
fairs from conducting any review, audit,

(2) to authorize the Secretary of the
Veterans Integrated Service Network in
which the medical center is located or the
Director of such medical center.
evaluation, or inspection regarding a topic for which an investigation is conducted under this section; or

(2) to modify the requirement that employ-
es of the Department assist with any re-
view, audit, evaluation, or inspection con-
ducted by the Office of the Inspector General of the Department.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the request, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. Roe) and the gentleman from California (Mr. Takano) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. Roe of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentle-
man from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

Mr. Roe of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may con-
sume.

Mr. Speaker. I rise today in support of S. 1266, the Enhancing Veteran Care Act. This bill would authorize the Depart-
ment of Veterans Affairs to con-
tact with a nonprofit entity special-
ing in civilian accreditation or healthcare evaluation to investigate and assess deficiencies at VA medical centers and to coordinate any such in-
vestigations with the VA inspector general and the Government Account-
ability Office.

This bill is sponsored by Senator James Inhofe from Oklahoma and is companion legislation to H.R. 42, which is sponsored by my good friend, Repre-
sentative Markwayne Mullin from Oklahoma’s Second District. I am grateful to both Senator Inhofe and Congressman Mullin for their work on this legislation.

We are all familiar with the various challenges and scandals that have plagued VA medical centers across the country since the 2014 systemwide VA access and accountability crisis.

I, along with Ranking Member Walz and other committee members, our Senate colleagues, Secretary Shulkin, veterans service organizations, and others, have been working tirelessly to transform the VA healthcare system into the modern, high-performing healthcare organization that our vet-
ers deserve.

S. 1266 is in line with those efforts in that it would provide VA an additional avenue to identify and resolve prob-
lems impacting the care our veterans receive in VA medical facilities.

Mr. Speaker. I urge all of my col-
leagues to join me in supporting this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Takano. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, since 2014, the Veterans’ Affairs Committee has held countless hearings focused on VA medical centers that were found to have covered up wait times or failed to consistently provide high-quality healthcare to vet-

ers.

Many of these failures were first brought to light by whistleblower alleg-
gations and were later substantiated by Government Accountability Office findings and VA inspector general inves-
tigations. Solutions to these failures were only uncovered through multiple inspections of medical centers’ facili-
ties, their policies, and their employ-
ees.

Congress relies on the hard work of medical inspectors and investigators at the VA, the OIG, and the GAO to re-
view allegations and issue rec-
ommendations regarding how VA and Congress should work to correct defi-
cencies at medical centers and hold VA officials accountable. With limited resources, the inspector general and the GAO have completed a staggering number of investigations and reviews that have led to significant reforms of the VA system. They should be commended for their excellent work.

The Enhancing Veteran Care Act gives the Secretary another tool for de-
veloping solutions to problems at VA medical facilities. The VA Secretary should be able to contract with non-
profit-nongovernmental medical in-
spectors or auditors when deemed ap-
propriate.

However, I strongly believe that granting the VA Secretary the author-
ity to contract with nongovernmental inspectors and auditors should not re-
sult in cuts to the IG’s or VA’s budgets. We need to enable VA inspectors and hold the VA OIG have the resources to con-
tinue their thorough and timely investi-
gations.

I am also concerned about these non-
governmental organizations not being required to follow Federal laws that re-
late to the activities of the VA inspectors, inspectors and auditors. However, I strongly believe that granting the VA Secretary the author-
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gations.

I am also concerned about these non-
governmental organizations not being required to follow Federal laws that re-
late to the activities of the VA inspectors, inspectors and auditors. Without transparency, Congress and the public will not have the same level of confidence in their findings.

If we had the opportunity to consider this legislation in committee, we could have received testimony from VA, the IG, and GAO on this legislation and done more to address concerns around transparency, while also ensuring that investigative efforts are not duplic-
ated. I encourage the chairman to con-
continue his inclusive approach by seek-
ing to bring all veterans related bills through committee for due con-
ideration.

However, these concerns will not pre-
vent me from supporting the Enhanc-
ing Veteran Care Act. I trust the Sec-
tetary will execute this authority in a manner that supports and supplements government-led investigations.

Veterans should have full confidence that they will receive high-quality healthcare at VA facilities. Rigorous and transparent investigations and aud-
its will help guarantee these high standards are met.

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

Mr. Roe of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. Mullin), my good friend and sponsor of the House com-
panion bill, H.R. 42.

Mr. Mullin. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman Roe for allowing this to come to the floor and Leader McCarthy for his leadership in bringing this bill to the floor. I also want to thank my fellow Senators from Oklahoma, Mr. Inhofe and Mr. Lankford, for their great work in getting this passed in the Senate.

As the sponsor of H.R. 42, the House companion bill to S. 1266, I urge my colleagues to support and vote in favor of today’s bill.

Nearly a year ago, we debated this bill on the floor and saw it passed by voice vote. I look forward to another strong response from the House in sending this bill to the President’s desk and it becoming law.

This bill simply authorizes the De-
partment of Veterans Affairs to con-
tract with nonprofit organizations that accredit healthcare organizations in order to investigate VA medical centers.

This bill would allow the VA to get a second opinion from outside of the agency in order to get the best infor-
mation and provide the best care for our veterans. Just like how patients sometimes need to get a second opinion on their diagnosis, the VA should not be above bringing in a second opinion.

Our veterans deserve care equal to the finest civilian hospitals, so let’s bring more transparency to the VA by allowing the VA to hire a second opinion from outside of the VA to look at the VA and make recom-
mendations when problems arise.

This is a commonsense bill that will help improve the care for our veterans, and I hope all will support it.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this bill.

Mr. Takano. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. Kuster), my good friend and ranking member of the Sub-
committee on Oversight and Investiga-
tions.

Ms. Kuster of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 1266, Enhancing Veteran Care Act.

Currently, the Department of Vet-
ers Affairs can contract with quali-
fied and accredited third-party non-
profits to investigate a VA medical center for deficiencies in its facility. Only the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, however, is directly capable of author-
izing these third-party investigations.

Unfortunately, this process is need-
lessly cumbersome and delays the im-
provement of medical centers. This bill
is an important reform because it empowers Veteran Integrated Service Network directors and VA medical center directors to initiate these third-party reviews.

The Manchester VA Medical Center in Manchester, New Hampshire, currently faces a number of questions regarding the services it provides and the facilities it manages. While Secretary Shulkin has initiated reviews of the facility, it took a number of whistleblowers to put their reputation and jobs on the line to force action.

Legislation like the Enhancing Veteran Care Act could have streamlined this process and made both the facility and the VISN more accountable to the needs of veterans in New Hampshire. VA must be better at assessing its own shortcomings.

Ultimately, veterans in the Granite State and across the country deserve the highest standard of care.

I thank Senators INHOFE and BENNET for introducing this important legislation. I thank Senator SHAHEEN, one of the lead Democratic cosponsors of the bill, for helping advance this bill through the U.S. Senate and being attentive to the needs of our Granite State veterans.

I proudly support this legislation and urge all of my colleagues to support this bill and immediately send it to the President's desk.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in support of S. 1266, the Enhancing Veteran Care Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. This has been a team effort on the Veterans' Affairs Committee to work to try to improve the care that our veterans and Nation's heroes get throughout this country. The involvement on both sides of the aisle on our committee is unprecedented, I think, for a committee working toward a single goal and purpose.

Many times, we have differences of opinion, but this bill is just another tool that the VA will be able to use to improve the care that veterans get.

I received a letter today from a gentleman in New Mexico who had a very different experience 6 or 7 years ago with the VA. He even was even hesitant to go back. He went back to this VA hospital and had a very pleasant experience. So I think things are changing for the better, I think due to the hard work of the leadership at the VA, the people who work there every day, and this committee.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Members to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. Roe) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 1266.

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. ROE of Tennessee. 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.

CONDEMN ETHNIC CLEANSING OF ROHINGYA AND CALLING FOR AN END TO ATTACKS IN AND AN IMMEDIATE RESTORATION OF HUMANITARIAN ACCESS TO RAKHINE, BURMA

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 90) condemning ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya and calling for an end to the attacks in and an immediate restoration of humanitarian access to the state of Rakhine in Burma, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 90

Whereas on August 25, 2017, the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army carried out attacks on Government positions in the state of Rakhine in Burma ("Rakhine State");

Whereas too many of the Rohingya people have lost, through systematic discrimination by Burmese national, state and local authorities, a range of civil and political rights, including citizenship, and face barriers today such that they are mostly stateless peoples;

Whereas since the August 25 attacks, Burma's military and security forces, as well as private mobs, have carried out attacks resulting in over 600,000 Rohingya fleeing to Bangladesh;

Whereas Amnesty International described the attacks by stating that "Myanmar security forces are setting northern Rakhine State ablaze in a targeted campaign to push the Rohingya out of Myanmar.");

Whereas the United Nations Security Council has called for an end to the violence and attacks;

Whereas the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights has said that the response by the military is "grossly disproportionate" and a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing";

Whereas Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has said, "This violence must stop, this persecution must stop";

Whereas Burma's military-drafted constitution, the country's military and security services are not subject to civilian rule and only Burma's Commander-in-Chief, Min Aung Hlaing, can command troops to cease attacks impacting civilians in Rakhine State;

Whereas Burma's civilian Government, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, has not yet taken necessary steps to address the violence and should take further measures, including to address the pervasive problem of hate speech;

Whereas the United States acknowledges the democratic transition underway in Burma, maintains hope for further genuine democratic reform, and supports Burma's elected officials to take action to prevent violence and secure rights;

Whereas the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State ("Rakhine Commission") examined, beginning in 2016, the underlying tensions in Rakhine State and made a series of recommendations that combine a range of suggestions and policy changes dealing with humanitarian aid, citizenship, reconciliation, and peace;

Whereas the Rakhine Commission stated, "While Myanmar has every right to defend its own territory, a highly militarized response is unlikely to bring peace to the area. What is needed is a calibrated approach—which combines political, developmental, security and human rights responses to ensure that violence does not escalate and inter- communal tensions are not exploited by control"; Whereas the United Nations estimates that $341,000,000 in humanitarian assistance will be needed to provide life-sustaining support to 1,200,000 people, both refugees and host communities, in the first few months of this crisis; and

Whereas the United States is providing an initial $2,000,000 in humanitarian assistance to address the urgent needs of Rohingya fleeing violence from Rakhine State into Bangladesh, as well as the needs of internally displaced persons in Rakhine State;

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) condemns the attacks against civilians by Burma's military and security forces and in Burma's Commander-in-Chief, Min Aung Hlaing, to immediately end all attacks against civilians in the state of Rakhine in Burma;

(2) expresses deepest appreciation to the Government of Bangladesh for providing refuge to those fleeing violence and attacks;

(3) condemns the attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army against civilians and infrastructure in Rakhine and Rohingya communities, but warns that these attacks do not justify the unrestrained response by Burmese military and security forces that has resulted in severe human rights violations, murderous ethnic cleansing, and atrocities against civilians;

(4) calls on Burma's Government, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, and the Burmese military and security forces to work constructively to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, including those relating to justice, reconciliation, humanitarian aid, and citizenship;

(5) calls on Burma's Government and its military and security forces to allow unimpeded humanitarian access to refugees and internally displaced persons; and

(6) urges support and access for the United Nations Fact Finding Mission to Burma;

(7) calls on Burma's military and Government to allow refugees to voluntarily return to Burma in a manner consistent with internationally recognized principles of human rights and refugee protection and to change laws and policies that have contributed to insecurity in the state of Rakhine; and

(8) calls on the President of the United States to impose sanctions on members of the Burmese military and security forces who are responsible for human rights abuses.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days