

H.R. 425, the Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act, is about helping expand veterans' job and education opportunities in the sciences. The bill directs the National Science Foundation to develop a veterans outreach plan and publish data on veterans' participation in mathematics, science, and technology in its annual "Science and Engineering Indicators" report.

The bill also updates the NSF Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program, its fellowship programs, and the cyber grant programs to include outreach to veterans.

Additionally, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy is tasked with overseeing an interagency working group to examine how to increase veteran participation in the STEM career fields, including addressing any barriers for both servicemembers and their spouses.

In the next 5 years, between 1 million and 1.5 million members of the Armed Forces will separate from the military, according to the Department of Defense. Many of these veterans will be seeking new careers, and by a great margin, veterans cite finding employment as their number-one need when separating from Active-Duty service.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, occupations in STEM fields are projected to grow to more than 9 million jobs by 2022. Research shows that many military veterans already have skills and training that align with STEM careers, particularly in the area of information technology.

However, it also shows that veterans face many barriers as they reenter the workforce, including a lack of formal certified STEM education, career guidance, and the difficult task of transferring military credits to civilian college credits.

Our Nation's veterans deserve every opportunity to transition to a rewarding and successful civilian life. This bill will help all servicemembers continue to serve our Nation in new ways by fulfilling 21st century jobs and keeping America on the cutting edge of innovation.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman LAMB, a fellow member of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee and a Marine Corps veteran, for cosponsoring this bipartisan legislation. And I salute my fellow veterans on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee who joined me in introducing this bill.

Last year, the House passed this legislation by an overwhelming margin, but we did not make it across the finish line in the Senate. This year, we have a bipartisan companion bill in the Senate, introduced by my home State Senator MARCO RUBIO and Senator AMY KLOBUCHAR.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that now is the time to get this done to help our Nation's veterans. I urge my colleagues to pass this bill and the Senate to act on it and send H.R. 425 to the President's desk.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I have no more speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers. I note that I think the gentleman from Florida, Dr. DUNN, very eloquently summed it up just moments ago. Veterans deserve every opportunity to transition back and to utilize those skills.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank Dr. DUNN for introducing this bill again, and we will work hard to see this through to the end.

I thank Mr. LAMB for his comments. It is certainly something that I have experienced, which is employers needing to find more workers. The men and women who are coming out of our armed services have those skills that are needed. We just need to give them a little more help to get them connected. This bill does that.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 425, the Supporting Veterans in STEM Careers Act. I commend Mr. DUNN and Mr. LAMB for their leadership in bringing this important legislation to the floor. As Chair of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee I am committed to supporting a strong STEM workforce. In light of increasing global competition, we must do more to ensure workers are equipped with the STEM skills and knowledge employers need.

Veterans are a highly trained and highly motivated group. They have the skills, the determination, and the know-how to thrive in high-paying, secure STEM careers. H.R. 425 directs the National Science Foundation and the Office of Science and Technology Policy to leverage existing data and programs to better support veterans in their transition to the STEM workforce. We need all hands on deck if we are to maintain our standing as the global leader in innovation. H.R. 425 is a good step in that direction. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 425.

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.

RECOGNIZING ACHIEVEMENT IN CLASSIFIED SCHOOL EMPLOYEES ACT

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 276) to direct the Secretary of Education to establish the Recognizing Inspiring School Employees (RISE) Award Program recognizing excellence exhibited by classified school employees providing services to students in prekindergarten through high school.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 276

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 "Recognizing Achievement in Classified School Employees Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Classified school employees provide valuable service in the United States.

(2) Classified school employees provide essential services, such as transportation, facilities maintenance and operations, food service, safety, and health care.

(3) Classified school employees play a vital role in providing for the welfare and safety of students.

(4) Classified school employees strive for excellence in all areas of service to the education community.

(5) Exemplary classified school employees should be recognized for their outstanding contributions to quality education in the United States.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) CLASSIFIED SCHOOL EMPLOYEE.—The term "classified school employee" means an employee of a State or of any political subdivision of a State, or an employee of a non-profit entity, who works in any grade from prekindergarten through high school in any of the following occupational specialties:

(A) Paraprofessional, including paraeducator services.

(B) Clerical and administrative services.

(C) Transportation services.

(D) Food and nutrition services.

(E) Custodial and maintenance services.

(F) Security services.

(G) Health and student services.

(H) Technical services.

(I) Skilled trades.

(2) OTHER DEFINITIONS.—The terms used in this Act have the meanings given the terms in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

SEC. 4. RECOGNITION PROGRAM ESTABLISHED.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Education shall establish a national recognition program to be known as the "Recognizing Inspiring School Employees Award Program" or the "award program". The purpose of the award program shall be to recognize and promote the commitment and excellence exhibited by classified school employees who provide exemplary service to students in prekindergarten through high school.

(b) AWARD.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Prior to May 31 of each year (beginning with the second calendar year that begins after the date of the enactment of this Act), the Secretary shall select a classified school employee to receive the Recognizing Inspiring School Employees Award for the year.

(2) NON-MONETARY VALUE.—The award and recognition provided under this Act shall have no monetary value.

(c) SELECTION PROCESS.—

(1) NOMINATION PROCESS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than November 1 of each year (beginning with the first calendar year that begins after the date of the enactment of this Act), the Secretary shall solicit nominations of classified school employees from the occupational specialties described in section 3(1) from the Governor of each State.

(B) NOMINATION SUBMISSIONS.—In order for individuals in a State to be eligible to receive recognition under this section, the

Governor of the State shall consider nominations submitted by the following:

- (i) Local educational agencies.
- (ii) School administrators.
- (iii) Professional associations.
- (iv) Labor organizations.
- (v) Educational service agencies.
- (vi) Nonprofit entities.
- (vii) Parents and students.
- (viii) Any other group determined appropriate by the Secretary.

(2) DEMONSTRATION.—Each Governor of a State who desires individuals in the State to receive recognition under this section shall submit the nominations described in paragraph (1) to the Secretary in such manner as may be required by the Secretary. Each such nomination shall contain, at a minimum, demonstrations of excellence in the following areas:

- (A) Work performance.
- (B) School and community involvement.
- (C) Leadership and commitment.
- (D) Local support.
- (E) Enhancement of classified school employees' image in the community and schools.

(3) SELECTION.—The Secretary shall develop uniform national guidelines for evaluating nominations submitted under paragraph (2) in order to select the most deserving nominees based on the demonstrations made in the areas described in such paragraph.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Nevada (Mrs. LEE) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Nevada.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Nevada?

There was no objection.

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, despite being under the weather, I decided to come down here to thank my colleague and the dean of our delegation, Congresswoman DINA TITUS, for leading this bipartisan effort.

This legislation would establish the Classified School Employee of the Year RISE Award Program to recognize the achievements and contributions of classified school employees to student education in schools across the country.

Classified school employees are critical members of the education workforce, making up one out of every three public school employees who assist students in our Nation's public schools. Classified school employees provide essential services, such as transportation, facilities maintenance and operations, food service, safety, and healthcare.

It is past time that the U.S. Department of Education recognize the tireless efforts of our Nation's outstanding classified school employees. The stature of the Secretary of Education in recognizing the RISE Award will pro-

vide national leadership and partnership to encourage broad participation in the development, selection, and recognition process.

Classified school employees across the country do extraordinary and inspirational things in their schools and communities to promote quality education, foster positive learning environments, and ensure student success. The RISE Award will recognize the contributions of classified school employees to student success.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes," and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 276. I thank my colleagues across the aisle, the gentlewoman from Nevada, and also all those who are original cosponsors in support of this bill.

It is not uncommon for a school employee to make a lasting impression on a student or even on entire generations of students. Front office attendants, school custodians, school safety personnel, food service workers, and others all interface directly with countless students every day. Many of these school employees make lifelong impacts on the students who they serve.

Ask any student and they will probably tell you about a particular school employee who may not have been their teacher, but, nevertheless, imparted crucial life lessons upon them or inspired joy and confidence in students who struggled to find either. Schools are made better by these leaders, and students benefit from their kindness, thoughtfulness, compassion, and respect that they show to others around them.

Mr. Speaker, these employees truly go above and beyond the call of duty to serve American students, and their steadfast devotion deserves our appreciation and recognition.

H.R. 276, the Recognizing Achievement in Classified School Employees Act, will direct the Secretary of Education to establish the Recognizing Inspiring School Employees Award, otherwise known as the RISE Award. The RISE Award will be presented each year to a classified school employee in a nonteaching position in recognition of their invaluable contribution to the lives of students at the schools that they serve.

The award will be nonmonetary and will go to employees who demonstrate excellent work performance, school and community involvement, leadership, and commitment, and who exemplify the very best of what it means to be a classified school employee.

H.R. 276 is just one small way to honor the men and women in our communities who demonstrate to students what it means to be outstanding citizens and civic leaders. Their tireless efforts deserve our recognition and thanks. I urge my colleagues in the

House to support this commonsense legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS), the lead sponsor of H.R. 276.

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding and for her support of this bill that creates the RISE Award.

I would like to address the bill before you by telling you the story of Ms. Virginia Mills. Ms. Mills started her career as a security guard at William E. Orr Middle School in District One in Las Vegas over two decades ago.

Almost immediately upon getting to the school, she saw that children were going to school without backpacks on their shoulders to carry their books and equipment. She saw athletes trying out for the basketball team without having the proper shoes on their feet. She saw children who didn't have enough clothes to make it through the whole week without changing.

So in her very first month on the job, taking old items from her own daughter's closet, she started a clothes closet for middle school students in need. She first enlisted the help of friends, then teachers, and then community members. Eventually, the closet grew to include school supplies and even food for children to take home on the weekends, when they might otherwise go hungry.

Ms. Mills has watched these students grow over the years to become assemblymen and -women in the legislature, business leaders, and community organizers. She said: "Giving a helping hand to these students has inspired them to become better adults They now understand the importance of paying it forward."

Virginia Mills has improved the lives of so many middle school students in my district, and she has filled a gap that too many young people are in danger of falling into. And she wanted me to tell you that she didn't do it alone.

There are countless people in our schools, including security guards who do more than keep students safe; they keep them motivated. There are bus drivers who provide more than just a ride; they offer friendship. There are counselors and nurses and cafeteria workers who strive tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the success of our students in our schools. Yet, too often, their contributions go unrecognized.

That is why I introduced this bipartisan legislation to celebrate the critical role that school staff plays in helping our students learn and enabling our teachers to teach.

□ 1730

The contributions of these vital school employees can't really be measured, but they can and should be recognized.

It is in our children's interest and certainly in our national interest for the Department of Education to

present these RISE Awards to people like Virginia Mills who have made such a profound impact on our Nation's youth. So for those who work so hard to help our students become the best versions of themselves, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes."

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the story that was shared about the woman working in that school district. I think we all probably have those stories as we think fondly back on our school experiences, whether it was elementary or high school, about individuals who weren't necessarily teachers but were still very influential in making an impression and setting a great example to be followed in so many different ways. That is why I am so pleased to be able to support this piece of legislation.

I have had the privilege and honor to be in our schools that are recognized as the Blue Ribbon Schools and Schools to Watch, and those are wonderful. They are wonderful not just because of what has been accomplished for those kids, but they do become an inspiration to other schools to strive for and to achieve.

What this piece of legislation does, Mr. Speaker, is to take that down to the staff level, because we know that the most valuable resource and asset that we have in our schools are people—not necessarily the classroom or anything that is physical like that, but it is the teachers, the faculty, and the staff. Being able to recognize the staff who work so hard each and every day there who are not necessarily teachers is a great opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I certainly am very excited about supporting this piece of legislation, H.R. 276. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes," and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

In closing, I would like to thank Representative TITUS for her leadership in bringing forth this bipartisan piece of legislation.

When it comes to delivering the promise of a great public school for every child, it is a team effort. Classified employees keep the lights on, students fed, and learning environments safe and welcoming.

This past year, we have seen unprecedented activism from teachers and school staff demanding better support for public schools across the country. While the media often speaks first about the contributions and working conditions for classroom teachers, it is important to recognize that behind every teacher is an army of classified school employees.

Passing this bill to recognize the contributions of classified school employees is an important first step, but I urge this body to do more. We must come together and continue to work across the aisle to invest in public education. We must invest in the staff who

support our public schools and in students who count on public schools to reach their academic potential.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that swift passage of H.R. 276 is just the beginning, and I look forward to future action in this Chamber in support of public schools. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes," and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Nevada (Mrs. LEE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 276.

The question was taken.

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

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. 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.

MSPB TEMPORARY TERM EXTENSION ACT

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1235) to provide that the term of office of certain members of the Merit Systems Protection Board shall be extended by a period of 1 year, to limit such members from concurrently holding positions within the Federal Government, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1235

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 "MSPB Temporary Term Extension Act".

SEC. 2. MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD MEMBERS: TERM EXTENSION AND LIMITATION ON SERVICE.

The term of office of any member of the Merit Systems Protection Board appointed under section 1202 of title 5, United States Code, serving as such a member on the date of enactment of this Act shall be extended for a period of one year beyond the date the member's service would otherwise end under subsection (c) of such section.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. HICE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this measure.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank House leadership for bringing H.R. 1235, the MSPB Temporary Term Extension Act, so quickly to the floor at the request of the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

Chairman CUMMINGS and I introduced this bill to prevent a potential crisis at the Merit Systems Protection Board, a vacant Board without any members. Acting Chairman Mark Robbins is and has been the sole member on the Board since January 2017. His holdover term expires at the end of this month, the 28th of February, and it cannot be extended without legislation. We planned to address this issue through regular order, but circumstances arose that prevented us from doing so.

The subcommittee I am going to chair originally scheduled a hearing to examine the problem on February 14, but the hearing was postponed to the end of this month to allow all Members to attend the funerals of our colleagues John Dingell and Walter Jones.

We hoped that the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee would take action to address the problem during its business meeting on February 20. Although the Senate committee was able to approve two nominees for the Board, Chairman JOHNSON indicated he would withhold those nominations from the Senate floor pending the naming of a third nominee by the White House.

The Senate committee was also reportedly working on language to extend Mr. Robbins' holdover term for another year, but no legislation was considered at the markup, thus our action today.

Given these events, it appears less and less likely that the Senate will be able to confirm new Board members before time runs out this Thursday. That is why the Committee on Oversight and Reform, Chairman CUMMINGS and I, introduced this stopgap measure, H.R. 1235, to ensure some work by the MSPB will continue. The legislation will provide a one-time, 1-year extension for Mr. Robbins' term to give the Senate more time to confirm the additional Board members.

This version of the bill before us eliminates the provision prohibiting dual appointments because Mr. Robbins assured us he would continue to recuse himself from working on matters related to OPM and that he would recuse himself from OPM matters that related to votes he had taken at MSPB if this bill is enacted.

This amendment is in response to many of the concerns raised by our Republican friends.

We urgently need to pass this bill because we need to ensure that MSPB can continue its operations. If Mr. Robbins' term expires without new members confirmed, it will be the first time in the agency's history that the Board has no members at all. We will be entering uncharted new territory, and not good territory.

If there is no principal officer to lead the agency, not only is it unclear