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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BEYER).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 18, 2019.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DONALD S. BEYER, Jr. to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Mariel Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2019, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

AMERICANS SUPPORT THE GI BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, 12 days ago, the eyes of the world were focused on the beaches of Normandy,

France, to observe the 75th anniversary of the D-day invasion. It was a solemn moment to rightly honor the sacrifice and courage of the combined Armed Forces of the Allied Powers, who, from that moment, launched the final, decisive assault that eventually destroyed the Axis Powers' murderous stranglehold on Europe and Asia.

Mr. Speaker, another 75th anniversary surrounding the epic effort to save democracy will occur in 4 days, this Saturday, June 22. On that day 75 years ago, President Franklin Roosevelt signed into law the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, more commonly known as the GI Bill. That landmark measure would provide both college tuition and a stipend for returning servicemembers who, as FDR said at the time, "have been compelled to make greater economic sacrifice and every other kind of sacrifice than the rest of us."

Even though the war would rage on for another year, leaders in Washington wisely recognized that millions of young soldiers, sailors, and airmen would soon be returning back into civilian life; and for their sake and for the sake of a healthy postwar economy, creating this educational pathway made tremendous sense.

In the 75 years since the GI Bill was signed into law, it is now recognized as one of the most successful pieces of domestic legislation ever enacted. The postwar economic boom and the blossoming of the American middle class have both been attributed, in part, to the GI Bill.

Many renown Americans, including Bob Dole, Johnny Carson, Harry Belafonte, William Rehnquist, and Clint Eastwood, were beneficiaries of the GI Bill.

Economic studies have shown that, for every dollar the government spent on the GI Bill, our economy saw nearly \$7 in return of additional economic output in tax revenues from income growth.

Despite its stellar performance, the relative strength of the GI Bill deteriorated in the late 20th century. By 2008, it was clear that tuition assistance and living stipends had not kept pace with the rising cost of a college education.

As a freshman Congressman in the House Armed Services Committee at the time, I heard from returning Iraq and Afghan vets who were forced to choose between dropping out of school or shouldering the burden of daunting student loans. To fix this decline, we passed the Post-9/11 GI Bill, which was signed into law by George Bush on June 30, 2008.

The updated law boosted tuition to match the cost of a 4-year public university in servicemembers' home States and increased the living stipend to keep faith with the original law. It also allowed GI benefits to be transferred to a spouse or dependent child, a groundbreaking change which transformed the value of military service for families.

After the bill signing, I flew to Iraq in late 2008 for a committee visit and vividly recall being surrounded by soldiers bursting with questions about when and how the new law would be implemented. Since then, it has become clear that the transferability of the GI Bill has been an enormous morale booster and a valuable incentive to enlist and remain in service.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the Trump Department of Defense announced a new policy last July which would arbitrarily cut off servicemembers with more than 16 years of service from transferring their Post-9/11 GI benefits to eligible family members. We were told at the time that the Department viewed this as a shrewd cost-cutting measure.

However, revoking transferability breaks our commitment to our most dedicated and seasoned servicemembers and their families. In addition, in a tight, lean labor market, it remains

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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