

has inspired my legislation, and she has been the driving force behind this bill.

Flammable or combustible liquids cause over 160,000 fires per year, \$1.5 billion in property damage, and some 4,000 injuries and over 450 deaths every year. These accidents can happen in any community, and the results can be devastating. These accidents are caused when fuel vapors flash back and ignite the container contents, leading to flame to flame jetting or explosions. These accidents are easily preventable.

Flame mitigation devices can prevent accidents caused by flammable vapors igniting within liquid containers. While workplace safety regulations govern the use of approved flame mitigation devices in flammable liquid containers for industrial use, there is no requirement for consumer containers used in homes, campsites, or schools across our country.

This bipartisan solution is supported by a broad coalition, including the American Burn Association, the Congressional Fire Services Institute, the International Association of Fire Fighters, International Association of Fire Chiefs, National Volunteer Fire Council, National Fire Protection Association, the Consumer Federation of America, the Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors, the Portable Fuel Container Manufacturers Association, and the National Association of State Fire Marshals.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the National Association of State Fire Marshals' letter of support.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
STATE FIRE MARSHALS,
Maitland, FL, September 16, 2019.

Hon. MIKE THOMPSON,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN THOMPSON: The National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM) membership comprises the most senior state fire officials in the United States, with a primary mission of protecting human life, property and the environment from fire and related public safety issues. Therefore, NASFM strongly endorses H.R. 806, Portable Fuel Container Safety Act of 2019.

Flammable or combustible liquids cause over 160,000 fires per year, causing \$1.5 billion in property damage, almost 4,000 injuries and 454 deaths annually. These accidents can happen in any community, and the results can be devastating.

Flame Mitigation Devices (FMD), such as flame arresters, can help prevent accidents caused by flammable vapors igniting within the liquid container, causing an explosion or flash fire. While workplace safety regulations govern the use of approved flame arresters in flammable liquid containers for industrial use, there is no requirement for consumer containers used in homes, camp sites, and schools across the country.

H.R. 806, Portable Fuel Container Safety Act of 2019 would address this gap by directing the Consumer Product Safety Commission to establish a standard for requiring FMDs to be used in these containers and reduce the risk of catastrophic accidents.

Thank you again for your leadership, NASFM looks forward to working with you

to enact into law this important fire safety prevention legislation.

Sincerely,

JIM NARVA,
Executive Director,

National Association of State Fire Marshals.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I urge every Member of this body to keep our constituents and their children safe by passing this bipartisan, commonsense consumer safety bill.

I thank the cosponsor, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, and, again, Chairwoman SCHAKOWSKY, for helping move this bill through her subcommittee.

Mr. Speaker, I urge everyone to vote in favor of this bill.

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 806, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, once again, I thank the sponsors of this bill and Congressman LONG for his participation. It means so much to me. I thank him for his help and his friendship.

I want to say that the story of Margrett and her daughter—her daughter has had countless surgeries as a consequence. She is one of the people who survived, but her life has been transformed forever, and we can prevent this with this legislation.

I want to give a special shout-out to the committee staff and the subcommittee staff on the Democratic side, as well as on the Republican side. I want to thank sincerely my staff in my office for all of their help on this bill. This is another one of those that will definitely be improving and saving the lives of so many Americans and ridding our country of this danger.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 806, the Portable Fuel Container Safety Act of 2019.

I want to thank Congressman MIKE THOMPSON for introducing H.R. 806 which will help to save the lives of countless children.

H.R. 806 directs the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to require fuel containers to include devices that impede flames from entering the container.

This requirement applies to flammable, liquid fuel containers of fewer than five gallons that are intended for transport.

The bill also requires child resistant caps on kerosene and diesel fuel containers.

CPSC may either promulgate a rule or adopt an existing standard.

Additionally, CPSC must educate consumers about dangers associated with using or storing such containers near an open flame or a source of ignition.

On September 21, 2013, a 10-year-old boy, Christopher Allsup, died when an old red plastic gas container exploded showering him with burning gasoline.

Over 90 percent of his body was burnt.

He was flown to the University of Iowa Burn Center where he lived for only 5 hours.

In 2010, Robert Jacoby had poured gasoline from a gas can onto a brush pile he planned to ignite, he then walked the can 20 feet from the pile when it exploded.

He said he had not yet lit a match or any other fire but claimed a spark from static electricity created by the friction between the plastic can and his denim jeans was the source of ignition.

Jacoby suffered severe burns over 75 percent of his body and spent four months in a burn unit, incurring \$1.5 million in medical bills.

In August in preparation for Hurricane Dorian a resident of Fort Myers, Florida had filled several gasoline canisters and stored them next to a natural gas-powered water heater.

A hot shower triggered the water heater causing it to work harder with the vapors of the gasoline ultimately starting a fire in the garage.

Luckily, water coming from the pipe sprayed everywhere, containing the fire to the garage.

Gasoline from gas cans is responsible for deaths and injuries both from ignition and the volatile vapors as well as from direct aspiration into the lung or aspiration following vomiting of ingested gasoline.

For children, the most serious types of injuries associated with exposure to gasoline are burns following ignition of the volatile vapors, chemical pneumonia, pulmonary damage, and possible death associated with direct aspiration into the lungs or aspiration during vomiting following ingestion.

The filling of portable fuel containers or "gas cans" in pickup trucks and cars can result in serious fires as a result from the buildup of static electricity from the bed liner or carpet.

Under certain limited conditions—including a very low volume of gasoline left inside—a flashback explosion can occur inside a plastic gas can, when gas vapor escaping the can contacts a source of ignition such as a flame or spark.

Since 1998 the CPSC has tallied at least 1,200 emergency room visits and 11 deaths due to gas can explosions.

That is why I urge all Members to join me in voting for H.R. 806.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 806, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EXPIRING AUTHORITIES ACT OF 2019

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4285) to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend and modify certain authorities and requirements relating to the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4285

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 "Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2019".

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY RELATING TO VENDEE LOANS.

Section 3733(a)(7) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking “September 30, 2019” and inserting “September 30, 2020”; and

(2) in subparagraph (C), by striking “September 30, 2019,” and inserting “September 30, 2020.”

SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR OPERATION OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS REGIONAL OFFICE IN MANILA, THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES.

Section 315(b) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “September 30, 2019” and inserting “September 30, 2020”.

SEC. 4. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR VERY LOW-INCOME VETERAN FAMILIES IN PERMANENT HOUSING.

Section 2044(e)(1)(G) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “fiscal year 2019” and inserting “each of fiscal years 2019 through 2021”.

SEC. 5. EXTENSION OF TEMPORARY EXPANSION OF PAYMENTS AND ALLOWANCES FOR BENEFICIARY TRAVEL IN CONNECTION WITH VETERANS RECEIVING CARE FROM VET CENTERS.

Section 104(a) of the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-154; 126 Stat. 1169), as most recently amended by section 109 of the Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-251; 132 Stat. 3169), is amended by striking “September 30, 2019” and inserting “September 30, 2020”.

SEC. 6. TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.

Title 38, United States Code, is amended as follows:

(1) In section 714(e)(2)(B), by striking “to the refer” and inserting “to refer”.

(2) In section 1725A(c), by inserting a comma after “a contract”.

(3) In section 3313(g)(3)(B)(ii), by inserting a comma after “for books”.

(4) In section 3321(a)(1), by striking “January,” and inserting “January”.

(5) In section 3683—

(A) by striking “(b) (b)” and inserting “(b)”;

(B) by striking “(c) (c)” and inserting “(c)”;

(C) by striking “(d) (d)” and inserting “(d)”.

(6) In section 3699(b), by striking “this paragraph” and inserting “this subsection”.

(7) In section 7462(b)(4)(A), by inserting “notice” after “written”.

(8) In section 7696(c)(1), by striking “).” and inserting a period.

(9) In section 8104(a), by striking paragraph (3) and inserting the following new paragraph (3):

“(3) For purposes of this subsection:

“(A) The term ‘major medical facility project’ means a project for the construction, alteration, or acquisition of a medical facility involving a total expenditure of more than \$20,000,000, but such term does not include an acquisition by exchange, non-recurring maintenance projects of the Department, or the construction, alteration, or acquisition of a shared Federal medical facility for which the Department’s estimated share of the project costs does not exceed \$20,000,000.

“(B) The term ‘major medical facility lease’ means a lease for space for use as a new medical facility at an average annual rent of more than \$1,000,000.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gen-

tleman from Tennessee (Mr. DAVID P. ROE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H.R. 4285.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 4285, and I thank Mr. BRINDISI for sponsoring this important bill which authorizes the continued operations of programs and offices vital to addressing the needs of the veterans we serve.

Mr. Speaker, this bill authorizes the continued operation of the Manila, Philippines, regional benefits office, the only VA regional benefits office, or VARO, operating in a foreign country, and I plan to visit that facility this year.

In addition to administering disability and survivor benefits to over 16,000 veterans, their dependents, and survivors, the Manila RO administers healthcare benefits, as well.

I urge support for continued operation of this key VA regional office serving veterans and their families in the Philippines.

This bill also extends the VA Vendee Loan Program, which allows VA to sell foreclosed properties to the general public, instead of continuing to own foreclosed properties it cannot use. Our committee is working hard to ensure we can increase economic opportunities for veterans and their families so that no bank will have to foreclose on a veteran's home and place that veteran and his or her family at risk of homelessness.

That is why this bill also includes a bipartisan agreement to extend the Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program for 2 years. This critical program assists homeless veterans and their families, and those most at risk of becoming homeless. In southern California, veterans experience some of the highest rates of homelessness in the country.

In the Inland Empire rents continue to rise. Geographic barriers make it challenging for veterans to access services that prevent homelessness. And the recent \$9 billion cut to HUD housing assistance programs is making the homelessness crisis worse generally. That is why extending the operation of this vital program is so important.

In recent weeks, our Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, led by Chairman MIKE LEVIN and Ranking Member GUS BILIRAKIS, held two bipartisan field hearings that are helping this committee to identify solutions to address veteran homelessness.

We have much work to do in understanding the definition of homeless-

ness, getting true population counts, preventing homelessness, and working to respond to homelessness after disasters.

During the field hearing in San Diego, we heard prevention was about one-tenth of the cost of crisis intervention.

The SSVF program, which awards grants to nonprofit organizations, provides supportive services to very low-income veterans and their families to assist homeless veterans in moving into permanent housing and veterans in housing who are at risk of becoming homeless. These grants help organizations provide case management, outreach, and help veterans obtain VA healthcare and disability benefits.

These grant recipients also help with child care assistance, transportation, housing counseling services, legal services, and financial planning for veterans and their families.

I urge each of my colleagues to support this vital program so that no veteran is forced to live on the street.

Mr. Speaker, September is National Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month. Tragically, 20 veterans take their lives each day. Despite Congress' and VA's efforts to address veteran suicide, the rate remains unchanged. This year, we have also seen multiple veteran suicides on VA campuses. For these reasons, I have made addressing veteran suicide the top policy priority of this committee.

Earlier this month, I called on VA to conduct a 15-day nationwide stand-down in response to a VA inspector general investigation into a veteran suicide at the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center. The IG report exposed weaknesses in procedures, staff training, and installation of monitoring equipment in the inpatient mental health clinic.

Three-quarters of veterans who commit suicide are not receiving treatment at VA hospitals and clinics. As Congress and VA chart a strategy to reach these veterans not receiving VA care, veterans and the public must be assured that VA's own mental health clinics are adequately and appropriately staffed. Each unit must have up-to-date monitoring equipment. All VA staff must undergo appropriate training. And each mental health unit must be routinely inspected.

While I am disappointed the VA secretary has resisted my call for a nationwide stand-down, I appreciate that VA is taking actions that meet the spirit of my request. VA must make every effort to provide the highest quality treatment for the veterans and their care, especially veterans in crisis who come to VA for help.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4285 extends a program that provides transportation for veterans living in highly rural areas to vet centers for counseling and other mental health and social services.

For veterans in need of mental healthcare who may be uncomfortable entering medical facilities, vet centers

serve as a community and counseling center. For some veterans, these vet centers are a lifeline.

Yesterday, Congressman ROSE and I visited the vet center in Staten Island, New York. We both learned about the support, counseling, connection to other VA services, and the sense of community the Staten Island vet center creates with the veterans who visit there.

□ 1645

We also learned that transportation, including a \$15 toll, can make it difficult for veterans in New York City to access vet centers and VA facilities. Our committee is going to look into a solution to address this.

Likewise, veterans in highly rural areas tell us distance and transportation are also obstacles to participating in counseling and mental health treatment at vet centers. Therefore, Congress has been authorizing a pilot program since 2012 that pays travel expenses for veterans attending counseling at vet centers in Bangor, Maine; Kalispell, Montana; Santa Fe, New Mexico; and Spokane, Washington.

Mr. Speaker, suicide is preventable. Veterans who are thinking about suicide are not alone. If my colleagues have veterans in their district who are thinking about suicide, please urge them to call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 and press 1. They can also text 741741.

Mr. Speaker, let me repeat this very important number again. The Veterans Crisis Line is 1-800-273-8255, and veterans are asked to press 1. Veterans can also text 741741.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank Mr. BRINDISI, a member of our Economic Opportunity and Health Subcommittees, for bringing this bill to the floor.

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

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4285, the Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2019.

This legislation represents a bipartisan, bicameral agreement that would extend the expiring authorities impacting the lives of veterans. Swift passage of this legislation today would ensure that these programs continue. This bill would extend four authorities.

First, the bill would extend through September 30, 2020, the VA's authority to provide direct loans to buyers of VA-owned residences that the VA has pooled together.

It would also extend to September 30, 2020, the VA's authority to operate a regional office in Manila that provides services to World War II veterans who reside in the Philippines.

Third, it would extend through 2021 the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program, the SSVF program, which provides grants to organizations

that provide supportive services to eligible homeless or at-risk veteran families to promote housing stability.

Finally, the bill would extend through September 2020 the VA's authority to pay travel allowances to and from vet centers for veterans who live in highly rural areas.

To be clear, these are not new authorities. They are in present law, and costs associated with them have been assumed in the House-passed appropriations bill for fiscal year 2020 and the 2021 advanced appropriations.

In addition to extending these authorities, the bill would also make technical changes to legislation that Congress has previously passed.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4285 so that the Senate can take it up quickly and send it to the President's desk.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. LEVIN), the chairman of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee.

Mr. LEVIN of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this legislation, which will, among other things, help us address the epidemic of veteran homelessness. It is simply unacceptable that many of the men and women who have served this great country are now living on our streets.

I am grateful to my friend, Ranking Member GUS BILIRAKIS from Florida. We have now had two field hearings in his district, the 12th Congressional District of Florida, and my district, the 49th Congressional District of California. We are absolutely committed to doing everything we can to address this issue in our communities and in all communities around the country.

We owe it to those who have served and their families to ensure that they have everything they need to get back on their feet, including case management; assistance in obtaining VA benefits; and temporary financial assistance with rent, utilities, or childcare expenses.

I was proud to introduce bipartisan legislation to help address homelessness, specifically among women veterans, by reauthorizing funding for the Supportive Services for Veteran Families grant program and requiring that at least \$20 million goes to organizations that have a focus on helping women veterans and their families.

What we are seeing in our subcommittee is that the rate of veterans' homelessness is roughly steady, but alarmingly, women veterans' homelessness is increasing. We have to do something about it.

The legislation before us today will provide the reauthorization that we need before the end of the fiscal year on September 30.

I have said it before, and I will say it again: Even one homeless veteran is one too many. We have a moral obligation to make robust Federal investments in programs to help get veterans off the streets.

By passing this legislation, we can make those investments, and we can do more than just pay lip service to our veterans. We can give them the support and resources they have earned and deserve.

I give credit to my friends, Chairman TAKANO and Ranking Member ROE. They are doing a fantastic job helping our veterans and trying to give back in any way we can to those who have served our country, those who have given so much. It is my great honor to serve with them on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST), an original cosponsor of this legislation.

I have had the privilege of serving with Congressman BOST since he has been on the committee. He is a Marine Corps veteran, 1979 to 1982. He served in the last Congress as chairman of the DAMA, Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee, and he is also on the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for yielding.

As a marine, it is one of my greatest honors to serve on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. It is vitally important that our government fulfill its promises to our Nation's military members that they will be taken care of once they return.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is tasked with ensuring that they receive the care they need and have earned. This bill ensures that the VA can continue to support some of our Nation's most vulnerable veterans. It extends funding for programs that help very low-income veterans and those who must travel long distances to vet centers in order to receive their care.

That is why I am proud to cosponsor and introduce this legislation with my friend, Congressman BRINDISI, and I urge my colleagues to support it as well.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. BRINDISI), who serves on our Economic Opportunity and Health Subcommittees and who also is the author of H.R. 4285.

Mr. BRINDISI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4285, the Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2019, which I introduced to ensure that veterans and their families continue to have access to the programs and benefits that they rely on.

This critical bill authorizes the continuation of several important VA programs that will expire at the end of this fiscal year if Congress does not act.

First, this bill provides a 1-year extension of VA's authority relating to vendee loans. Vendee loans are loans offered by the VA to purchase VA real estate-owned properties. Offered to veterans and nonveterans alike, this loan

program allows people to purchase properties that were previously foreclosed upon and are now government-owned, with little to no downpayment.

This bill also provides a 2-year extension of financial assistance for supportive services for very low-income veteran families in permanent housing. Grantees under this program are required to provide supportive services to eligible veterans and their families, including outreach, case management, and assistance in obtaining VA benefits.

This program was previously authorized for fiscal year 2019, but this extension would extend authorization to include fiscal years 2020 and 2021. This extension of the program helps give the VA and the grantees better certainty of the program's future so they can continue providing critical wraparound services that help low-income veterans get back on their feet.

The bill also provides a 1-year extension of VA's payments and allowances for beneficiary travel in connection with veterans receiving care from vet centers. While veterans can claim beneficiary travel from VA medical facilities, we know that care at the vet centers can be just as important.

This program is important because it specifically helps populations of rural veterans. Highly rural veterans have frequently described transportation as being a limiting factor in receiving care, and I am proud that this bill would extend this critical program.

I thank Chairman TAKANO and Ranking Member ROE for their work on extending these critical programs and their true commitment to our Nation's veterans. I also thank my colleague Congressman BOST from Illinois, my friend on the VA Committee, for leading this legislation with me.

It is an honor to serve on the VA Committee, the most bipartisan committee in Congress, and work with my colleagues to support our Nation's veterans.

I encourage my colleagues to support this critical legislation and support our Nation's veterans.

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, just to reemphasize what was said about homeless veterans, I have been on the committee for almost 11 years, my entire time in Congress. When I first arrived here, we had over 100,000 homeless veterans on the streets of this country, which was unbelievable.

Then-Secretary General Shinseki made one of his priorities to try to reduce homelessness to zero by 2016. He did not succeed in that, but we have reduced the homeless veterans population now down to under 40,000, which is a 60 percent reduction, a huge reduction.

I could not agree more with my colleague from California. One veteran homeless is too many.

I know there are pockets in this country. I know that, in California,

they have a really serious problem there, and I think they are working very hard on trying to solve this. This legislation will be one piece of the puzzle.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and Veterans' Affairs Committee Ranking Member PHIL ROE for mentioning the tremendous strides the VA and this Nation have made toward reducing veteran homelessness.

It is true that Secretary Shinseki's goal of ending veteran homelessness did not occur by the designated year, 2016. But even in the State of California, where we are still experiencing several pockets of veteran homelessness, in Riverside County, the county I represent in Congress, this county has achieved functional zero. This does not mean that there are zero homeless veterans, but what it does mean is that when homeless veterans are identified, their homelessness is brief and non-recurring. That is the definition of functional zero.

I want to commend, again, the officials at the Riverside County VA and the Loma Linda VA for the incredible work they have done to achieve functional zero. I hope that they will be able to share their insights with other counties in my State and across the Nation that are looking to do the same.

What I do know is that functional zero will not remain functional zero without concerted and intentional effort to be vigilant. We need to be vigilant in areas where we have reduced homelessness to functional zero, and we also need to ensure that we continue to address the challenges in Los Angeles, Orange County, and San Diego County where homelessness among our veterans persists.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud and pleased to support this package of extensions of programs—among them, programs that will address veteran homelessness.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in passing this very important legislation, H.R. 4285, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the House Committees on the Judiciary, Homeland Security, and Budget, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4285, the Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2019, which among other things, reauthorizes the VA Vendee Loan Program.

The VA Vendee Loan program allows veterans, non-veterans, owner-occupants, and investors the opportunity to purchase VA real estate owned properties.

Veterans have the opportunity to purchase these properties with little to no money down, competitive interest rates, 15 or 30 year loan term options, and no appraisal requirement or pre-payment penalties.

H.R. 4285 would provide a one-year extension to this critical program that gives veterans a viable alternative to traditional financing.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is making a positive impact on the lives of thousands of veterans and beneficiaries.

For example, in the Philippines, the Manila Regional office is the only Veterans Affairs office outside the United States or its territories.

This legislation will create a one-year extension of VA's authority to operate a Regional Office in the Philippines, providing benefits claims, local payment of benefit checks, and other social services to thousands of U.S. veterans living overseas in the Philippines.

In addition, H.R. 4285 will provide a two year extension of authority to fund financial assistance for supportive services to very low income veteran families in permanent housing, and a one-year extension of VA's authority to temporarily expand payments and allowances for beneficiary travel in connection with veterans receiving care from vet centers.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 4285, the Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2019, to continue providing the Department of Veterans Affairs the resources to continue providing services to our nation's veterans.

□ 1700

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4285.

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. TAKANO. 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.

HELEN KELLER NATIONAL CENTER REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2019

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2134) to reauthorize the Helen Keller National Center for Youths and Adults Who Are Deaf-Blind, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2134

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 "Helen Keller National Center Reauthorization Act of 2019".

SEC. 2. HELEN KELLER NATIONAL CENTER REAUTHORIZED.

The first sentence of section 205(a) of the Helen Keller National Center Act (29 U.S.C. 1904(a)) is amended by striking "1999 through 2003" and inserting "2019 through 2023".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. JAYAPAL) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Washington.