

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.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2134.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am excited that the House of Representatives is considering this bill, the Helen Keller National Center Reauthorization Act, a bipartisan bill, and I urge my colleagues to support it. This bill will reauthorize funding for the center through 2023.

Congress established the Helen Keller National Center in 1967 to provide nationwide services for people who are deaf-blind. Headquartered in New York with regional offices across the country, the center is the only organization of its kind that provides training and resources exclusively to people 16 and over who have both vision and hearing loss.

Unfortunately, deaf-blind people face unique and diverse challenges. Many youth who are deaf-blind have not been provided with the type or quality of education that generally yields successful outcomes in employment, independent living, and community involvement. In fact, deaf-blind youth have some of the lowest levels of access to special education services.

I am so proud of some of the work that we are doing in my home State of Washington to advance justice for deaf-blind people. Washington State Deaf-Blind Citizens is doing incredible work to organize community events, to provide support for everyday tasks like reading the mail and doing errands, and to advocate with lawmakers on the unique needs of the deaf-blind community.

We also have the Deaf-Blind Service Center of Seattle, which focuses on breaking down communication barriers by providing interpretation and advocacy services for free to deaf-blind individuals.

I think we can all agree that every deaf-blind person deserves equal access to services that promote their successes, independence, and full participation in their communities. That is exactly what the Helen Keller National Center provides to this underserved population. Thanks to the center, deaf-blind people in every congressional district can connect with support systems to grow productively and find meaning in their lives.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to enthusiastically support this bill to extend congressional authorization for the Helen Keller National Center. I urge my colleagues to support it as well, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H.R. 2134, the legislation to reauthorize

the Helen Keller National Center Act. Originally enacted in 1967, the law established the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults.

Today's legislation allows the important center—the only organization of its kind—to continue to support individuals with combined vision and hearing loss, as well as their families and service providers.

Helen Keller's story is well-known to us all. It is an example of determination and hard work. Not only did she overcome her difficulties, she also worked tirelessly to benefit the lives of others. In doing so, she showed the world there are no boundaries.

I would like to read a couple of quotes of Helen Keller: "Remember, no effort that we make to attain something beautiful is ever lost."

"Sometime, somewhere, somehow we shall find that which we seek."

In an article from 1933, entitled, "The Simplest Way to Be Happy," she wrote: "A happy life consists not in the absence, but in the mastery of hardships."

These quotes embody her perseverance. The Helen Keller National Center carries on this message by working to give the deaf-blind community the tools they need to work and thrive in communities of their choice.

The center offers hope and dignity to those it serves through on-campus assistive technology education; vocational, orientation and mobility, and communication services; and independent living support through its headquarters in Sands Point, New York. Individuals from across the country travel to their headquarters for these incredible resources.

The National Center also provides similar services to local communities in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories. The goal of these programs and services is to advance the personal development and independence of individuals who are deaf-blind.

Federal support allows the center to continue its invaluable research and development programs in several areas, including communication techniques and teaching methods. All of this leads to improved program offerings and, ultimately, better lives for deaf-blind Americans and their families.

H.R. 2134 will reauthorize the Helen Keller Center through the year 2023, which demonstrates this body's continued commitment to providing deaf-blind youths and adults with opportunities to lead successful, independent lives. By passing this legislation, Congress recognizes the unique needs of individuals who are deaf-blind as well as the unique care and developmental programs they need.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill. Doing so allows us to carry on Helen Keller's incredible story of independence and success that has given hope to generations of those who are deaf-blind.

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

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. POCAN), who is the sponsor of this bill, H.R. 2134, a member of the Appropriations Committee, and my co-chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. He is a real champion for communities across the country.

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend, Ms. JAYAPAL, for yielding me some time. I want to thank my friend from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) for his supportive words. I appreciate that.

I am happy that we here today to pass H.R. 2134, the Helen Keller National Center Reauthorization Act of 2019, which I am glad to author and introduce with my colleagues, Representatives TOM SUOZZI and TOM COLE. Without their support, as well as the support of Representatives ROSA DELAURO, PETE KING, and Chairman BOBBY SCOTT, this legislation would not be on the floor today.

The Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults was first authorized by Congress in 1967 to assist the deaf-blind community in America. To this day, it is the only comprehensive national program that provides information, referrals, support, and training exclusively to Americans who have combined vision and hearing loss, while also supporting families and professionals who work with the deaf-blind community.

Unfortunately, the center's authorization has lapsed, but through our actions today, we will be able to reauthorize it through 2023 and continue to advocate on its behalf during the annual appropriations process.

In my home State of Wisconsin, the Helen Keller National Center has partnered with the Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation through a formal agreement to provide job preparation and job placement services, independent living, and communication skills, training, and self-advocacy training.

Additionally, it co-led the Midwest Deaf-Blind Transition Institute this past July, where deaf-blind youths from across Wisconsin and their family members explored post-high school options and met with peer mentors.

The center has also recently provided training to 55 professionals in Wisconsin on haptics, a system of providing tactual signs to deaf-blind persons to relay information, which can increase independence and engagement in daily life.

Clearly, the work the Helen Keller National Center performs is vital and life-changing. That is why I am proud to stand here on the floor of the House of Representatives in support of the center and its work. The Helen Keller National Center is worthy of all of our support.

I thank Sue Ruzenski at the Helen Keller National Center for bringing its work and the needs of the deaf-blind community to my attention.

I thank Jacque Mosely of the House Education and Labor Committee, who has been invaluable.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to stand in support of the American deaf-blind community and vote in favor of this bipartisan legislation before us.

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

H.R. 2134 is legislation to reauthorize the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults. The center offers groundbreaking educational programs across the country that help deaf-blind individuals triumph over adversity, just as Helen Keller did more than 50 years ago. By passing today's legislation, we ensure this center can continue its critical work providing our Nation's deaf-blind with the resources needed to lead successful and independent lives.

Mr. Speaker, I join my colleague, Congressman POCAN, whom I thank for authoring this bill. I once again urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 2134, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. SUOZZI), who is my good friend.

Mr. SUOZZI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman JAYAPAL for yielding me time.

Today I rise in support of H.R. 2134, the Helen Keller National Center Reauthorization Act of 2019.

The Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults is located in my district in Sands Point, Long Island. It is a national organization and, really, the only one of its type.

I want to thank my colleagues, Representative POCAN, who is the author of this bill, and Congressman PETER KING, Congressman BOBBY SCOTT, Congresswoman DELAURO, Congressman COLE, and Congresswoman LOWEY, for championing the authorization of the Helen Keller National Center.

Think about it: This was formed in 1967, and it is a unique facility in that it serves a population that is both deaf and blind, combined. Imagine how important this organization is in the lives of these folks who are confronting being deaf and blind at the same time.

It is estimated that there are 2.4 million deaf and blind youths and adults in America, and that number is going up dramatically as the population ages.

Mr. Speaker, this organization services adults who are over 16 years of age. They travel from all over the country to come to this facility, as well as having regional centers, which have been mentioned already, that provide what you would characterize as outpatient services.

In my second week in office, in 2017, I visited the Helen Keller National Center in my district. I met with deaf and blind individuals in the program. I learned about their experiences and how Helen Keller services made a dif-

ference in their lives and the lives of their families. Many described how they had gained skills in order to live independently and to be successfully employed in a career of their choice.

We must all recognize the critical importance of this group, and the reauthorization of the Helen Keller Act is one significant way that Congress can collectively convey to the deaf-blind community that we are all committed to ensuring quality services are available to promote their empowerment and their success, not only the work they have done in the past, but that they will do in the future as well.

I want people to know that, since coming to Congress in 2017, after years of no increases in their funding, my colleagues and I have helped increase funding at the Helen Keller National Center from \$10.3 million a year to \$13.5 million for the Helen Keller National Center. It is really a modest investment, but with this funding, they have been able to provide a wider array of critical services to deaf-blind individuals by building a network all across the Nation among professionals and service providers with 11 regional offices located across the country. This year's appropriations bill package passed by the House included \$16 million and is awaiting action in the Senate.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all of my colleagues who have done so much for such an important organization.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, in closing, this is commonsense, bipartisan legislation to help deaf-blind students across the country. I am so proud that the House is considering this legislation today. I urge a "yes" vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2134 the "Helen Keller National Center Reauthorization Act of 2019."

Helen Keller was an American author, political activist, and lecturer who was the first deaf-blind person to earn a Bachelors Degree in the United States.

She was born in Tuscumbia, Alabama on June 27, 1880 and she spent her life campaigning for women's suffrage, labor rights and antimilitarism.

The Helen Keller National Center Act established a Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults to provide specialized intensive services for deaf-blind persons, to train personnel to provide such services, and to conduct applied research, development, and demonstrations relating to communication techniques, teaching methods, aids, devices and delivery of services.

This bill requires an annual audit of the Center and it directs the Secretary of Education to ensure that Center service and training programs are monitored regularly, and Center operation is evaluated annually, with written reports to the President and Congress submitted by specified deadlines.

There are approximately thirty-six million adult Americans that suffer some type of hearing loss and approximately ten million Americans that are blind or visually impaired.

This legislation will help ensure that these Americans get the help they need to fulfill their dreams.

That is why I urge all Members to join me in voting for H.R. 2134.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. JAYAPAL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2134, 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.

□ 1715

FOSTERING UNDERGRADUATE TALENT BY UNLOCKING RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION ACT

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2486) to reauthorize mandatory funding programs for historically Black colleges and universities and other minority-serving institutions, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2486

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 "Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education Act" or the "FUTURE Act".

SEC. 2. STRENGTHENING HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES AND OTHER MINORITY-SERVING INSTITUTIONS.

Section 371(b)(1)(A) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1067q(b)(1)(A)) is amended—

(1) in the first sentence, by striking "through 2019" and inserting "through 2021"; and

(2) in the second sentence, by striking "2019" and inserting "2021".

SEC. 3. ELIMINATION OF ACCOUNT MAINTENANCE FEES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 458 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087h) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking paragraphs (1), (4), and (5); and

(B) by redesignating paragraphs (3), (6), (7), and (8) as paragraphs (1), (2), (3), and (4), respectively;

(2) by striking subsection (b); and

(3) by redesignating subsection (c) as subsection (b).

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 422B(c) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1072b(c)) is amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (3); and

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (4) through (6) as paragraphs (3) through (5), respectively.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on October 1, 2019.

SEC. 4. TRANSFER OF FEDERAL PELL GRANT FUNDS.

Section 401(b)(7)(A)(iv) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070a(b)(7)(A)(iv)) is amended by striking