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No. 180

House of Representatives

The House met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BUTTERFIELD).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 12, 2019.

I hereby appoint the Honorable G.K. BUTTERFIELD to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Dear God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We ask Your special blessing upon the Members of the people's House. They face difficult decisions in difficult times, with many forces and interests demanding their attention.

Give them generosity to enter into their work. May they serve You in the work they do as You deserve, give of themselves and not count the costs, fight for what is best for our Nation and not count the political wounds, toil until their work is done and not seek to rest, and labor without seeking any reward other than knowing that they are doing Your will and serving the people of this great Nation.

Bless them, O God, and be with them and with us all this day and every day to come. May all that is done be for Your greater honor and glory.
Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Washington (Mr. LARSEN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

EX-IM REAUTHORIZATION

(Mr. LARSEN of Washington asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to express my support for H.R. 4863, the United States Export Finance Agency Act, which reauthorizes the Ex-Im Bank's charter for 10 years. The Ex-Im Bank is a proven job-creating success story.

For years, I have met with small- and medium-sized manufacturers in north-

west Washington State who rely on the Ex-Im Bank to compete in the global marketplace. Since 2014, companies, suppliers, and other manufacturers in my district who rely on the Ex-Im Bank have generated nearly \$24 billion in total export value.

Vista Clara Inc. in Mukilteo is a small, veteran-owned business which used Ex-Im funds to develop and manufacture advanced nuclear magnetic resonance, NMR, geophysical instruments for groundwater, environmental, and energy resources investigations.

The Ex-Im Bank levels the international playing field for U.S. exporters and workers, enabling them to respond to foreign competition when it is backed by export credit agency support. It also supports large manufacturers like Boeing, America's largest exporter.

I represent nearly 18,000 current employees at Boeing's Everett plant, which depends upon the Ex-Im Bank to support millions of dollars in total insured shipments, guaranteed credit, or disbursed loans.

The U.S. can be an attractive alternative to China by employing a strategic approach combining development assistance, ensuring protections for the environment and worker rights, and supporting good governance and the rule of law.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to voting for H.R. 4863 this week to provide much-needed certainty for the Nation's manufacturers, and I urge my colleagues' support.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 4 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 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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□ 1605

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. FRANKEL) at 4 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages in writing from the President of the United States were communicated to the House by Miss Kaitlyn Roberts, one of his secretaries.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

PROTECT THE GI BILL ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4625) to amend title 38, United States Code, to require that educational institutions abide by certain principles as a condition of approval for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4625

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Protect the GI Bill Act”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Clarification of educational assistance for individuals who pursue an approved program of education leading to a degree while on active duty.
- Sec. 3. Verification of enrollment for purposes of receipt of Post-9/11 Educational Assistance benefits.
- Sec. 4. Clarification regarding the dependents to whom entitlement to educational assistance may be transferred under the Post 9/11 Educational Assistance Program.
- Sec. 5. Expansion of reasons for which a course of education may be disapproved.
- Sec. 6. Oversight of educational institutions subject to Government action for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 7. Additional requirement for approval of educational institutions for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 8. Clarification of accreditation for law schools for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 9. Clarification of grounds for disapproval of a course for purposes of the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 10. Requirements for educational institutions participating in the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 11. Overpayments to eligible persons or veterans.

Sec. 12. Improvements to limitation on certain advertising, sales, and enrollment practices.

Sec. 13. Additional limitation on certain advertising, sales, and enrollment practices of educational institutions.

Sec. 14. Charge to entitlement to educational assistance for individuals who do not transfer credits from certain closed or disapproved programs of education.

SEC. 2. CLARIFICATION OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO PURSUE AN APPROVED PROGRAM OF EDUCATION LEADING TO A DEGREE WHILE ON ACTIVE DUTY.

Section 3313(e) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the heading, by inserting “FOR A PERIOD OF MORE THAN 30 DAYS” after “ACTIVE DUTY”;

(2) in paragraph (1), by inserting “for a period of more than 30 days” after “active duty”;

(3) in paragraph (2), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting “for a period of more than 30 days” after “active duty”.

SEC. 3. VERIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT FOR PURPOSES OF RECEIPT OF POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3313 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 2, is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(1) VERIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT.—(1) The Secretary shall require—

“(A) each educational institution to submit to the Secretary verification of each individual who is enrolled in a course or program of education at the educational institution and is receiving educational assistance under this chapter for each month during which the individual is so enrolled and receiving such educational assistance; and

“(B) each individual who is enrolled in a course or program of education and is receiving educational assistance under this chapter to submit to the Secretary verification of such enrollment for each month during which the individual is so enrolled and receiving such educational assistance.

“(2) Verification under this subsection shall be in an electronic form prescribed by the Secretary.

“(3) If an individual fails to submit the verification required under paragraph (1)(B) for two consecutive months, the Secretary may not make a monthly stipend payment to the individual under this section until the individual submits such verification.”

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2020.

SEC. 4. CLARIFICATION REGARDING THE DEPENDENTS TO WHOM ENTITLEMENT TO EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE MAY BE TRANSFERRED UNDER THE POST 9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3319(c) of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(c) ELIGIBLE DEPENDENTS.—

“(1) TRANSFER.—An individual approved to transfer an entitlement to educational assistance under this section may transfer the individual’s entitlement to an eligible dependent or a combination of eligible dependents.

“(2) DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE DEPENDENT.—For purposes of this subsection, the term ‘eligible dependent’ has the meaning given the term ‘dependent’ under paragraph (2) of section 1072 of title 10.”

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to educational assistance payable under chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code, before, on, or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 5. EXPANSION OF REASONS FOR WHICH A COURSE OF EDUCATION MAY BE DISAPPROVED.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3672(b)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)(i), by inserting or “or (D)” after “subparagraph (C)”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(D) A program that is described in subparagraph (A)(i) of this paragraph and offered by an educational institution that is at risk of losing accreditation shall not be deemed to be approved for purposes of this chapter. For purposes of this subparagraph, an educational institution is at risk of losing accreditation if that educational institution has received from the relevant accrediting agency or association a notice described in section 3673(e)(2)(D) of this title.”

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 6. OVERSIGHT OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS SUBJECT TO GOVERNMENT ACTION FOR PURPOSES OF THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3673 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(e) NOTICE OF GOVERNMENT ACTION.—(1)(A)

If the Secretary receives notice under paragraph (2), or otherwise becomes aware of an action or event described in paragraph (3), with respect to an educational institution, the Secretary shall transmit such notice or provide notice of such action or event to the State approving agency for the State where the educational institution is located by not later than 30 days after the date on which the Secretary receives such notice or becomes aware of such action or event. A State approving agency shall perform a risk-based oversight survey to the educational institution by not later than 60 days after receiving notice under this subparagraph.

“(B) If a State approving agency receives notice as described in paragraph (2), or otherwise becomes aware of an action or event described in paragraph (3), with respect to an educational institution, the State approving agency shall perform a risk-based oversight survey to the educational institution by not later than 60 days after receiving such notice or otherwise becoming aware of such action or event.

“(2) Notice under this paragraph is any of the following:

“(A) Notice from the Secretary of Education of an event under paragraph (3)(A).

“(B) Notice of an event under paragraph (3)(B).

“(C) Notice from a State of an action taken by that State under paragraph (3)(C).

“(D) Notice provided by an accrediting agency or association of an action described in paragraph (3)(D) taken by that agency or association.

“(E) Notice that the Secretary of Education has placed the educational institution on provisional status.

“(3) An action or event under this paragraph is any of the following:

“(A) The receipt by an educational institution of payments under the heightened cash monitoring payment method pursuant to section 487(c)(1)(B) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1094).

“(B) Final punitive action taken by the Attorney General, the Federal Trade Commission, or any other Federal department or agency against an educational institution relating to misconduct or misleading marketing practices, as defined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

“(C) Final punitive action taken by a State against an educational institution.

“(D) The loss, or risk of loss, by an educational institution of an accreditation from an accrediting agency or association, including notice of probation, suspension, an order to show cause, or revocation of accreditation.

“(E) The placement of an educational institution on provisional status by the Secretary of Education.

“(4) If a State approving agency disapproves or suspends an educational institution, the State approving agency shall provide notice of such disapproval or suspension to the Secretary and to the other State approving agencies.

“(5) This subsection shall be carried out using amounts made available pursuant to section 3674(a)(4) of this title as long as such amounts remain available.”

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2020.

SEC. 7. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT FOR APPROVAL OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR PURPOSES OF THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3675 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4) The educational institution is approved and participates in a program under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.) or the Secretary has waived the requirement under this paragraph with respect to an educational institution and submits to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives notice of such waiver.”

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(d) The Secretary shall submit to Congress an annual report on any waivers issued pursuant to subsection (b)(4) or section 3672(b)(2)(A)(i) of this title. Each such report shall include, for the year covered by the report—

“(1) the name of each educational institution for which a waiver was issued;

“(2) the justification for each such waiver; and

“(3) the total number of waivers issued.”

(b) REQUIREMENT FOR APPROVAL OF STANDARD COLLEGE DEGREE PROGRAMS.—Clause (i) of subparagraph (A) of paragraph (2) of subsection (b) of section 3672 of such title is amended to read as follows:

“(i) Except as provided in subparagraph (C) or (D), an accredited standard college degree

program offered at a public or not-for-profit proprietary educational institution that—

“(I) is accredited by an agency or association recognized for that purpose by the Secretary of Education; and

“(II) is approved and participates in a program under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.), unless the Secretary has waived the requirement to participate in a program under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.).”

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) shall take effect on August 1, 2020.

SEC. 8. CLARIFICATION OF ACCREDITATION FOR LAW SCHOOLS FOR PURPOSES OF THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraphs (14)(B) and (15)(B) of section 3676(c) of title 38, United States Code, are each amended by striking “an accrediting agency” both places it appears and inserting “a specialized accrediting agency”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2020.

SEC. 9. CLARIFICATION OF GROUNDS FOR DISAPPROVAL OF A COURSE FOR PURPOSES OF THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3679(a)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting “(including failure to comply with a risk-based survey under section 3673(d) of this title and secure an affirmation of approval by the appropriate State approving agency following the survey)” after “requirements of this chapter”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2020.

SEC. 10. REQUIREMENTS FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3679 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 6, is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(f)(1) Except as provided by paragraph (5), a State approving agency, or the Secretary when acting in the role of the State approving agency, may take an action described in paragraph (4)(A) if the State approving agency or the Secretary determines that an educational institution does not perform any of the following:

“(A) Prior to the enrollment of a covered individual in a course of education at the educational institution, provide the individual with a form that contains information personalized to the individual that describes—

“(i) the estimated total cost of the course, including tuition, fees, books, supplies, and any other additional costs;

“(ii) an estimate of the cost for living expenses for students enrolled in the course;

“(iii) the amount of the costs under clauses (i) and (ii) that are covered by the educational assistance provided to the individual under chapter 30, 32, 33, or 35 of this title, or chapter 1606 or 1607 of title 10, as the case may be;

“(iv) the type and amount of Federal financial aid not administered by the Secretary and financial aid offered by the institution that the individual may qualify to receive;

“(v) an estimate of the amount of student loan debt the individual would have upon graduation;

“(vi) information regarding graduation rates;

“(vii) job-placement rates for graduates of the course, if available;

“(viii) information regarding the acceptance by the institution of transfer of credits, including military credits;

“(ix) any conditions or additional requirements, including training, experience, or examinations, required to obtain the license, certification, or approval for which the course of education is designed to provide preparation; and

“(x) other information to facilitate comparison by the individual of aid packages offered by different educational institutions.

“(B) Not later than 15 days after the date on which the institution (or the governing body of the institution) determines tuition rates and fees for an academic year that is different than the amount being charged by the institution, provide a covered individual enrolled in a course of education at the educational institution with the form under subparagraph (A) that contains updated information.

“(C) Maintain policies to—

“(i) inform each covered individual enrolled in a course of education at the educational institution of the availability of Federal financial aid not administered by the Secretary and financial aid offered by the institution; and

“(ii) alert such individual of the potential eligibility of the individual for such financial aid before packaging or arranging student loans or alternative financing programs for the individual.

“(D) Maintain policies to—

“(i) prohibit the automatic renewal of a covered individual in courses and programs of education; and

“(ii) ensure that each covered individual approves of the enrollment of the individual in a course.

“(E) Provide to a covered individual enrolled in a course of education at the educational institution with information regarding the requirements to graduate from such course, including information regarding when required classes will be offered and a timeline to graduate.

“(F) With respect to an accredited educational institution, obtain the approval of the accrediting agency for each new course or program of the institution before enrolling covered individuals in such courses or programs if the accrediting agency determines that such approval is appropriate under the substantive change requirements of the accrediting agency regarding the quality, objectives, scope, or control of the institution.

“(G) Maintain a policy that—

“(i) ensures that members of the Armed Forces, including the reserve components and the National Guard, who enroll in a course of education at the educational institution may be readmitted at such institution if such members are temporarily unavailable or have to suspend such enrollment by reason of serving in the Armed Forces; and

“(ii) otherwise accommodates such members during short absences by reason of such service.

“(H) Designate an employee of the educational institution to serve as a point of contact for covered individuals and the family of such individuals needing assistance with respect to academic counseling, financial counseling, disability counseling, and other information regarding completing a course of education at such institution, including by referring such individuals and family to the appropriate persons for such counseling and information.

“(2) Except as provided by paragraph (5), a State approving agency, or the Secretary when acting in the role of the State approving agency, may take an action described in

paragraph (4)(A) if the State approving agency, the Secretary, or the Federal Trade Commission, determines that an educational institution does any of the following:

“(A) Carries out deceptive or persistent recruiting techniques, including on military installations, that may include—

“(i) misrepresentation (as defined in section 3696(e)(2)(B) of this title) or payment of incentive compensation;

“(ii) during any one-month period making three or more unsolicited contacts to a covered individual, including contacts by phone, email, or in-person; or

“(iii) engaging in same-day recruitment and registration.

“(B) Pays inducements, including any gratuity, favor, discount, entertainment, hospitality, loan, transportation, lodging, meals, or other item having a monetary value of more than a de minimis amount, to any individual or entity, or its agents including third party lead generators or marketing firms other than salaries paid to employees or fees paid to contractors in conformity with all applicable laws for the purpose of securing enrollments of covered individuals or obtaining access to educational assistance under this title, with the exception of scholarships, grants, and tuition reductions provided by the educational institution.

“(3) A State approving agency, or the Secretary when acting in the role of the State approving agency, may take an action described in paragraph (4)(A) if the State approving agency or the Secretary determines that an educational institution is the subject of a negative action made by the accrediting agency that accredits the institution, including any of the following:

“(A) A show cause order.

“(B) Accreditor sanctions.

“(C) Accreditation probation.

“(D) The loss of accreditation or candidacy for accreditation.

“(4)(A) An action described in this subparagraph is any of the following:

“(i) Publishing a warning on the internet website of the Department described in section 3698(c)(2) of this title, or such other similar internet website of the Department, that describes how an educational institution is failing to meet a requirement under paragraph (1) or (2).

“(ii) Prohibiting the pursuit by an individual of a course of education at an educational institution under chapter 30, 32, 33, or 35 of this title during the period beginning on the date of such prohibition and ending on a date specified by the State approving agency, in consultation with the Secretary, or the Secretary when acting in the role of the State approving agency, unless the individual was enrolled at the institution before such period.

“(B) The Secretary shall establish guidelines to ensure that the actions described in subparagraph (A) are applied in a proportional and uniform manner by State approving agencies, or the Secretary when acting in the role of the State approving agency.

“(5)(A) The Secretary may waive the requirements of paragraph (1) or waive the requirements of paragraph (2) with respect to an educational institution for a one-academic-year period beginning in August of the year in which the waiver is made. A single educational institution may not receive waivers under this paragraph for more than two consecutive academic years.

“(B) To be considered for a waiver under this paragraph, an educational institution shall submit to the Secretary an application prior to the first day of the academic year for which the waiver is sought.

“(6) On an annual basis, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate the following reports:

“(A) A report, which shall be made publicly available, that includes the following:

“(i) A summary of each action described in paragraph (4)(A) made during the year covered by the report, including—

“(I) the name of the educational institution;

“(II) the type of action taken;

“(III) the rationale for the action, including how the educational institution was not in compliance with this subsection;

“(IV) the length of time that the educational institution was not in such compliance; and

“(V) whether the educational institution was also not in compliance with this subsection during any of the two years prior to the year covered by the report.

“(ii) A summary and justifications for the waivers made under paragraph (5) during the year covered by the report, including the total number of waivers each educational institution has received.

“(B) A report containing the recommendations of the Secretary with respect to any legislative actions the Secretary determines appropriate to ensure that this subsection is carried out in a manner that is consistent with the requirements that educational institutions must meet for purposes of other departments or agencies of the Federal Government.

“(7) In this subsection, the term ‘covered individual’ means an individual who is pursuing a course of education at an educational institution under chapter 30, 32, 33, or 35 of this title.”

(b) APPLICATION DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall take effect on June 15, 2020, and shall apply to an educational institution beginning on August 1, 2020, except that an educational institution may submit an application for a waiver under subsection (f)(5) of section 3679 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), beginning on June 15, 2020.

SEC. 11. OVERPAYMENTS TO ELIGIBLE PERSONS OR VETERANS.

Subsection (b) of section 3685 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(b) Any overpayment by an educational institution to a veteran or eligible person shall constitute a liability of the educational institution to the United States if—

“(1) the Secretary finds that the overpayment has been made as the result of—

“(A) the willful or negligent failure of an educational institution to report, as required under this chapter or chapter 34 or 35 of this title, to the Department of Veterans Affairs excessive absences from a course, or discontinuance or interruption of a course by the veteran or eligible person; or

“(B) the willful or negligent false certification by an educational institution; or

“(2) the payment is made pursuant to—

“(A) section 3313(h) of this title;

“(B) section 3317 of this title; or

“(C) section 3680(d) of this title.”

SEC. 12. IMPROVEMENTS TO LIMITATION ON CERTAIN ADVERTISING, SALES, AND ENROLLMENT PRACTICES.

(a) SUBSTANTIAL MISREPRESENTATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) of section 3696 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(a) The Secretary, or a State approving agency acting in the role of the Secretary, shall not approve the enrollment of an eligible veteran or eligible person in any course offered by an institution, or by an entity that owns the institution, engaged in substantial misrepresentation described in subsection (e)(1).”

(2) DEFINITIONS.—Such section is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(e)(1) Substantial misrepresentation described in this paragraph is substantial misrepresentation by an educational institution, a representative of the institution, or any person with whom the institution has an agreement to provide educational programs, marketing, advertising, recruiting or admissions services, concerning any of the following:

“(A) The nature of the educational program of the institution, including misrepresentation regarding—

“(i) the particular type, specific source, or nature and extent, of the accreditation of the institution or a course of education at the institution;

“(ii) whether a student may transfer course credits to another institution;

“(iii) conditions under which the institution will accept transfer credits earned at another institution;

“(iv) whether successful completion of a course of instruction qualifies a student—

“(I) for acceptance to a labor union or similar organization; or

“(II) to receive, to apply to take, or to take an examination required to receive a local, State, or Federal license, or a non-governmental certification required as a precondition for employment, or to perform certain functions in the States in which the educational program is offered, or to meet additional conditions that the institution knows or reasonably should know are generally needed to secure employment in a recognized occupation for which the program is represented to prepare students;

“(v) the requirements for successfully completing the course of study or program and the circumstances that would constitute grounds for terminating the student's enrollment;

“(vi) whether the courses of education at the institution are recommended or have been the subject of unsolicited testimonials or endorsements by—

“(I) vocational counselors, high schools, colleges, educational organizations, employment agencies, members of a particular industry, students, former students, or others; or

“(II) officials of a local or State government or the Federal Government;

“(vii) the size, location, facilities, or equipment of the institution;

“(viii) the availability, frequency, and appropriateness of the courses of education and programs to the employment objectives that the institution states the courses and programs are designed to meet;

“(ix) the nature, age, and availability of the training devices or equipment of the institution and the appropriateness to the employment objectives that the institution states the courses and programs are designed to meet;

“(x) the number, availability, and qualifications, including the training and experience, of the faculty and other personnel of the institution;

“(xi) the availability of part-time employment or other forms of financial assistance;

“(xii) the nature and availability of any tutorial or specialized instruction, guidance and counseling, or other supplementary assistance the institution ill provide students before, during, or after the completion of a course of education;

“(xiii) the nature or extent of any prerequisites established for enrollment in any course of education;

“(xiv) the subject matter, content of the course of education, or any other fact related to the degree, diploma, certificate of completion, or any similar document that the student is to be, or is, awarded upon completion of the course of education; and

“(xv) whether the degree that the institution will confer upon completion of the course of education has been authorized by the appropriate State educational agency, including with respect to cases where the institution fails to disclose facts regarding the lack of such authorization in any advertising or promotional materials that reference such degree.

“(B) The financial charges of the institution, including misrepresentation regarding—

“(i) offers of scholarships to pay all or part of a course charge;

“(ii) whether a particular charge is the customary charge at the institution for a course;

“(iii) the cost of the program and the refund policy of the institution if the student does not complete the program;

“(iv) the availability or nature of any financial assistance offered to students, including a student’s responsibility to repay any loans, regardless of whether the student is successful in completing the program and obtaining employment; and

“(v) the student’s right to reject any particular type of financial aid or other assistance, or whether the student must apply for a particular type of financial aid, such as financing offered by the institution.

“(C) The employability of the graduates of the institution, including misrepresentation regarding—

“(i) the relationship of the institution with any organization, employment agency, or other agency providing authorized training leading directly to employment;

“(ii) the plans of the institution to maintain a placement service for graduates or otherwise assist graduates to obtain employment;

“(iii) the knowledge of the institution about the current or likely future conditions, compensation, or employment opportunities in the industry or occupation for which the students are being prepared;

“(iv) job market statistics maintained by the Federal Government in relation to the potential placement of the graduates of the institution; and

“(v) other requirements that are generally needed to be employed in the fields for which the training is provided, such as requirements related to commercial driving licenses or permits to carry firearms, and failing to disclose factors that would prevent an applicant from qualifying for such requirements, such as prior criminal records or preexisting medical conditions.

“(2) In this subsection:

“(A) The term ‘misleading statement’ includes any communication, action, omission, or intimation made in writing, visually, orally, or through other means, that has the likelihood or tendency to mislead the intended recipient of the communication under the circumstances in which the communication is made. Such term includes the use of student endorsements or testimonials for an educational institution that a student gives to the institution either under duress or because the institution required the student to make such an endorsement or testimonial to participate in a program of education.

“(B) The term ‘misrepresentation’ means any false, erroneous, or misleading statement, action, omission, or intimation made directly or indirectly to a student, a prospective student, the public, an accrediting agency, a State agency, or to the Secretary by an eligible institution, one of its representatives, or any person with whom the institution has an agreement to provide educational programs, marketing, advertising, recruiting or admissions services.

“(C) The term ‘substantial misrepresentation’ means misrepresentation in which the

person to whom it was made could reasonably be expected to rely, or has reasonably relied, to that person’s detriment.”.

(b) REFERRAL.—Subsection (c) of such section is amended by striking the last sentence and inserting the following: “The findings and results of any such investigations shall be referred to the State approving agency, or the Secretary when acting in the role of the State approving agency, who shall take appropriate action in such cases not later than 60 days after the date of such referral.”.

(c) REQUIREMENTS FOR NONACCREDITED COURSES.—Paragraph (10) of section 3676(c) of such title is amended to read as follows:

“(10) The institution, and any entity that owns the institution, does not engage in substantial misrepresentation described in section 3696(e) of this title. The institution shall not be deemed to have met this requirement until the State approving agency—

“(A) has ascertained that no Federal department or agency has taken a punitive action, not including a settlement agreement, against the school for misleading or deceptive practices;

“(B) has, if such an order has been issued, given due weight to that fact; and

“(C) has reviewed the complete record of advertising, sales, or enrollment materials (and copies thereof) used by or on behalf of the institution during the preceding 12-month period.”.

(d) APPLICATION DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to an educational institution beginning on August 1, 2020.

SEC. 13. ADDITIONAL LIMITATION ON CERTAIN ADVERTISING, SALES, AND ENROLLMENT PRACTICES OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3696(a) of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 11, is further amended—

(1) by inserting “(1)” before “The Secretary”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(2) Not later than 120 days after a State or Federal department or agency takes final punitive action against an educational institution relating to practices described in paragraph (1), the Secretary or the relevant State approving agency may—

“(A) take an action described in subsection (f)(4)(A) of section 3679 of this title; or

“(B) disapprove under such section each course offered by that educational institution.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2020.

SEC. 14. CHARGE TO ENTITLEMENT TO EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO DO NOT TRANSFER CREDITS FROM CERTAIN CLOSED OR DISAPPROVED PROGRAMS OF EDUCATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (c) of section 3699 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(c) PERIOD NOT CHARGED.—(1) The period for which, by reason of this subsection, educational assistance is not charged against entitlement or counted toward the applicable aggregate period under section 3695 of this title shall not exceed the aggregate of—

“(A) the portion of the period of enrollment in the course from which the individual did not receive credit or with respect to which the individual lost training time, as determined under subsection (b)(2); and

“(B) the period by which a monthly stipend is extended under section 3680(a)(2)(B) of this title.

“(2)(A) An individual described in subparagraph (B) who transfers fewer than 12 credits from a program of education that is closed or

disapproved as described in subsection (b)(1) shall be deemed to be an individual who did not receive such credits, as described in subsection (b)(2), except that the period for which such individual’s entitlement is not charged shall be the entire period of the individual’s enrollment in the program of education. In carrying out this subparagraph, the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, shall establish procedures to determine whether the individual transferred credits to a comparable course or program of education.

“(B) An individual described in this subparagraph is an individual who is enrolled in a course or program of education closed or discontinued as described in subsection (b)(1) during the period beginning on the date that is 120 days before the date of such closure or discontinuance and ending on the date of such closure or discontinuance, as the case may be.

“(C) This paragraph shall apply with respect to a course or program of education closed or discontinued before September 30, 2023.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2020.

SEC. 15. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DAVID P. ROE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 4625, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4625, as amended, the Protect the GI Bill Act.

In 2009, before passage of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2010—the Post-9/11 GI Bill—the Department of Veterans Affairs supplied educational benefits to over 14,000 veterans and paid schools over \$36 million in educational benefits.

Now, VA provides educational benefits to over 600,000 veterans and pays institutions of higher learning over \$11 billion to cover the tuition, fees, and books for veterans on an annual basis.

The increased educational benefits enacted through the Post-9/11 GI Bill and the Harry W. Colmery Forever GI Bill of 2017 have made pursuing an education a viable path for many veterans

across the country. Schools across this country have embraced the influx of students to their campuses with open arms; and, in return, veterans have brought their knowledge, expertise, and ideas into the classroom and, eventually, the workforce.

Since 2010, most institutions of higher learning have provided student veterans with a means to upward economic mobility through traditional education and vocational training.

However, a small number of predatory schools have sought to expand their coffers by targeting veterans for their educational benefits, providing subpar educations in return. Not only do veterans lose precious time and benefits from being misled by these malicious actors, but it also costs taxpayers millions of dollars each year, which is why we must pass the Protect the GI Bill Act today.

The Protect the GI Bill Act would hold all schools to standards set forth by the principles of excellence outlined in Executive Order No. 13607. By codifying the principles of excellence, we are ensuring that schools can no longer misrepresent their student outcomes, job placement rates, and graduation requirements when marketing to veterans and members of the military.

The Protect the GI Bill Act also ensures that schools are upfront and honest regarding the cost of attendance, scholarships available for veterans before they take loans, and whether additional training is needed after graduation to pass State-based licensure or certification tests. This will allow veterans to make informed choices about the schools they want to attend to start their new careers and ensure that institutions are more accountable to veterans.

This legislation also includes Congressman BILIRAKIS' Student Veteran Empowerment Act, Congresswoman SUSIE LEE's Forever GI Bill Class Evaluation Act, Congresswoman SUSAN DAVIS' Reserve and Guard GI Bill Housing Fairness Act, and Congressman FOSTER's GI Bill Education Fairness Act.

This bipartisan legislation empowers State approving agencies to conduct targeted, risk-based surveys; eliminates waste in the Post-9/11 GI Bill program; ensures that spouses of servicemembers in the Reserves and Guard are not penalized when servicemembers are called to duty; and clarifies that servicemembers can transfer their education benefits to stepchildren, foster and adopted children, and other minor dependents.

As amended, the Protect the GI Bill Act also protects veterans by stopping them from incurring debt from Post-9/11 GI Bill overpayments. According to a GAO report, in fiscal year 2014, the VA paid approximately \$10.8 billion in education assistance through the Post-9/11 GI Bill and made approximately \$416 million in overpayments to veterans in about 6,000 schools. Approximately one in four veterans received an overpayment in fiscal year 2014.

Now, saddling veterans with unexpected debt is an injustice that we cannot perpetuate. This bill delays payments to schools, mandates that veterans confirm their enrollment each month, and prohibits late payment charges to students who are receiving GI Bill benefits.

The Protect the GI Bill Act would also allow more veterans to restore their educational benefits in cases where schools they attend close, are disapproved by a State approving agency, or are discontinued for other reasons outside of their control.

Current law only allows veterans to restore their education benefits if they attend schools that close or are disapproved by State approving agencies and if these veterans do not transfer any credits to another school or institution.

This requires these veterans to restart their education to restore the benefits, which could erode their motivation and cost taxpayers more money. There is no reason that veterans should be forced to repeat basic classes or core credits in order to regain their educational benefits.

This bill allows veterans to restore their education benefits while transferring up to 12 credits to another school.

The expansion of eligibility in this bill is retroactive and will allow thousands of veterans to recover their educational benefits upon the enactment of this much needed bill.

Madam Speaker, if our goal as a legislative body is to improve veterans' economic opportunities and end veteran homelessness, we must empower veterans to develop new and marketable skill sets in community colleges, universities, and trade schools.

We must also be good fiduciaries of taxpayer funds by enacting rigorous standards and providing adequate oversight of institutions who seek to collect funds from veterans' educational benefits, which is why I support this bill.

This bill also has the support of the Student Veterans of America and Veterans Education Success.

I want to thank Representative LEVIN for his hard work on this excellent bill. I would also like to thank Representative BILIRAKIS, Representative LEE, Representative DAVIS, and Representative FOSTER for their contributions to this bill, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4625, as amended, the Protect the GI Bill Act.

Earlier this year, we celebrated the 75th anniversary of the original World War II GI Bill that helped launch the modern middle class. In the past 75 years, the GI Bill has helped millions

of transitioning servicemembers get the training and education they need to be successful and help grow our economy. I used the GI Bill myself when I got out of the military.

Part of our role on the Veterans' Affairs Committee is to protect the GI Bill's important legacy and ensure that the incredible benefit the GI Bill provides remains available for veterans for generations to come.

The Protect the GI Bill Act would advance that goal by putting important protections in place to help student veterans make the right choice when using their GI Bill benefits by helping regulators flag and, if necessary, remove bad schools and programs from being eligible for the GI Bill.

This bill would also double down on our support for student veterans whose school has closed before they finish their program by restoring their GI Bill entitlement if the student is unable to transfer their credits to another institution.

I thank my friend and fellow long-term committee member, Congressman GUS BILIRAKIS from Florida, for his hard work on this bill. GUS is the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, and this bill includes the text of his bill, H.R. 4085, the Student Veteran Empowerment Act, and builds off his work in the 113th Congress to create the GI Bill Comparison Tool.

I would also like to thank Student Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and, especially, Veterans Education Success for their help in crafting this legislation. Their expert advice and counsel are critical to ensuring that we preserve the legacy of the GI Bill for another 75 years and beyond.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. FOSTER), my good friend.

Mr. FOSTER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I thank Chairman TAKANO, Ranking Member ROE, and members of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs for their steadfast commitment to the men and women of our armed services and for their work on H.R. 4625, the Protect the GI Bill Act.

Included in this bill is legislation of mine that I have been working on with Representative MCMORRIS RODGERS for some years now to remedy the bureaucratic oversight affecting military families across the country.

Under current law, the Department of Defense includes wards and foster children in their definition of an "eligible child" who is authorized to receive their parents' unused GI education benefits. However, the Department of Veterans Affairs does not. Unfortunately, this misalignment has led to a nightmare for some members of the armed services and their families.

This issue first came to my attention when a constituent, Sergeant First

Class Angela Dees, and her son, Christopher, reached out to my office to share their story.

Regrettably, their story is not unique, and they are not alone. To date, nearly 100 wards and foster children were initially approved by the Department of Defense for the transfer of GI education benefits, and money was paid out to their schools. Then, midsemester, the Department of Veterans Affairs revoked their benefits. The students and their families were notified that they would have to repay tuition expenses.

These families now face unexpected and crippling debts. They aren't just stuck with bigger loan payments but with outstanding bills. In many cases, the students even had to drop out of school.

Children of the men and women who serve honorably should not be denied the benefits that they were promised because of bureaucratic oversight. These servicemen and -women have honored the promise that they made to serve our country, and we need to honor the promises we make to them.

This legislation would correct this discrepancy and prevent this situation from happening in the future. Doing so would allow foster children and wards like Christopher, who were approved for GI education benefits only to have them revoked, to receive the education funding that they were promised.

I urge my colleagues to join me and vote "yes" on this critical piece of legislation.

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), my good friend, a tireless working member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. I know of no one on our committee who works harder for veterans, whether it is on PTSD or the benefits they have earned, than GUS BILIRAKIS.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I thank the ranking member and the chairman. I appreciate them working with us on this very good bill. Also, Chairman LEVIN, who is not here at the time, does an outstanding job, and I look forward to working with him on many more bills.

Madam Speaker, as Ranking Member ROE just mentioned, one of the most important jobs of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs is defending and protecting programs like the GI Bill that continue to provide life-changing education and training benefits to our Nation's veterans and servicemembers. I am proud that provisions in H.R. 4625 will continue this goal and are a by-product of several bipartisan hearings that I have led with Chairman LEVIN to improve oversight of the GI Bill.

I am also pleased that this package includes all the provisions from my bill, H.R. 4085, the Student Veteran Empowerment Act. My bill is designed to limit overpayment of GI Bill funds to students and schools, improve oversight of the GI Bill program by VA and

State approving agencies, and, most importantly, extend the restoration of entitlement for student veterans impacted by school closures.

This last section extends benefits we originally provided to a limited number of students in the Forever GI Bill to all students. It extends to all students; that is important. It is critical to ensure that a student's entitlement is not lost when a school closes or is disapproved before the student completes their education.

My provisions in this bill would make important structural improvements regarding GI Bill oversight and accountability. These changes are important so that we can do all we can to prevent unnecessary school closures and ensure that a student's hard-earned benefits are used on training and education programs that will set up the veteran for long-term economic success.

Again, like Dr. ROE, I thank the veterans service organizations for their advice and suggestions, especially Veterans Education Success.

I also thank the bill's sponsor, as I said before, the chairman of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, my friend from California, MIKE LEVIN. It has been my distinct pleasure, as the ranking member, to work with him on this bill and on other issues that come before our subcommittee. He is a thoughtful legislator, and I thank him for including the provisions of my bill in this legislation before us.

I urge passage of this great bill, H.R. 4625.

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

Let me just say that this bill, the Protect the GI Bill Act, contains so many elements offered by both sides of the aisle. I have to point out, for the RECORD, the coincidence of having the interests of foster children being protected by a man named BILL FOSTER. There are not enough people in here to get that joke, but I thought that was worth pointing out.

The language in this bill also contains enhancements to the authorities of State approving agencies. One of the broken parts of how our schools, our for-profit schools or all schools, get approved, get their programs approved, is because our State approving agencies lack sufficient authority to intervene when they know that a certain for-profit operation that has had a shady history is about to open in their State. This legislation would allow a State approving agency to act before a bad-acting for-profit school is actually charged, formally charged.

Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I, too, am ready to close. I yield myself the balance of my time.

I do want to say that this bill is indicative of how, when we work to-

gether, we can solve problems. You heard various issues from both sides of the aisle that were brought to bear and worked in the subcommittee and committee to solve these problems for constituents all across the country.

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

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

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 4625, as amended. Indeed, both sides of the aisle worked carefully together, and I am pleased to recommend that we pass this bill on suspension. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SABLAN. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4625, the Protect the GI Bill Act, which restores education benefits for veterans impacted by recent for-profit school closures and provides the VA additional tools to keep schools who violate the terms of their GI Bill funding accountable.

For the past 75 years, the VA estimates the GI Bill has helped more than 25 million veterans and their families nationwide including the Marianas achieve their educational and career goals.

In recent years however, closures of several for-profit schools have left many veterans with degrees and credits that are not recognized or transferable and facing serious hardships from diminished GI Bill funds that also help pay for housing and other living expenses.

The Protect the GI Bill Act would help the victims of school closures by reinstating lost benefits and barring schools who do not meet quality standards for receiving GI Bill funds. Under H.R. 4625, schools would also be required to inform veterans of the actual cost of attendance including how much their benefits cover, as well as graduation and job placement rates. The bill requires VA and State Approving Agencies to take swift action on schools in violation of GI Bill requirements including suspension of new enrollments as well as bans on deceptive practices like automatic re-enrollment without the veteran's permission.

Passage of H.R. 4625 is critical to preventing future victims of school closures and ensuring veterans and their eligible family members receive a quality education for their hard-earned GI Bill benefits.

I thank the gentleman from California, Mr. LEVIN, for his leadership on this legislation and urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4625.

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. 4625, 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.

REDUCING HIGH RISK TO VETERANS AND VETERANS SERVICES ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4477) to direct the Secretary

of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a plan to address certain high risk areas identified by the Comptroller General of the United States regarding the Department of Veterans Affairs in the 2019 High-Risk List of the Government Accountability Office, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4477

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 “Reducing High Risk to Veterans and Veterans Services Act”.

SEC. 2. REPORT AND PLANNED ACTIONS OF THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO ADDRESS CERTAIN HIGH-RISK AREAS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **REPORT REQUIRED.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Comptroller General of the United States, shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report outlining the plan the Secretary has developed and the actions the Secretary has taken to address the areas of concern identified by the Comptroller General for the Department of Veterans Affairs in the 2019 High-Risk List of the Government Accountability Office (GAO-19-157SP) regarding—

(1) acquisition management; and

(2) managing risks and improving health care.

(b) **ELEMENTS.**—The report under subsection (a) shall include each of the following:

(1) Root causes of the areas of concern described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (a).

(2) Corrective actions and specific steps to address each root cause, including—

(A) the progress of the Secretary in implementing those actions and steps; and

(B) timelines and milestones the Secretary determines feasible to complete each corrective action.

(3) Resources the Secretary determines are necessary to implement corrective actions, including—

(A) funding;

(B) stakeholders;

(C) technology; and

(D) senior officials responsible for implementing the corrective actions and reporting results.

(4) Metrics for assessing progress in addressing the areas of concern described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (a).

(5) Key outcomes that demonstrate progress in addressing the areas of concern described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (a).

(6) Obstacles to implementation of the plan that the Secretary identifies.

(7) Recommendations of the Secretary regarding legislation or funding the Secretary determines necessary to implement the plan.

(8) Any other information the Secretary determines is relevant to understanding the progress of the Department toward the removal of the areas of concern from the High Risk List.

(c) **ANNUAL UPDATES.**—

(1) **UPDATE REQUIRED.**—Not less than once each year during the implementation period under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall submit to Congress an update regarding implementation of each element of the plan under subsection (b).

(2) **IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD.**—The implementation period described in this paragraph begins on the date on which the Secretary submits the report required under subsection (a) and ends on the earlier of the following dates:

(A) The date on which the Comptroller General removes the last area of concern for the De-

partment from the most recent High-Risk List of the Government Accountability Office.

(B) The date that is eight years after the date on which the Secretary submits the plan required under subsection (a).

SEC. 3. ANNUAL REPORT BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES PERTAINING TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **ANNUAL REPORT REQUIRED.**—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not less than once during each of the subsequent three years, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives and to the Comptroller General of the United States a report on the implementation of priority recommendations of the Comptroller General that pertain to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) **CONTENTS.**—Each report submitted under subsection (a) shall include, for the period covered by the report, the following:

(1) The progress of the Secretary in implementing all open priority recommendations of the Comptroller General for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) An explanation for each instance where the Secretary has decided not to implement, or has not fully implemented, an open priority recommendation of the Comptroller General for the Department.

(3) A summary of the corrective actions taken and remaining steps the Secretary plans to take to implement open priority recommendations of the Comptroller General.

(c) **SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT CERTAIN REQUIRED REPORTS OR WRITTEN STATEMENTS.**—The report under this section shall not be construed to supplant any report or written statement required under section 720 of title 31, United States Code.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DAVID P. ROE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 4477, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4477, as amended, the Reducing High Risk to Veterans and Veterans Services Act.

The Government Accountability Office provides important oversight across the Federal Government. As Congress’ investigative arm, GAO audits and examines Department of Veterans Affairs programs and spending. The Comptroller General and his staff provide hundreds of recommendations on how to improve services and benefits. However, too often, GAO recommendations are ignored by the Department.

H.R. 4477, as amended, is bipartisan legislation offered by the Sub-

committee on Oversight and Investigations’ Chairman PAPPAS and Ranking Member BERGMAN that seeks to address, in a systematic manner, GAO’s most notable and important findings and recommendations.

The act requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop a plan to address the two areas within VA identified as high risk by the Government Accountability Office. These are the Veterans Health Administration and acquisition management.

Every 2 years, the Government Accountability Office releases its High-Risk List of Federal Government programs most vulnerable to fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement.

Included in 2015, the Veterans Health Administration, the largest healthcare system in the country, remains on GAO’s 2019 list.

This was the first year that VA acquisition management was placed on the High-Risk List as a result of inefficient use of acquisition funding and staffing resources, as well as numerous contracting challenges. VA’s acquisition management is vital to VA’s functioning because of its role in medical supplies procurement and construction, both of which relate directly to VA’s ability to serve veterans and provide quality medical care.

The Reducing High Risk to Veterans and Veterans Services Act requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop a plan to address the two areas within VA identified as high risk by the Government Accountability Office.

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This plan will address the root causes of why these programs are at high risk and include specific timelines to correct the problems. VA will report to Congress on progress and ongoing challenges. The Department will also provide their views on whether Congress needs to take legislative action or provide additional resources.

This bill has the support of the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the DAV. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise today in support of H.R. 4477, as amended, the Reducing High Risk to Veterans and Veterans Services Act. This bill was introduced by Congressman CHRIS PAPPAS from New Hampshire and my good friend, Congressman JACK BERGMAN from Michigan, the chairman and ranking member, respectively, of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation.

Every 2 years, the Government Accountability Office, the GAO, publishes its High-Risk List identifying those activities that are considered high risk due to their vulnerabilities to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement or that need transformation. GAO added managing risks and improving Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare to

its High-Risk List in 2015, and it remains there today.

Last Congress, the committee held a roundtable discussion with representatives from VA and GAO to address VA's progress towards addressing GAO's concerns. While it takes an agency, on average, 7 years to be removed from the list, VA has demonstrated little progress. Additionally, GAO added that VA Acquisition Management to its 2019 list.

H.R. 4477, as amended, would require VA to develop a plan of action to address deficiencies in acquisition management and healthcare that led GAO to place VA on their High-Risk List in 2015 and again in 2017 and again in 2019. It would also incorporate a provision under H.R. 698, a bill introduced by Representative JIM BANKS of Indiana, to direct VA to report on its efforts to address GAO's priority recommendations and GAO's top 30 open recommendations.

Our Nation's veterans and taxpayers deserve a VA that is high performing and that acts quickly to address areas of concern as they arise. This help will help ensure that they get it done.

I am grateful to Congressman PAPPAS and General BERGMAN for sponsoring this bill, which has my full support, but I would be remiss if I did not point out that this is another bill that did not go through regular order.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN), a lieutenant general—and for those of you all who don't know what that is, it is three stars; I only made it to a major—to describe his bill.

Mr. BERGMAN. Madam Speaker, basically, when you have three stars, it just means you outlasted a lot of folks. But the point is the honor of being able to serve among marines, sailors, soldiers, airmen, and coastguardsmen is enough to make us all swell with pride because, you know, yesterday was Veteran's Day, and it is a real special day thanking the veterans of all wars for their service to our country.

I rise today in support of H.R. 4477, as amended, the Reducing High Risk to Veterans and Veterans Services Act, a bill introduced by Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Chairman CHRIS PAPPAS and co-led by myself.

Every 2 years, GAO publishes its High-Risk List identifying those activities which are considered high risk due to their vulnerabilities to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement or their need for transformation. Sometimes things don't always stay the same, and we need to move forward with the change.

As Ranking Member ROE stated, GAO added managing risks and improving VA healthcare to its list in 2015 and

added VA Acquisition Management in 2019. This past May, the Comptroller General of the United States testified before the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, where I am proud to serve as ranking member, concerning the Department's efforts to add GAO recommendations.

Comptroller General Dodaro testified during the hearing: "I want to emphasize hardly any area in the high-risk area gets off the list without sustained congressional oversight, as well, and action by the Congress. The engagement by the Congress is absolutely critical to the success of agencies coming off the High-Risk List."

The intent of this bill is to focus VA on its efforts to remove these two programs from GAO's High-Risk List and give Congress the information needed to provide the sustained congressional oversight the Comptroller General said was absolutely necessary and needed to remove programs from the High-Risk List.

H.R. 4477 was amended in committee to incorporate provisions of H.R. 698, a bill introduced by Representative BANKS, which would require VA to report on its efforts to implement GAO's priority recommendations for VA.

I strongly encourage all Members to support H.R. 4477, as amended.

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I encourage all Members to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 4477, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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. 4477, 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.

VA TELE-HEARING MODERNIZATION ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4771) to amend title 38, United States Code, to permit appellants to appear in disability compensation cases before the Board of Veterans' Appeals by picture and voice transmission from locations other than facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4771

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "VA Tele-Hearing Modernization Act".

SECTION 2. HEARINGS BEFORE THE BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS BY MEANS OF TELECONFERENCE FROM LOCATIONS OTHER THAN FACILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Section 7107(c)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by inserting "or subparagraph (C) of this paragraph" after "subparagraph (B) of such paragraph";

(2) in subparagraph (B), by inserting "or subparagraph (A) of such paragraph"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph (C):

"(C)(i) Upon notification of a Board hearing under subparagraph (A) or (B) of paragraph (1), the appellant may alternatively request a hearing by picture and voice transmission—

"(I) at a location selected by the appellant; and

"(II) via a secure internet platform established and maintained by the Secretary that protects sensitive personal information from a data breach.

"(ii) If an appellant makes a request under clause (i), the Board shall grant such request."

(b) *DEADLINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION.*—The Secretary shall implement the amendments made by subsection (a) not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) *REPORTING.*—

(1) *ANNUAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.*—Section 7101(d)(2) of such title is amended—

(A) in subparagraph (E), by striking "; and" and inserting a semicolon;

(B) in subparagraph (F), by striking the period at the ending and inserting "; and"; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(G) with respect to hearings scheduled under section 7107(c)(2)(C) of this title—

"(i) the number of hearings scheduled under such section;

"(ii) the number of hearings under such section that were cancelled; and

"(iii) any statistical difference in outcomes between cases heard under such section and those held at the principal location of the Board or by picture and voice transmission at a facility of the Department."

(2) *ONE-TIME REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.*—The first report required to be submitted under section 7101(d) of title 38, United States Code, shall include the following information with respect to hearings scheduled under subparagraph (C) of paragraph (2) of subsection (c) of section 7101 of such title, as added by subsection (a):

(A) An outline of the outreach the Secretary of Veterans Affairs plans to conduct to inform veterans, families of veterans, survivors of veterans, veterans service organizations, military service organizations, congressional case-workers, advocates for veterans, and such other stakeholders as the Secretary considers appropriate about hearings scheduled under such subparagraph, including—

(i) a description of the resources required to conduct such outreach;

(ii) a timeline for conducting such outreach; and

(iii) information related to the advantages and potential technological challenges of conducting hearings under such subparagraph.

(B) A description of any modifications to the information technology systems of the Veterans Benefits Administration and the Board of Veterans' Appeals required to carry out hearings under such subparagraph, including cost estimates and a timeline for making such modifications.

(C) A detailed description of the intra-agency partnership between the Board of Veterans' Appeals and the telehealth program of the Veterans Health Administration as the Board conducts hearings under such subparagraph, including best practices, a risk assessment overview, risk mitigation efforts, and a plan for ongoing collaboration and information sharing.

(d) *COLLABORATION.*—*In developing the capacity and procedures to conduct hearings under subparagraph (C) of paragraph (2) of subsection (c) of section 7101 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall collaborate with, partner with, and give weight to the advice of veterans service organizations and such other stakeholders as the Secretary considers appropriate.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DAVID P. ROE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 4771, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4771, as amended, introduced by Mr. CUNNINGHAM. I support this legislation that creates an easy technological fix so veterans can quickly and conveniently attend their hearings before the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

Applying for disability compensation and benefits through VA can be a long and confusing ordeal, which is further complicated in the appeals process. Currently, veterans often face difficulties traveling to VA regional offices for their Board hearings, difficulties including long wait times, scheduling challenges, or simply the distance an elderly or disabled veteran may have to travel.

Madam Speaker, the VA Tele-Hearing Modernization Act permits veterans to provide testimony before a veterans law judge via video conference from a location outside of a VA facility. This means a veteran could testify in support of his or her claim from the comfort of their own home.

Now, VA told us this piece of legislation could have an especially positive impact on hearing access for homebound or rural veterans. This bill ensures veterans have the flexibility to appeal VA's decisions in a comfortable, accessible location without affecting the security of their personal information.

The tele-hearing program is modeled after the existing telehealth program at the Veterans Health Administration and will likely improve hearing attendance and help veterans receive their benefits. A tele-hearing pilot program conducted by the Board showed increased participation in hearings as well as increased efficiency and timeliness of requested hearings.

Under this bill, VA is required to provide annual reports to Congress with information about how often the tele-

hearing option is used by veterans and whether those claimants are as likely to have their claims granted as veterans using the traditional hearing methods. This report allows Congress to ensure this program is working the way it should.

I thank Representative CUNNINGHAM for introducing this bill, and I support this legislation for the step it takes to simplify the appeals process for our veterans.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4771, as amended, the Department of Veterans Affairs Tele-Hearing Modernization Act. This bill would expand the Board of Veterans' Appeals hearing options to include tele-hearings.

I appreciate my colleagues, Chairman ISAKSON, Chairman TAKANO, and Ranking Member TESTER, for working with me on this bill to ensure that the virtual hearing concept included in this bill represents the input of all four corners of Congress.

Madam Speaker, we all depend on and use our smartphones for just about everything we do these days. This legislation would allow veterans to use their personal device for a VA hearing.

I am happy that we are moving this legislation to make hearings more accessible to veterans, especially those in rural areas where I live or for whom travel might be physically challenging.

This bill was amended in committee to include additional reporting requirements that will help Congress monitor the implementation of this program. Specifically, the Board would be required to report on its outreach to veterans and stakeholders on the option for a tele-hearing, including the advantages and potential technological challenges of a tele-hearing, the IT modifications needed to conduct tele-hearings, and the partnership between the Board and the Veterans Health Administration, VHA, to share lessons learned from their respective programs since the tele-hearing program is modeled after the telehealth program that VA uses to increase access to care for veteran patients.

The amended bill would also require VA to collaborate with veteran service organizations and other stakeholders to ensure that those who represent veterans at these hearings will have input into how the program is developed so that it can best meet the needs of our veterans.

Madam Speaker, this bill has my full support, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CUNNINGHAM), my good friend, member of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, and author of H.R. 4771.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Madam Speaker, today I am proud to rise in support of

my bill, the VA Tele-Hearing Modernization Act, which will make it easier for our Nation's veterans to appeal their claims with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Currently, the Board of Veterans' Affairs only conducts tele-hearings from certain VA locations, meaning veterans have to travel to testify in support of their claims; and, in many cases, this forces Lowcountry veterans to drive all the way to Columbia.

My bill offers a commonsense solution to this problem by allowing veterans to teleconference into these hearings from the comfort of their own homes using their personal computers.

Further, this legislation will require these hearings to take place via a secure platform so that veterans do not have to sacrifice the security of their sensitive personal information to take advantage of this new process. This change will not only benefit those veterans who may be otherwise unable to travel for their hearing, but will also help to expedite the appeals process for veterans across the board.

With veterans given the freedom to participate in their appeals hearing from a place of their own choosing, no-shows, which add to the appeals backlog and slow down the process for everyone, will be significantly reduced, all with no additional cost to taxpayers.

□ 1645

The VA Tele-Hearing Modernization Act is exemplary of the sorts of advances that we can make when both parties come together for the sake of our veterans.

Madam Speaker, I thank Congressman KATKO for signing on as an original cosponsor. I also want to thank Chairman TAKANO and Ranking Member ROE for their leadership on the committee and for expediting this legislation, as well as their staffs for all their hard work.

Madam Speaker, I urge all my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join in supporting this legislation for our veterans, who have sacrificed too much to need to jump through hoops for a fair hearing on their claims.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CUNNINGHAM) for his hard work.

I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers. I also am prepared to close.

Madam Speaker, I encourage everyone to support this. This is obviously, in rural America, how we are going to have access to healthcare in the future. It absolutely makes sense. This technology is available to almost everyone.

It makes no sense to make an infirm veteran or other patients go miles and miles and hours. This just makes sense. We have the technology to do it today, and I strongly support this and encourage my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in passing this important piece of legislation, H.R. 4771, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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. 4771, as amended.

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

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to permit appellants to appear in cases before the Board of Veterans' Appeals by picture and voice transmission from locations other than facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VA OVERPAYMENT ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4360) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the due process accorded veterans with respect to recovery of overpayments made by the Department and other amounts owed by veterans to the United States, to improve the processing of veterans benefits by 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. 4360

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 "VA Overpayment Accountability Act".

SEC. 2. REPAIR OF CREDIT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 53 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§5320. Correction of erroneous information submitted to consumer reporting agencies

"(a) CORRECTING ERRORS BY THE DEPARTMENT.—In any case in which the Secretary finds that the Department has submitted erroneous information to a consumer reporting agency about the indebtedness of any person who has been determined by the Secretary to be indebted to the United States by virtue of the participation of that person in a benefits program administered by the Secretary, the Secretary shall—

"(1) instruct the consumer reporting agency to remove such erroneous information from the consumer report of such person or take such other action as may be required to ensure that such erroneous information is not included in the report of such person; and

"(2) transmit to the consumer reporting agency such information as the consumer reporting agency may require to take such appropriate actions.

"(b) CORRECTING ERRORS BY DEBT COLLECTORS.—In any case in which the Secretary

finds that a debt collector acting on behalf of the Department has submitted erroneous information to a consumer reporting agency about the indebtedness of any person who has been determined by the Secretary to be indebted to the United States by virtue of the participation of that person in a benefits program administered by the Secretary, the Secretary shall instruct the debt collector to request the consumer reporting agency remove such erroneous information from the consumer report of such person or take such other action as may be required to ensure such erroneous information is not included in the report of such person.

"(c) NOTICE.—Not later than 60 days after the date on which the Secretary issues an instruction under subsection (a)(1) or (b) with respect to a person, the Secretary shall notify the person that the Secretary issued such instruction.

"(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

"(1) The terms 'consumer report' and 'consumer reporting agency' have the meanings given such terms in section 603 of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (15 U.S.C. 1681a).

"(2) The term 'debt collector' has the meaning given such term in section 803 of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (15 U.S.C. 1692a)."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 53 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

"5320. Correction of erroneous information submitted to consumer reporting agencies."

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act and shall apply with respect to deductions made under section 5314 of such title, administrative costs under section 5315 of such title, and suits filed under section 5316 of such title on or after such date.

SEC. 3. IMPROVED PROCESSING OF BENEFITS BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall improve the information technology of the Department of Veterans Affairs (including the eBenefits system or successor system) as may be necessary to achieve the following:

(1) NOTIFICATION OF DEBTS INCURRED.—The Secretary shall provide a notification to a person who—

(A) is entitled to a payment from the Secretary under a benefits program administered by the Secretary;

(B) incurs a debt to the United States under that benefits program; and

(C) elects to receive such notifications.

(2) REVIEW OF INFORMATION REGARDING DEPENDENTS.—A person entitled to a payment from the Secretary under a benefits program administered by the Secretary may review information relating to dependents of that person.

(3) TRACKING METRICS.—The Secretary shall be able to track—

(A) the number and amount of payments made by the Secretary to a person entitled to a payment from the Secretary under a benefits program administered by the Secretary who incurs a debt to the United States under such program;

(B) the average debt to the United States incurred by a person described in subparagraph (A);

(C) how frequently the Secretary approves and denies applications for relief under section 5302(a) of title 38, United States Code; and

(D) such other metrics the Secretary determines appropriate.

SEC. 4. AUDIT OF ERRONEOUS PAYMENTS BY VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION; PLAN OF CORRECTION.

(a) AUDIT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall complete an audit to determine the following:

(1) The frequency by which the Department of Veterans Affairs makes an error that results in a payment to a person by virtue of such person's participation in a benefits program administered by the Secretary that such person is not entitled to or in an amount that exceeds the amount to which the person is entitled.

(2) Whether and to what degree vacant positions in the Veterans Benefits Administration affect such frequency.

(b) PLAN.—Not later than 30 days after the completion of the audit under subsection (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a plan and description of resources necessary to align information technology systems to ensure that errors described in subsection (a)(1) are not the result of communication or absence of communication between information technology systems.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DAVID P. ROE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 4360.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4360, the VA Overpayment Accountability Act, introduced by Representative KIM.

This bill protects veterans by ensuring that the Department of Veterans Affairs reviews and updates its systems and policies to minimize overpayments in the future and mitigate negative effects on veterans.

Now, under certain circumstances, if the Department of Veterans Affairs makes accounting errors that result in overpayment of benefits, veterans are left saddled with debt. Then, within a short period of time, these veterans are required to pay these overpayments back to VA, placing an extraordinary financial burden on them.

The VA can, and sometimes does, withhold part of veterans' monthly benefit checks to recover overpayments, exacerbating these financial hardships.

In some cases, VA may send these debts to a debt collection agency, compounding veterans' financial stress.

If the information submitted by VA to a consumer reporting agency is incorrect either because VA later determines its payment was not in error or

because VA decides to waive the debt, veterans may still suffer harm to their credit. This bill makes sure VA rights this wrong.

Under this legislation, VA would be required to instruct the consumer reporting agency to remove any erroneous information from veterans' consumer reports. And if VA employs a debt collection agency and that agency then reports erroneous information to a consumer reporting agency, VA must instruct the debt agency to fix the error.

Importantly, this bill also requires VA to maintain future tracking metrics. This information tracks the number of VA overpayments, average amount of overpayment, and how often VA grants and denies veterans' requests for relief from this debt.

As we know, VA's information technology system hinders its ability to manage erroneous or duplicate payments. That is why this legislation requires an audit of overpayments, so whether it is its staffing shortages or IT failures, data can guide VA and Congress on where resources should be directed.

I wholeheartedly support this legislation to financially protect veterans, because it is an essential step that we need to take to ensure that veterans are not forced to face severe consequences due to VA's mistakes.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4360, the VA Overpayment Accountability Act.

Veterans receive overpayments for many reasons. For example, a veteran may erroneously receive drill pay and disability compensation at the same time. A veteran may reduce their course load after their GI Bill payment has been sent from the Department of Veterans Affairs to the school, or a veterans' marital status may have changed, but they continue to receive additional compensation for dependents. As a result, VA creates a debt that the veteran must pay back.

In some instances, the veteran may be aware that he or she had been overpaid and that VA will most likely ask them to return the money, but in other circumstances, they may not.

I am concerned that many overpayments are caused by VA's negligence, not the veterans.

Unexpectedly receiving a debt notification letter can create big problems for veterans and their families, especially if they can't afford to pay VA back; therefore, it is critical that the VA has the tools it needs to effectively prevent overpayments, and that if certain types of overpayments are unavoidable, VA's recoupment process is fair and considerate for veterans.

This bill is sponsored by Congressman ANDY KIM from New Jersey and is intended to ensure that veterans are

not unduly harmed by VA's debt collection process.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate his leadership on this issue, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4360.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. KIM), my good friend.

Mr. KIM. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise today because America's veterans deserve America's best. They deserve the best healthcare and the best government service.

I introduced this bipartisan VA Overpayment Accountability Act with Congressman FRENCH HILL, because sometimes our veterans do not receive the best.

Through several programs, the Department of Veterans Affairs provides monthly payments to veterans and other beneficiaries. Because the VA often relies on outdated systems to provide those payments, those recipients sometimes receive overpayments at no fault of their own. When this happens, it is the veteran who pays a price.

In order to compensate for their mistake, the VA will withhold payment from veterans.

At a time in which 1.4 million veterans across the United States are struggling with poverty issues, withholding payment can have severe consequences for Americans who earned these benefits.

Because there is no limit on how much the VA can ask a vet to repay and no limit on how far back it can go to collect the debt, these sums can impact the credit and financial stability of veterans.

The VA Overpayment Accountability Act aims to fix these issues by improving the VA IT systems that are often the cause of these overpayments. It also provides credit protection for veterans who are the victims of overpayments and become targets of unfair practices.

As a grateful Nation, we should aim to honor our veterans, not send debt collectors after them because of a failure at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Barbara Kim-Hagemann, the State Commander of the Department of New Jersey Veterans of Foreign Wars said in her endorsement remarks of this bill that it is imperative that Congress work to correct "harsh Veterans Administration procedures in recouping benefit overpayments from veterans who are barely living paycheck to paycheck."

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the thousands of veterans that Barbara fights for every day and the millions across our country who sacrificed in their service, I call on my colleagues to join me and Congressman HILL in this bipartisan effort to make the VA work and honor our veterans.

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gen-

tleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL), my good friend.

He is incredibly committed to our veterans. I have toured two different veterans' medical centers in his home State of Arkansas.

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Tennessee and my good friend from California for their leadership of our Veterans' Affairs Committee. They are a dynamic duo. I appreciate the opportunity to be on the floor to be in support of this list of good bills tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I particularly want to thank my friend from New Jersey, Mr. KIM, for his hard work and collaboration on this important bill for our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, in the last 5 years I have served in this House, I have had over 3,200 cases completed and closed for veterans in my district.

As a former community banker, when I look at those cases and I listen to these stories, this too often is a challenge for our veterans. It is a crazy challenge. Mr. Speaker, that withholding a payment can have severe consequences for our brave veterans who are out there just doing their job, through no fault of their own and through a computer mess up or an IT problem, our veterans receive an overpayment and then suddenly get a letter a few weeks later saying, "Oh, hey, we made a mistake. You owe us \$5,000 back."

Well, the normal American, Mr. Speaker, doesn't have that kind of financial planning expertise, and relies on the quality of our VA services to not make mistakes like that.

So it is a pleasure to work with Mr. KIM on this measure to try to improve that situation and answer the IG's own report at the VA that this is a serious problem affecting over 1.5 million veterans.

This bill tries to tackle this issue by improving Veterans Administration IT systems, which are often the cause of this challenge, and offers veterans that unknowingly are forced to go without their earned benefits for extended periods of time some recourse on being a victim of an overpayment and have their credit impaired.

I am proud to represent veterans from Camp Robinson and Little Rock Air Force Base in our central Arkansas area. I am proud to work on something that rectifies a common problem across this country.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from New Jersey for his work and for the leadership of the committee for bringing this bill to the House floor.

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to extend, again, my gratitude for the insightful and hard work that the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. KIM) has done with this legislation to correct an injustice

which has been occurring. I thank Congressman KIM for this very important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to extend my gratitude to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL), whose district I have visited and whose medical center I have also visited. And I have to say that he runs a crack operation. That came out wrong.

He runs, not a crack operation, but amazing constituent services for his veterans.

You know, this unfortunate situation where the VA overpays veterans and then claws back those payments will be corrected by this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say I have no further speakers and I am prepared to close.

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

□ 1700

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

Mr. Speaker, I don't know about New Jersey and California, but a crack operation where we are is a good one, so I think I would take that as a compliment.

I thank Mr. KIM and my good friend Mr. HILL for their work on this.

It does create, as the chairman said, tremendous anxiety and problems for our veterans. It is needless. Many times, it is just a bureaucratic mistake. I think all of us have suffered those with the IRS or whomever, so this is a way to correct that. I thank these Members for bringing it up.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this bill, and I urge Members to.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 4360, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BEYER). 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. 4360.

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.

PROTECTING FAMILIES OF FALLEN SERVICEMEMBERS ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4356) to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to allow certain individuals to terminate contracts for telephone, multichannel video programming, or internet access service, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4356

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 "Protecting Families of Fallen Servicemembers Act".

SEC. 2. TERMINATION OF CONTRACTS FOR TELEPHONE, MULTICHANNEL VIDEO PROGRAMMING, OR INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE BY CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS UNDER SERVICEMEMBERS CIVIL RELIEF ACT.

Section 305A(a) of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. 3956(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(4) ADDITIONAL INDIVIDUALS COVERED.—For purposes of this section, the following individuals shall be treated as a servicemember covered by paragraph (1):

"(A) A spouse or dependent of a servicemember who dies while in military service or a spouse or dependent of a member of the reserve components who dies while performing duty described in subparagraph (C).

"(B) A spouse or dependent of a servicemember who incurs a catastrophic injury or illness (as that term is defined in section 439(g) of title 37, United States Code), if the servicemember incurs the catastrophic injury or illness while in military service or performing duty described in subparagraph (C).

"(C) A member of the reserve components performing military service or performing full-time National Guard duty, active Guard and Reserve duty, or inactive-duty training (as such terms are defined in section 101(d) of title 10, United States Code)."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman 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 to insert extraneous material on H.R. 4356, as amended.

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 rise in support of H.R. 4356, as amended, the Protecting Families of Fallen Servicemembers Act.

Mr. Speaker, this bill was introduced by Representative JOSH HARDER from California, and I thank him for his work with the committee on the bill. It expands on the work the committee did last Congress in partnership with Representative BUSTOS to improve the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act.

This bill ensures that spouses and dependents of both Active and Reserve component servicemembers who are catastrophically injured or pass away while in service to this Nation have protections under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, otherwise known as SCRA. Specifically, the bill allows impacted servicemembers or their families to terminate cable, internet, and phone service.

Servicemembers and families undergo difficult life transitions because of a catastrophic injury or death of loved ones. Families should have the flexi-

bility to be at the servicemember's side during recovery. Surviving spouses and family members of fallen servicemembers should easily be able to move closer to family and friends or other support networks. Families dealing with the difficult loss or injury of their loved ones should not have to worry about contracts or cancellation fees.

I would like to note that this legislation unanimously passed the House last Congress and has been updated to reflect improvements recommended by veterans service organizations.

I also thank Dr. WENSTRUP, who served with us on the committee for several Congresses, for his focus on the issue and for working with Mr. HARDER on this bill.

Finally, I thank the Paralyzed Veterans of America for highlighting the need to include catastrophically disabled veterans and families in our work to improve the SCRA.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the bipartisan work of Congressman LEVIN and Congressman BILIRAKIS on moving this bill through committee.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to join me in voting to pass H.R. 4356, as amended, and 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. 4356, as amended, the Protecting Families of Fallen Servicemembers Act.

Mr. Speaker, this bill would amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to give a spouse or dependent of a servicemember who experiences a catastrophic injury or who dies while in military service the ability to terminate telephone, multichannel video programming, or internet service contracts.

This bill would also extend SCRA protections to members of the National Guard and Reserve who are executing Active Duty orders or performing inactive duty training. These are worthwhile protections for our servicemembers and are worthy of our support.

This bill is sponsored by Congressman JOSH HARDER from California, and I appreciate his work.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

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

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP), my good friend. Dr. Colonel BRAD WENSTRUP is a combat veteran of Iraq who is still on Reserve duty and has served at both Fort Belvoir Hospital and Walter Reed Hospital.

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I thank Dr. ROE for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4356, the Protecting Families of Fallen Servicemembers Act.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the armed services, I know how important it is to protect the families of those who serve when tragedy strikes. That is why I was proud to join Representative HARDER to introduce this legislation, which will allow the spouses and dependents of servicemembers who are killed or catastrophically injured in the line of duty to terminate their phone, internet, and TV contracts without penalty.

Last year, the Veterans Benefits and Transition Act of 2018 passed the House with overwhelming support. That legislation included a number of changes to existing law to protect our servicemembers and our Gold Star families.

However, due to a drafting error, the bill only allowed servicemembers, not their spouses and dependents, to end their phone, internet, and TV contracts without penalty. This bill corrects that error and ensures that grieving families are able to terminate contracts, giving them the freedom to relocate based on the needs of their families.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the House Veterans' Affairs Committee for advancing this legislation to the floor, and I urge all Members to support this bill.

Mr. TAKANO. 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, in closing, this is commonsense legislation—I talk about this a lot when I go home—about a grieving spouse, a husband or wife, who has lost a family member in combat in service to our country. I saw many of those this past weekend, as many of us did, as we attended veterans events.

I can't think of anything worse than being a spouse who is in a city that is unfamiliar to them, away from family, and to have these contractual obligations through our catastrophically injured veteran or a deceased veteran.

It is the right thing to do. Everywhere I go and talk about this throughout the country, our fellow Americans want this done.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly encourage my colleagues to support this much-needed 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 agree with my friend and colleague from Tennessee, Ranking Member ROE. This is commonsense legislation. We should not compound the suffering of a family, whether they are caretakers or grieving, with the complications that they may not be aware of, which are these continuing contractual agreements for cable, internet, or other types of contractual agreements of the sort. This bill addresses a way for families to easily terminate these contracts.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 4356, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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. 4356, 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.

GI BILL PLANNING ACT OF 2019

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4162) to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the period under which an election must be made for entitlement to educational assistance under the All-Volunteer Educational Assistance Program of Department of Veterans Affairs, to phase out the use of such program, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4162

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 “GI Bill Planning Act of 2019”.

SEC. 2. PERIOD FOR ELECTION TO RECEIVE BENEFITS UNDER ALL-VOLUNTEER EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3011 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)(1), by striking “Any such election shall be made at the time the individual initially enters on active duty as a member of the Armed Forces” and inserting “Any such election shall be made during the 90-day period beginning on the day that is 180 days after the date on which the individual initially enters initial training”; and

(2) in subsection (b)(1), by striking “that such individual is entitled to such pay” and inserting “that begin after the date that is 270 days after the date on which the individual initially enters initial training”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. PHASE OUT OF ALL-VOLUNTEER EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Subsection (a)(1)(A) of section 3011 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 1, is further amended by striking “after June 30, 1985” and inserting “during the period beginning July 1, 1985, and ending September 30, 2029”.

SEC. 4. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman 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 to insert extraneous material on H.R. 4162, as amended.

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 rise in support of H.R. 4162, as amended, the GI Bill Planning Act of 2019.

Mr. Speaker, this bill was introduced by Representative JACK BERGMAN and Representative KATHLEEN RICE. Both of them are great members of our committee and tireless fighters for veterans. I thank Representative BERGMAN for his work on this legislation and his commitment to working with me on several issues related to veterans education and healthcare.

Mr. Speaker, with the enactment of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, the Montgomery GI Bill has become a less attractive option for many servicemembers. In most cases, the benefits are worse for servicemembers when choosing the Montgomery GI Bill instead of the Forever GI Bill. The issue is that many servicemembers sign up without knowing what they are signing up for.

For a servicemember to receive benefits through the Montgomery GI Bill, they must elect to pay into it when they first enter the military. Often, this is a chaotic period in a servicemember's life, to say the least. They are unable to give the decision much thought or do not fully understand the full impact of the decision at the time.

Also, there have been ongoing reports that some servicemembers are pressured to sign up by instructors at initial entry training or lose the benefit. This bill addresses this concern by moving the date when a servicemember elects to join the program so they can better understand and make a better informed decision.

Many end up signing up for the Montgomery GI Bill benefits only to never use them and never see them refunded. This is wrong and a waste of our servicemembers' money.

The committee will work to ensure that the Post-9/11 GI Bill is updated to ensure that future generations who may have benefited more from the Montgomery GI Bill than the Post-9/11 GI Bill do not see one bit of a drop-off in potential benefits. With the work we are doing to empower State approving agencies to improve the quality of education, now is the time for us also to improve the quality of benefits for our servicemembers.

I thank Representative BERGMAN and Representative RICE for their leadership, and I urge all of my colleagues to support the passage of H.R. 4162.

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. 4162, as amended, the GI Bill Planning Act of 2019.

Mr. Speaker, in order to be eligible for the Montgomery GI Bill, servicemembers automatically have \$100 a month deducted from their paycheck for the first 12 months of their service for a total of \$1,200. Currently, servicemembers have to elect to opt out of these payments just a few short days into their basic training or boot camp. From personal experience, I can say that is not the time to be making such an important decision.

This bill would extend the time the servicemember has to elect out of the Montgomery GI Bill to a 90-day period beginning 180 days after the date the servicemember enters training. It gives them 6 months to kind of think about it a little bit and then some time.

□ 1715

By delaying the decision to elect out of that Montgomery GI Bill, servicemembers will have more of an opportunity to research which GI Bill, the Post-9/11 GI Bill, or the Montgomery GI Bill is best suited to meet their educational needs in the future outside of the pressure and constraints of boot camp.

In addition, this bill would responsibly sunset the Montgomery GI Bill benefit for new enlistees in 2029. This would mean that current servicemembers or anyone who chooses this benefit before 2029, would not be impacted.

While the legacy of the Montgomery GI Bill benefit has helped thousands, it only makes sense to move to the more generous Post-9/11 GI Bill. This change would help ease confusion among student veterans and make things easier for the Department of Veterans Affairs to administer the benefit.

I am also glad that the text of my bill, H.R. 3608, which would extend in-state tuition benefits to veterans is also included in this bill. The 2014 CHOICE Act required that public schools charge veterans who are within 3 years of their discharge in-state tuition rates regardless of whether they meet the State's residency requirements in order to be eligible for GI Bill programs.

That requirement was waivable, but to date, all States and public schools are complying with it. Last Congress I was proud to coauthor the Forever GI Bill, which, among other improvements to the Post-9/11 GI Bill, eliminated the requirement that a veteran's 36 months of GI Bill benefits expire 15 years after their last discharge from Active Duty.

Now that this change has become law, it makes no sense to require that the veteran be within 3 years of their discharge to receive in-state tuition rates if they have their entire lives to use their GI Bill benefits.

I want to thank my good friend and colleague Congressman JACK BERGMAN from Michigan for all of his hard work on this bill, and I urge my colleagues to support the GI Bill Planning Act of 2019.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers and I am prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN), to debate his bill. General BERGMAN served as the chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations in the 115th Congress, and he is now the ranking member.

Mr. Speaker, I didn't get a chance to wish the gentleman a belated happy Veterans Day.

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his recognition.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of H.R. 4162. But I would like to rise on behalf of not only the veterans, but also, the day before Veterans Day was the 244th birthday of the United States Marine Corps.

The point is, all of the members of the military who serve and have served, no matter what branch of service, we are proudly serving in the culture that we chose.

That would be, in my case, the Marine Corps. And we are honored that so many of our fellow veterans from the other services have chosen to join us in the celebration of service to our country. So it is an honor to be here, but also it is more of an honor to represent the veterans on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, so ably led by Chairman TAKANO and Ranking Member ROE.

As far as H.R. 4162, as amended, the GI Bill Planning Act of 2019, the support we have gotten across the committee on this is nothing short of spectacular and bipartisan. I would like to thank Congresswoman KATHLEEN RICE for her support in making this happen.

As Ranking Member ROE mentioned, during the first 2 weeks of boot camp, recruits are really not focused on making any big decisions, other than staying with the program and making sure that they get through boot camp. So they are not only asked to make a tough decision. They are actually required to make a very consequential decision at a time of extreme fatigue.

They must decide whether to opt out of their Montgomery GI Bill benefit or pay \$1,200 to keep their eligibility for down the road later on when they are eligible to use it as a veteran.

Seventy percent of these enlistees are choosing to pay this relatively large expense, but few will ever use the Montgomery GI Bill. Rather, 97 percent of veterans today are choosing the newer Post-9/11 GI Bill, which usually amounts to a higher monetary benefit.

My legislation, the GI Bill Planning Act, would delay this decision to no earlier than 6 months after these young men and women have completed boot camp and entered service, instead of that first 2 weeks, again, very critical in their time for success in boot camp.

Additionally, this bill would responsibly end new enlistee enrollments in

the outdated Montgomery GI Bill by October 2029. While the Montgomery GI Bill has helped millions of veterans since 1984, it is time to simplify benefits and sunset this bill.

Mr. Speaker, not only can this legislation save enlistees money, but it can also ensure that they are more informed in their educational benefits decisions. It is important that these motivated young men and women know that we in Congress have their backs and are thinking of them as they plan their bright futures in service to our great Nation.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4162, as amended.

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I, too, wish the Marine Corps a happy birthday, but as usual, they are behind the Army. Their birthday is later than the U.S. Army which is older than the Marine Corps. I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Let me just say, I wish to extend a belated happy Veterans Day to both of my colleagues, Dr. ROE and General BERGMAN. We certainly appreciate their service. I extend this congratulations and gratitude to all of our servicemembers, and I underscore all of our servicemembers, whether they be the Marines, the Army, the Air Force, the Navy, or the Coast Guard. And I understand the friendly rivalry, but I want to make sure that everyone knows whatever service they engaged, that America appreciates them.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I, too, have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close. I recommend that all of my colleagues support this very commonsense legislation, the GI Bill.

I used the GI Bill in 1975–1976, when I got out of the Army. It was an amazing piece of legislation. It helped me then. I am appreciative to this day that my country invested \$300 a month in me for 2 years, and that I got to use that. It really helped me a lot.

This bill that we have now, the Forever GI Bill, is a phenomenal benefit for young people. We know the GI Bill helped transform a generation after World War II. I believe this Forever GI Bill will transform this generation, and I wholeheartedly encourage my colleagues to support it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I wish to associate myself with the remarks of the ranking member regarding the transformative power of the GI Bill right after World War II, what it did for a generation.

I want to also take note that the Forever GI Bill was shepherded by Ranking Member ROE when he was the chairman and it still is an amazing, remarkable accomplishment that we

have made the GI Bill a lifetime benefit that can be used at any point in a veteran's lifetime. And, also, if they don't use it, they can transfer it to a spouse or their children. This is a remarkable piece of legislation.

It took cooperation of a minority working in good faith during the last session of Congress, and I think it is a remarkable accomplishment.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 4162, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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. 4162, as amended.

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.

VA DESIGN-BUILD CONSTRUCTION ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2019

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3996) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for certain requirements relating to the use of the design-build construction method for Department of Veterans Affairs construction projects, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3996

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 "VA Design-Build Construction Enhancement Act of 2019".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING THE DESIGN-BUILD CONSTRUCTION METHOD FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs found that, in the Aurora, Colorado, replacement medical center project, the Department decided to change its acquisition strategy from traditional design-bid-build to integrated-design and construct in the fourth year of the project, which was too late for the integrated design-construction firm to provide effective input into the design.

(2) In response to deficiencies in the Department's management of the Aurora, Colorado, replacement medical center project and in order to prevent reoccurrence of such deficiencies in the future, Congress enacted section 8103 of title 38, United States Code, which mandates that an appropriate non-Department Federal entity take over management of future super construction projects of the Department, including project design,

acquisition, construction, and contract changes.

(3) It has been the policy of the Federal Government since the enactment of the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-106) that design-build shall be used when appropriate circumstances are present.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the unsuccessful use of the integrated-design and construct acquisition method in the Aurora, Colorado, replacement medical center project should not be interpreted to mean that design-build, as described in section 3309 of title 41, United States Code, is unsuitable for construction projects of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(2) when used properly by adequately trained acquisition and construction management personnel and in the appropriate circumstances, design-build is an effective construction acquisition method for the Department of Veterans Affairs, which has been demonstrated to reduce change orders, decrease the duration between design completion and beneficial occupancy, and increase warranty protections.

SEC. 3. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS USE OF DESIGN-BUILD CONSTRUCTION METHOD.

(a) USE OF DESIGN-BUILD SELECTION PROCEDURES.—Section 8106 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(d)(1) If the Secretary seeks to enter into a contract for the design and construction of a building or facility, the Secretary shall use the procedures established in section 3309 of title 41.

"(2) In the case of a super construction project for which a non-Department Federal entity provides project management services under section 8103(e) of this title, the Secretary shall not discourage the entity from using the procedures established in section 3309 of title 41."

(b) COVERED CERTIFICATION PROGRAM.—Section 8103(g)(6)(A) of such title is amended by inserting "including design-build construction" before the period at the end.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman 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 have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 3996.

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 rise in support of H.R. 3996, the VA Design-Build Construction Enhancement Act of 2019. This bipartisan bill encourages VA to use a method of managing construction projects termed design-build in appropriate circumstances.

In addition, this bill incorporates design-build training into the VA construction management curriculum. There have been multiple internal VA and Government Accountability Office reports that have been very critical,

documenting serious delays in cost overruns in VA facility construction and other projects.

At present, both veterans and taxpayers are suffering from the cumbersome VA construction process. I am confident this piece of legislation will help deliver state-of-the-art facilities to our veterans in a more effective and expeditious manner.

Design-build is a proven way to deliver construction projects in a more efficient and timely manner. This method is widely used in the private sector, and it has been used in parts of the Federal Government for over 20 years.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with this technique, design-build is a delivery method for construction projects that combines the architectural, engineering, and construction services into a single contract. It is an innovation from traditional design-bid-build construction, where design and construction are sequential and performed by different contractors, thus creating costly and lengthy timelines for delivering much-needed sites of care for our veterans.

Over the years, the Department of Veterans Affairs has faced numerous challenges when it comes to managing construction projects. I am aware that some of these challenges are caused by Congress due to the time it takes to authorize and secure funds for new builds. However, a good portion of these construction challenges are self-inflicted.

This committee is intimately aware of the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center in Aurora, Colorado. Not only was the opening of the new state-of-the-art medical center several years delayed, it was \$1 billion over budget. This is a tragic disservice to our Nation's veterans and taxpayers.

Unfortunately, Aurora, Colorado, is only one of several examples of challenged VA construction projects. The VA is currently facing a multimillion-dollar backlog of construction projects. I am confident that a shift to design-build in appropriate circumstances could tremendously decrease the cost and shorten the length of time for VA construction projects.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support H.R. 3996, and 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. 3996, the VA Design-Build Construction Enhancement Act of 2019.

This bill is sponsored by my good friend Congressman JIM BANKS from Indiana. Congressman BANKS is a former chairman and current ranking member of the Subcommittee on Technology Modernization and a tireless advocate for his fellow veterans.

His bill would encourage the use of the design-build construction method in the Department of Veterans Affairs by adding a reference to VA's construction statute, to existing government-

wide design-build construction procedures; prohibiting VA from discouraging other Federal agencies that manage construction projects on VA's behalf from using design-build; and incorporating design-build into VA's construction management training curriculum.

Design-build is a construction delivery method that is characterized by combining architectural, engineering, and construction services into a single contract. Design-build has been used successfully across the Federal Government since the mid-1990s.

When used appropriately, it can accelerate the completion of construction projects, reduce change orders, and increase warranty protections.

However, design-build has been used infrequently by VA, particularly after it was unfairly blamed for the troubles that plagued the replacement medical center construction project in Aurora, Colorado, which is just outside of Denver, despite not being used until 4 years into that project when the majority of the design-build had already been completed.

As the chairman said, that project was \$1 billion over budget. And to put that in perspective for just regular folks like me out there where I live, that is 1,000 million dollars over budget. That is how much a billion is.

□ 1730

I believe that VA could have avoided these excessive change orders and other issues that caused the delays and cost overruns that came to characterize the Denver project had they incorporated design-build principles much earlier.

Moving forward, I hope that the Department learns from the difficult lessons that Denver taught and does not shy away from using the design-build method, when appropriate, to deliver high-quality construction projects to serve our Nation's veterans.

I thank Congressman BANKS for his work on this bill; and while I wish Chairman TAKANO had used regular order to bring it forward, I am pleased to support its passage today.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BANKS), my good friend. I have had a chance to visit his district and VA and talked to many groups in his district. There is no more passionate member of our committee than Congressman BANKS.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of my legislation, H.R. 3996, the VA Design-Build Construction Enhancement Act.

I first want to thank Mr. PERLMUTTER, my colleague on the other side

of the aisle, for his tireless support and advocacy for veterans in the Denver area and beyond and for cosponsoring this legislation with me.

Design-build has proven itself to be an innovative and effective method for managing construction projects in the private sector and in some key Federal agencies. The most prominent application of design-build was to rebuild the Pentagon after 9/11, which was completed in less than 1 year.

VA has a multibillion-dollar backlog of construction projects but has never made much use of the design-build method, despite it being available for over 20 years. Unfortunately, one of the few times the VA did use a method similar to design-build was during the troubled Aurora, Colorado, replacement medical center project that we have already heard about today.

And as Dr. ROE noted, the VA only involved the construction contractor in the design decisions after the design was already complete. Design-build seems to have been given a bad name in the VA—unfairly—as a result.

My legislation today makes it clear that design-build is available to the VA and encourages the Department to use it when appropriate, as is already stipulated by the law, and incorporates design-build training into the VA construction management curriculum.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure that the VA is using every available tool to deliver world-class facilities to our veterans. When used correctly, design-build can speed up construction and minimize costly change orders. That is exactly what we need in the VA, and I am committed to making sure that that happens.

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I think this is commonsense legislation, and certainly we can avoid what happened in Denver. That thousand million dollars could have been spent on veterans' healthcare or benefits or other much-needed projects in the VA. We don't have an endless supply of money.

I certainly appreciate Mr. BANKS' work on this.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, let me just say that, as a former community college trustee that had responsibility for overseeing many projects that were undertaken to build out the community college district, design-build was employed in those instances. And where appropriately used, I agree with the comments by my friends from the other side of the aisle that this can make future VA construction projects more efficient and more cost-effective for our taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 3996, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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. 3996.

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.

FALLEN WARRIOR BATTLEFIELD CROSS MEMORIAL ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1424) to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure the Secretary of Veterans Affairs permits the display of Fallen Soldier Displays in national cemeteries.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1424

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 "Fallen Warrior Battlefield Cross Memorial Act".

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION FOR FALLEN SOLDIER DISPLAYS IN NATIONAL CEMETERIES.

Section 2403 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(d)(1) Subject to standards established by the Secretary, the Secretary shall permit the display of a Fallen Soldier Display in any national cemetery.

"(2) In this subsection, the term 'Fallen Soldier Display' means a memorial monument in honor of fallen members of the Armed Forces that may include a replica of an inverted rifle, boots, helmets, and identification tag."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman 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 to insert extraneous material on H.R. 1424.

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 rise in support of H.R. 1424, the Fallen Warrior Battlefield Cross Memorial Act, introduced by Representative ANTHONY GONZALEZ of Ohio.

This act permits the Secretary of the VA to allow the Fallen Soldier Display, also known as the Battlefield Cross Memorial, in national cemeteries.

Battlefield crosses honor fallen soldiers using symbols of their service. These symbols have evolved since their

initial use in the American Revolutionary War when they were used as a crude marker as the position of a fallen soldier. The cultural position remains today, as units in theater traditionally hold a remembrance ceremony in country to allow the unit to pay last respects to those killed in action.

These displays are meant to honor those who lost their lives in service by featuring replicas of inverted rifles, boots, helmets, and identification tags. A U.S. Army field manual states: “The helmet and identification tags signify the dead soldier. The inverted rifle with bayonet signals a time for prayer, a break in the action to pay tribute to our comrade. The combat boots represent the final march of the last battle.”

VA’s National Cemetery Administration currently allows for display of a cross, but it has not specifically addressed the Battlefield Cross Memorial. In fact, in 2017, a Battlefield Cross Memorial was removed from the Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery.

Though the cemetery ultimately decided to restore the memorial, this legislation would ensure the Battlefield Cross Memorial would also be permitted at national cemeteries and prevent future misinterpretations.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize the sacrifices of the women and men who gave their lives in service to our Nation and the right of a community to honor its fallen heroes. I urge all Members to support H.R. 1424, and 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. 1424, the Fallen Warrior Battlefield Cross Memorial Act. This bill would require the Department of Veterans Affairs’ national cemeteries to allow the display of the battlefield cross, which is a monument that depicts a fallen servicemember by an inverted rifle with a helmet and dog tags on top and a pair of combat boots at the bottom. We have all seen this.

In 2017, a VA employee misinterpreted VA policy and removed a battlefield cross from the Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery, as well as two other similar memorials in cemeteries in Illinois and Michigan. The objection to the memorials were that they contained realistic depictions of firearms.

As one Ohio veteran described, this image is one that veterans “have seen in battlefields, on ships, on aircraft carriers, wherever we lost men. It’s a symbol of respect and thanks. . . . It means a lot to veterans.”

I could not have said it better myself, Mr. Speaker; although, I do note that the battlefield cross is a powerful symbol that is used to honor all of our fallen warriors, both men and women.

In response to veterans’ and congressional concerns over the incident, the Department reinstated the memorial monuments and clarified that VA

cemeteries can display this image. However, this bill is necessary to codify that policy and to ensure that VA does not ban this image ever again.

This bill has my full support, and I appreciate Congressman ANTHONY GONZALEZ from Ohio for introducing it and for his leadership on this issue.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. GONZALEZ), the author of this bill. I appreciate the gentleman is a new Member, but it didn’t take him long to jump into gear and to recognize a wrong and to right that wrong.

Mr. GONZALEZ of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1424, the Fallen Warrior Battlefield Cross Memorial Act is the first piece of legislation I introduced as a Member of Congress, and it is fitting that we discuss it on the floor today, just one day after Veterans Day.

This bipartisan legislation would protect the display of these memorials at our national cemeteries and bar the Department of Veterans Affairs from removing these tributes, as they did in national cemeteries across the Midwest in 2017. This legislation comes straight from the veteran community and my northeast Ohio district.

Over the past several years, Elton Boyer, the president of the 555th Honors Detachment, made this bill his mission as he worked to erect a Battlefield Cross Memorial at Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery in Seville. He and the honors detachments at Western Reserve collected the spent brass from the military funerals they oversaw at the cemetery with the goal to someday melt them down and form them into a heartwarming tribute to the fallen warriors laid to rest.

When Battlefield Cross Memorials were removed from the cemetery in the fall of 2017, Elton’s work was put at risk. Elton wrote my predecessor, Congressman Jim Renacci, for help, stating: “It has been said that the soldier’s cross is a symbol for caring, honoring, and remembering. ‘No one is left behind.’”

Elton passed away last month, but I know that he is looking upon this House today, proud of the vote we are about to take. His efforts were not in vain.

Battlefield Cross Memorials stand in cemeteries across our Nation as a tribute to the service of fallen soldiers who have given their lives for our country. They depict the soldier’s boots, helmet, dog tag, and inverted rifle, and have been a noncontroversial, time-honored tradition since at least the Civil War.

As Strongsville, Ohio, VFW Commander Tim Zvoncheck told me: “It’s imperative that this custom continues to be displayed for as long as the sons and daughters of this Nation are willing to give their lives in its defense.”

Michael Kuhn, a combat veteran from Massillon, Ohio, explained to me what this memorial means to him:

The battlefield cross encapsulates so many of the most important things to a combat vet: the rifle, the boots, the tags, and, most of all, the fallen comrade. It’s extremely important for us to have those things wrapped up in one memorial for us to kneel to, grieve with, and talk to our brothers in arms that have died the ultimate death in laying down their life for us and their country. As a combat vet, you relate to very little outside of that world and always feel like an outsider. Whenever you see that combat cross, it brings a somber, quiet feeling of peace for that moment that you have that direct line to your fallen comrade.

I thank Chairman TAKANO and Ranking Member ROE for bringing H.R. 1424 to the floor today and recognizing how important this legislation is to our veteran communities, and I urge my colleagues to vote in support of the bill, H.R. 1424.

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I am prepared to close, and I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I can think of no other time better than the day right after Veterans Day to bring this up and to vote on this legislation.

I have lost friends in combat in the Vietnam War and know many families, as most of us have visited with families who have lost members.

I also want to say that nowhere in the country—really, in the world—do we honor our cemeteries more than the VA does. The VA does a phenomenal job in our national cemeteries. And I have had an opportunity to travel to Europe and visit those cemeteries in Normandy, Flanders Field, Chateau-Thierry, and many others.

It is really a place of sacred honor, these cemeteries are, and it is only appropriate that we allow and have this symbol there codified by law.

I thank Congressman GONZALEZ for his first bill. He can take great pride in having this bill passed and signed into law by the President.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of our Members to support H.R. 1424, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I wish to associate myself with the remarks of the ranking member regarding the beautiful work that our Cemetery Administration does for our veteran cemeteries and the National Battle Monuments Commission for the work they do with our cemeteries abroad. They are truly the pride of our country and fitting ways to show our gratitude and respect for those who have fallen in the service of our country.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative GONZALEZ for his work on this bill. I urge my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 1424, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1745

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. 1424.

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.

DEBORAH SAMPSON ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3224) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for increased access to Department of Veterans Affairs medical care for women veterans, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3224

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Deborah Sampson Act”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Sec. 101. Office of Women’s Health in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 102. Expansion of capabilities of women veterans call center to include text messaging.

Sec. 103. Requirement for Department of Veterans Affairs internet website to provide information on services available to women veterans.

Sec. 104. Report on Women Veterans Retrofit Initiative.

Sec. 105. Establishment of environment of care standards and inspections at Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers.

Sec. 106. Additional funding for primary care and emergency care clinicians in Women Veterans Health Care Mini-Residency Program.

Sec. 107. Establishment of women veteran training module for non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care providers.

TITLE II—MEDICAL CARE

Sec. 201. Improved access to Department of Veterans Affairs medical care for women veterans.

Sec. 202. Counseling and treatment for sexual trauma.

Sec. 203. Counseling in retreat settings for women veterans and other individuals.

Sec. 204. Improvement of health care services provided to newborn children by Department of Veterans Affairs.

TITLE III—REPORTS AND OTHER MATTERS

Subtitle A—Reports

Sec. 301. Assessment of effects of intimate partner violence on women veterans by Advisory Committee on Women Veterans.

Sec. 302. Study on staffing of Women Veteran Program Manager program at medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs and training of staff.

Sec. 303. Report on availability of prosthetic items for women veterans from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 304. Study of barriers for women veterans to health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 305. Report regarding veterans who receive benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 306. Study on Women Veteran Coordinator program.

Subtitle B—Other Matters

Sec. 321. Anti-harassment and anti-sexual assault policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 322. Support for organizations that have a focus on providing assistance to women veterans and their families.

Sec. 323. Gap analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs programs that provide assistance to women veterans who are homeless.

Sec. 324. Department of Veterans Affairs public-private partnership on legal services for women veterans.

Sec. 325. Program to assist veterans who experience intimate partner violence or sexual assault.

Sec. 326. Study and task force on veterans experiencing intimate partner violence or sexual assault.

TITLE I—VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

SEC. 101. OFFICE OF WOMEN’S HEALTH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) DIRECTOR OF WOMEN’S HEALTH.—Subsection (a) of section 7306 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (10) as paragraph (11); and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (9) the following new paragraph:

“(10) The Director of Women’s Health.”.

(b) ORGANIZATION OF OFFICE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 73 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end of the following new sections:

“§ 7310. Office of Women’s Health

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—(1) The Under Secretary for Health shall establish and operate in the Veterans Health Administration the Office of Women’s Health (hereinafter in this section referred to as the ‘Office’). The Office shall be located at the Central Office of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“(2) The head of the Office is the Director of Women’s Health (hereinafter in this section referred to as the ‘Director’). The Director shall report to the Under Secretary for Health.

“(3) The Under Secretary for Health shall provide the Office with such staff and other support as may be necessary for the Office to carry out effectively its functions under this section.

“(4) The Under Secretary for Health may reorganize existing offices within the Veterans Health Administration as of the date of the enactment of this section in order to avoid duplication with the functions of the Office.

“(b) PURPOSE.—The functions of the Office include the following:

“(1) To provide a central office for monitoring and encouraging the activities of the Veterans Health Administration with respect to the provision, evaluation, and improvement of women veterans’ health care services in the Department.

“(2) To develop and implement standards of care for the provision of health care for women veterans in the Department.

“(3) To monitor and identify deficiencies in standards of care for the provision of health care for women veterans in the Department, to provide technical assistance to medical facilities of the Department to address and remedy deficiencies, and to perform oversight of implementation of standards of care for women veterans’ health care in the Department.

“(4) To monitor and identify deficiencies in standards of care for the provision of health care for women veterans provided through the community pursuant to this title, and to provide recommendations to the appropriate office to address and remedy any deficiencies.

“(5) To oversee distribution of resources and information related to women veterans’ health programming under this title.

“(6) To promote the expansion and improvement of clinical, research, and educational activities of the Veterans Health Administration with respect the health care of women veterans.

“(7) To provide, as part of the annual budgeting process, recommendations with respect to the amount of funds to be requested for furnishing hospital care and medical services to women veterans pursuant to chapter 17 of this title, including, at a minimum, recommendations that ensure that such amount of funds either reflect or exceed the proportion of veterans enrolled in the patient enrollment system under section 1705 of this title who are women.

“(8) To provide recommendations to the Under Secretary for Health with respect to modifying the Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation system to ensure that resource allocations under such system reflect the health care needs of women veterans.

“(9) To carry out such other duties as the Under Secretary for Health may require.

“(c) RECOMMENDATIONS.—If the Under Secretary for Health determines not to implement any recommendation made by the Director with respect to the allocation of resources to address the health care needs of women veterans, the Secretary shall notify the appropriate congressional committees of such determination by not later than 30 days after the date on which the Under Secretary for Health receives the recommendation. Each such notification shall include the following:

“(1) The reasoning of the Under Secretary for Health in making such determination.

“(2) An alternative, if one is selected, to such recommendation that the Under Secretary for Health will carry out to fulfill the health care needs of women veterans.

“(d) STANDARDS OF CARE.—In this section, the standards of care for the provision of health care for women veterans in the Department shall include, at a minimum, the following:

“(1) Requirement for—

“(A) at least one designated women’s health primary care provider at each medical center whose duties include, to the extent practicable, providing training to other health care providers of the Department with respect to the needs of women veterans; and

“(B) at least one designated women’s health primary care provider at each community-based outpatient clinic of the Department who may serve female patients as a percentage of the total duties of the provider.

“(2) Other requirements as determined by the Under Secretary for Health.

“(e) OUTREACH.—The Director shall ensure that—

“(1) not less frequently than biannually, each medical facility of the Department holds a public forum for women veterans that occurs outside of regular business hours; and

“(2) not less frequently than quarterly, each medical facility of the Department convenes a focus group of women veterans that includes a discussion of harassment occurring at such facility.

“(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘appropriate congressional committees’ has the meaning given that term in section 7310A of this title.

“(2) The term ‘facility of the Department’ has the meaning given the term in section 1701(3).

“(3) The term ‘Veterans Equitable Resource Allocation system’ means the resource allocation system established pursuant to section 429 of the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 1997 (Public Law 104-204; 110 Stat. 2929).

“§ 7310A. Annual reports on women’s Health

“(a) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than December 1 of each year, the Director of Women’s Health shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report containing the matters under subsections (b) through (g).

“(b) OFFICE OF WOMEN’S HEALTH.—Each report under subsection (a) shall include a description of—

“(1) actions taken by the Office of Women’s Health in the preceding fiscal year to improve the Department’s provision of health care to women veterans;

“(2) any identified deficiencies related to the Department’s provision of health care to women veterans and the standards of care established in section 7310 of this title, and the Department’s plan to address such deficiencies;

“(3) the funding and personnel provided to the Office and whether additional funding or personnel are needed to meet the requirements of such section; and

“(4) other information that would be of interest to the appropriate congressional committees with respect to oversight of the Department’s provision of health care to women veterans.

“(c) ACCESS TO GENDER-SPECIFIC SERVICES.—Each report under subsection (a) shall include an analysis of the access of women veterans to gender-specific services under contracts, agreements, or other arrangements with non-Department medical providers entered into by the Secretary for the provision of hospital care or medical services to veterans. Such analysis shall include data and performance measures for the availability of gender specific services, including—

“(1) the average wait time between the veteran’s preferred appointment date and the date on which the appointment is completed;

“(2) the average driving time required for veterans to attend appointments; and

“(3) reasons why appointments could not be scheduled with non-Department medical providers.

“(d) LOCATIONS WHERE WOMEN VETERANS ARE USING HEALTH CARE.—Each report under subsection (a) shall include an analysis of the use by women veterans of health care from the Department, including the following information:

“(1) The number of women veterans who reside in each State.

“(2) The number of women veterans in each State who are enrolled in the system of patient enrollment of the Department established and operated under section 1705(a) of this title.

“(3) Of the women veterans who are so enrolled, the number who have received health care under the laws administered by the Secretary at least one time during the one-year period preceding the submittal of the report.

“(4) The number of women veterans who have been seen at each medical facility of the Department during such year.

“(5) The number of appointments that women veterans have had at each such facility during such year.

“(6) If known, an identification of the medical facility of the Department in each Veterans Integrated Service Network with the largest rate of increase in patient population of women veterans as measured by the increase in unique women veteran patient use.

“(7) If known, an identification of the medical facility of the Department in each Veterans Integrated Service Network with the largest rate of decrease in patient population of women veterans as measured by the decrease in unique women veterans patient use.

“(e) MODELS OF CARE.—Each report under subsection (a) shall include an analysis of the use by the Department of general primary care clinics, separate but shared spaces, and women’s health centers as models of providing health care to women veterans. Such analysis shall include the following:

“(1) The number of facilities of the Department that fall into each such model, disaggregated by Veterans Integrated Service Network and State.

“(2) A description of the criteria used by the Department to determine which such model is most appropriate for each facility of the Department.

“(3) An assessment of how the Department decides to make investments to modify facilities to a different model.

“(4) A description of what, if any, plans the Department has to modify facilities from general primary care clinics to another model.

“(5) An assessment of whether any facilities could be modified to a separate but shared space for a women’s health center within planned investments under the strategic capital investment planning process of the Department.

“(6) An assessment of whether any facilities could be modified to a separate or shared space, or women’s health center with minor modifications to existing plans under the strategic capital investment planning process of the Department.

“(7) An assessment of whether the Department has a goal for how many facilities should fall into each such model.

“(f) STAFFING.—Each report under subsection (a) shall include an analysis of the staffing of the Department relating to the treatment of women, including the following, disaggregated by Veterans Integrated Service Network and State (except with respect to paragraph (4)):

“(1) The number of women’s health centers.

“(2) The number of patient aligned care teams of the Department relating to women’s health.

“(3) The number of full- and part-time gynecologists of the Department.

“(4) The number of designated women’s health care providers of the Department, disaggregated by facility of the Department.

“(5) The number of health care providers of the Department who have completed a mini-residency for women’s health care through Women Veterans Health Care Mini-Residency Program of the Department during the one-year period preceding the submittal of the report, and the number that plan to participate in such a mini-residency during the one-year period following such date.

“(6) The number of designated women’s health care providers of the Department who have sufficient female patients to retain their competencies and proficiencies.

“(g) ACCESSIBILITY AND TREATMENT OPTIONS.—Each report under subsection (a) shall include an analysis of the accessibility and treatment options for women veterans, including the following:

“(1) An assessment of wheelchair accessibility of women’s health centers of the Department, including, with respect to each such facility, an assessment of such accessibility for each kind of treatment provided at the center, including with respect to radiology and mammography, that addresses all relevant factors, including door sizes, hoists, and equipment.

“(2) The options for women veterans to access female mental health providers and primary care providers.

“(3) The options for women veterans at medical facilities of the Department with respect to clothing sizes, including for gowns, drawstring pants, and pajamas.

“(h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘appropriate congressional committees’ means—

“(A) the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate; and

“(B) the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

“(2) The term ‘gender-specific services’ means mammography, obstetric care, gynecological care, and such other services as the Secretary determines appropriate.”

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 7309A the following new items:

“7310. Office of Women’s Health.

“7310A. Annual reports on women’s Health.”

(c) INITIAL REPORT.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit the initial report under section 7310A of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (b), by not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 102. EXPANSION OF CAPABILITIES OF WOMEN VETERANS CALL CENTER TO INCLUDE TEXT MESSAGING.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall expand the capabilities of the Women Veterans Call Center of the Department of Veterans Affairs to include a text messaging capability.

SEC. 103. REQUIREMENT FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS INTERNET WEBSITE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON SERVICES AVAILABLE TO WOMEN VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall survey the internet websites and information resources of the Department of Veterans Affairs in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act and publish an internet website that serves as a centralized source for the provision to women veterans of information about the benefits and services available to them under laws administered by the Secretary.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The internet website published under subsection (a) shall provide to women veterans information regarding all of the services available in the district in which the veteran is seeking such services, including, with respect to each medical center and community-based outpatient clinic in the applicable Veterans Integrated Service Network—

(1) the name and contact information of each women veterans program manager;

(2) a list of appropriate staff for other benefits available from the Veterans Benefits Administration, the National Cemetery Administration, and such other entities as the Secretary considers appropriate; and

(3) such other information as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(c) **UPDATED INFORMATION.**—The Secretary shall ensure that the information described in subsection (b) that is published on the internet website required by subsection (a) is updated not less frequently than once every 90 days.

(d) **OUTREACH.**—In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall ensure that the outreach conducted under section 1720F(i) of title 38, United States Code, includes information regarding the internet website required by subsection (a).

(e) **DERIVATION OF FUNDS.**—Amounts used by the Secretary to carry out this section shall be derived from amounts made available to the Secretary to publish internet websites of the Department.

SEC. 104. REPORT ON WOMEN VETERANS RETROFIT INITIATIVE.

(a) **REPORT.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs and the Committees on Appropriations of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report on requirements to retrofit existing medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs with fixtures, materials, and other outfitting measures to support the provision of care to women veterans at such facilities.

(b) **ELEMENTS.**—The report under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) An assessment of how the Secretary prioritizes retrofitting existing medical facilities to support provision of care to women veterans in comparison to other requirements.

(2) A five-year plan for retrofitting medical facilities of the Department to support the provision of care to women veterans.

SEC. 105. ESTABLISHMENT OF ENVIRONMENT OF CARE STANDARDS AND INSPECTIONS AT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTERS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a policy under which the environment of care standards and inspections at medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs include—

(1) an alignment of the requirements for such standards and inspections with the women's health handbook of the Veterans Health Administration;

(2) a requirement for the frequency of such inspections;

(3) delineation of the roles and responsibilities of staff at the medical center who are responsible for compliance;

(4) the requirement that each medical center submit to the Secretary and make publicly available a report on the compliance of the medical center with the standards; and

(5) a remediation plan.

(b) **REPORT.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives certification in writing that the policy required by subsection (a) has been finalized and disseminated to Departmental medical centers.

SEC. 106. ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR PRIMARY CARE AND EMERGENCY CARE CLINICIANS IN WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE MINI-RESIDENCY PROGRAM.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs \$1,000,000 for each fiscal year for the Women Veterans Health Care Mini-Residency Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide opportunities for participation in such program for primary care and emergency care clinicians.

(b) **TREATMENT OF AMOUNTS.**—The amounts authorized to be appropriated under sub-

section (a) shall be in addition to amounts otherwise made available to the Secretary for the purposes set forth in such subsection.

SEC. 107. ESTABLISHMENT OF WOMEN VETERAN TRAINING MODULE FOR NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish and make available to community providers a training module that is specific to women veterans.

(b) **COMMUNITY PROVIDER DEFINED.**—In this section, the term “community provider” means a non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care provider who provides health care to veterans under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

TITLE II—MEDICAL CARE

SEC. 201. IMPROVED ACCESS TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CARE FOR WOMEN VETERANS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subchapter II of chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§1720J. Medical services for women veterans

“(a) **ACCESS TO CARE.**—The Secretary shall ensure that women's health primary care services are available during regular business hours at every medical center and community based outpatient clinic of the Department.

“(b) **STUDY ON EXTENDED HOURS OF CARE.**—The Secretary shall conduct a study to assess—

“(1) the use of extended hours as a means of reducing barriers to care;

“(2) the need for extended hours based on interviews with women veterans and employees; and

“(3) the best practices and resources required to implement use of extended hours.

“(c) **ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS.**—Not later than September 30 of each year, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on compliance with subsection (a).”

(b) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1720I the following new item:

“1720J. Medical services for women veterans.”

SEC. 202. COUNSELING AND TREATMENT FOR SEXUAL TRAUMA.

Section 1720D of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training” and inserting “duty, regardless of duty status or line of duty determination (as that term is used in section 12323 of title 10)”; and

(B) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking “active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training” and inserting “duty, regardless of duty status or line of duty determination (as that term is used in section 12323 of title 10)”; and

(2) by striking “veteran” each place it appears and inserting “former member of the Armed Forces”; and

(3) by striking “veterans” each place it appears and inserting “former members of the Armed Forces”; and

(4) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(g) In this section, the term ‘former member of the Armed Forces’ includes the following:

“(1) A veteran described in section 101(2) of this title.

“(2) An individual not described in paragraph (1) who was discharged or released from the Armed Forces under a condition that is not honorable but not—

“(A) a dishonorable discharge; or

“(B) a discharge by court-martial.”

SEC. 203. COUNSELING IN RETREAT SETTINGS FOR WOMEN VETERANS AND OTHER INDIVIDUALS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 1712C the following new section:

“§1712D. Counseling in retreat settings for women veterans and other individuals

“(a) **PROGRAM.**—(1) Commencing not later than January 1, 2021, the Secretary shall carry out, through the Readjustment Counseling Service of the Veterans Health Administration, a program to provide reintegration and readjustment services described in subsection (b) in group retreat settings to covered individuals, including cohorts of women veterans who are eligible for readjustment counseling services under section 1712A of this title.

“(2) The participation of a covered individual in the program under paragraph (1) shall be at the election of the individual.

“(b) **COVERED SERVICES.**—The services provided to a covered individual under the program under subsection (a)(1) shall include the following:

“(1) Information on reintegration into the family, employment, and community of the individual.

“(2) Financial counseling.

“(3) Occupational counseling.

“(4) Information and counseling on stress reduction.

“(5) Information and counseling on conflict resolution.

“(6) Such other information and counseling as the Secretary considers appropriate to assist the individual in reintegration into the family, employment, and community of the veteran.

“(c) **BIENNIAL REPORTS.**—Not later than December 31, 2022, and each even-numbered year thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the program under subsection (a)(1).

“(d) **COVERED INDIVIDUAL DEFINED.**—In this section, the term ‘covered individual’ means—

“(1) Any veteran who is enrolled in the system of annual patient enrollment under section 1705 of this title.

“(2) Any survivor or dependent of a veteran who is eligible for medical care under section 1781 of this title.”

(b) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1712C the following new item:

“1712D. Counseling in retreat settings for women veterans and other individuals.”

SEC. 204. IMPROVEMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES PROVIDED TO NEWBORN CHILDREN BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **EXPANSION.**—Section 1786 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking “seven days” and inserting “14 days”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(f) **ANNUAL REPORT.**—Not later than 60 days after the end of each fiscal year, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the health care services provided under subsection (a) during

such fiscal year, including the number of newborn children who received such services during such fiscal year.”.

(b) **AUTHORITY TO FURNISH MEDICALLY NECESSARY TRANSPORTATION FOR NEWBORN CHILDREN OF CERTAIN WOMEN VETERANS.**—Such section is further amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter before paragraph (1)—

(i) by inserting “and transportation necessary to receive such services” after “described in subsection (b)”;

(ii) by inserting “, except as provided in subsection (e),” after “14 days”;

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking “or”;

(C) in paragraph (2), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; or”;

(D) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(3) another location, including a health care facility, if the veteran delivers the child before arriving at a facility described in paragraph (1) or (2).”;

(2) in subsection (b), by inserting before the period at the end the following: “, including necessary health care services provided by a facility other than the facility where the newborn child was delivered (including a specialty pediatric hospital) that accepts transfer of the newborn child and responsibility for treatment of the newborn child”; and

(3) by inserting before subsection (f), as added by subsection (a), the following new subsections:

“(c) **TRANSPORTATION.**—(1) Transportation furnished under subsection (a) to, from, or between care settings to meet the needs of a newborn child includes costs for either or both the newborn child and parents.

“(2) Transportation furnished under subsection (a) is transportation by ambulance, including air ambulance, or other appropriate medically staffed modes of transportation—

“(A) to another health care facility (including a specialty pediatric hospital) that accepts transfer of the newborn child or otherwise provides post-delivery care services when the treating facility is not capable of furnishing the care or services required; or

“(B) to a health care facility in a medical emergency of such nature that a prudent layperson reasonably expects that delay in seeking immediate medical attention would be hazardous to life or health.

“(3) Amounts paid by the Department for transportation under this section shall be derived from the Medical Services appropriations account of the Department.

“(d) **REIMBURSEMENT OR PAYMENT FOR HEALTH CARE SERVICES OR TRANSPORTATION.**—(1) Pursuant to regulations the Secretary shall prescribe to establish rates of reimbursement and any limitations thereto under this section, the Secretary shall directly reimburse a covered entity for health care services or transportation services provided under this section, unless the cost of the services or transportation is covered by an established agreement or contract. If such an agreement or contract exists, its negotiated payment terms shall apply.

“(2)(A) Reimbursement or payment by the Secretary under this section on behalf of an individual to a covered entity shall, unless rejected and refunded by the covered entity within 30 days of receipt, extinguish any liability on the part of the individual for the health care services or transportation covered by such payment.

“(B) Neither the absence of a contract or agreement between the Secretary and a covered entity nor any provision of a contract, agreement, or assignment to the contrary shall operate to modify, limit, or negate the requirements of subparagraph (A).

“(3) In this subsection, the term ‘covered entity’ means any individual, transportation

carrier, organization, or other entity that furnished or paid for health care services or transportation under this section.

“(e) **EXCEPTION.**—Pursuant to such regulations as the Secretary shall prescribe to carry out this section, the Secretary may furnish more than 14 days of health care services described in subsection (b), and transportation necessary to receive such services, to a newborn child based on medical necessity if the child is in need of additional care, including a case in which the newborn child has been discharged or released from a hospital and requires readmittance to ensure the health and welfare of the newborn child.”.

(c) **TREATMENT OF CERTAIN EXPENSES ALREADY INCURRED.**—Pursuant to such regulations as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall prescribe, the Secretary may provide reimbursement under section 1786 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a), health care services or transportation services furnished to a newborn child during the period beginning on May 5, 2010, and ending on the date of the enactment of this Act, if the Secretary determines that, under the circumstances applicable with respect to the newborn, such reimbursement appropriate.

TITLE III—REPORTS AND OTHER MATTERS

Subtitle A—Reports

SEC. 301. ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE ON WOMEN VETERANS BY ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN VETERANS.

Section 542(c)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) by redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph (D); and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (B) the following new subparagraph (C):

“(C) an assessment of the effects of intimate partner violence on women veterans; and”.

SEC. 302. STUDY ON STAFFING OF WOMEN VETERAN PROGRAM MANAGER PROGRAM AT MEDICAL CENTERS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND TRAINING OF STAFF.

(a) **STUDY.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a study on the use of the Women Veteran Program Manager program of the Department of Veterans Affairs to determine—

(1) if the program is appropriately staffed at each medical center of the Department;

(2) whether each medical center of the Department is staffed with a Women Veteran Program Manager; and

(3) whether it would be feasible and advisable to have a Women Veteran Program Ombudsman at each medical center of the Department.

(b) **REPORT.**—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the study conducted under subsection (a).

(c) **TRAINING.**—The Secretary shall ensure that all Women Veteran Program Managers and Women Veteran Program Ombudsmen receive the proper training to carry out their duties.

SEC. 303. REPORT ON AVAILABILITY OF PROSTHETIC ITEMS FOR WOMEN VETERANS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of

the House of Representatives a report on the availability from the Department of Veterans Affairs of prosthetic items made for women veterans, including an assessment of the availability of such prosthetic items at each medical facility of the Department. The report shall—

(1) address efforts on research, development, and employment of additive manufacturing technology (commonly referred to as “3D printing”) to provide prosthetic items for women veterans; and

(2) include a survey with a representative sample of 50,000 veterans (of which women shall be overrepresented) in amputee care program on satisfaction with prosthetics furnished or procured by the Department that replace appendages or their function.

SEC. 304. STUDY OF BARRIERS FOR WOMEN VETERANS TO HEALTH CARE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **STUDY REQUIRED.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a comprehensive study of the barriers to the provision of comprehensive health care by the Department of Veterans Affairs encountered by women who are veterans. In conducting the study, the Secretary shall—

(1) survey women veterans who seek or receive hospital care or medical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs as well as women veterans who do not seek or receive such care or services;

(2) administer the survey to a representative sample of women veterans from each Veterans Integrated Service Network; and

(3) ensure that the sample of women veterans surveyed is of sufficient size for the study results to be statistically significant and is a larger sample than that of the study referred to in subsection (b)(1).

(b) **USE OF PREVIOUS STUDIES.**—In conducting the study required by subsection (a), the Secretary shall build on the work of the studies of the Department of Veterans Affairs titled—

(1) “National Survey of Women Veterans in Fiscal Year 2007–2008”; and

(2) “Study of Barriers for Women Veterans to VA Health Care 2015”.

(c) **ELEMENTS OF STUDY.**—In conducting the study required by subsection (a), the Secretary shall conduct research on the effects of the following on the women veterans surveyed in the study:

(1) The barriers associated with seeking mental health care services, including with respect to provider availability, telehealth access, and family, work, and school obligations.

(2) The effect of driving distance or availability of other forms of transportation to the nearest medical facility on access to care.

(3) The effect of access to care in the community.

(4) The availability of child care.

(5) The acceptability of integrated primary care, women’s health clinics, or both.

(6) The comprehension of eligibility requirements for, and the scope of services available under, hospital care and medical services.

(7) The perception of personal safety and comfort in inpatient, outpatient, and behavioral health facilities.

(8) The gender sensitivity of health care providers and staff to issues that particularly affect women.

(9) The effectiveness of outreach for health care services available to women veterans.

(10) The location and operating hours of health care facilities that provide services to women veterans.

(11) The perception of women veterans regarding the motto of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(12) Such other significant barriers as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(d) **DISCHARGE BY CONTRACT.**—The Secretary shall enter into a contract with a qualified independent entity or organization to carry out the study and research required under this section.

(e) **MANDATORY REVIEW OF DATA BY CERTAIN DEPARTMENT DIVISIONS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall ensure that the head of each division of the Department of Veterans Affairs specified in paragraph (2) reviews the results of the study conducted under this section. The head of each such division shall submit findings with respect to the study to the Under Secretary for responsibilities relating to health care services for women veterans.

(2) **SPECIFIED DIVISIONS.**—The divisions of the Department of Veterans Affairs specified in this paragraph are the following:

(A) The Under Secretary for Health.

(B) The Office of Women's Health.

(C) The Center for Women Veterans established under section 318 of title 38, United States Code.

(D) The Advisory Committee on Women Veterans established under section 542 of this title.

(f) **REPORT.**—Not later than 30 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the study required under this section. The report shall include recommendations for such administrative and legislative action as the Secretary considers appropriate. The report shall also include the findings of the head of each division of the Department specified under subsection (e)(2) and of the Under Secretary for Health.

SEC. 305. REPORT REGARDING VETERANS WHO RECEIVE BENEFITS UNDER LAWS ADMINISTERED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **REPORT.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish a report regarding veterans who receive benefits under laws administered by the Secretary, including the Transition Assistance Program under sections 1142 and 1144 of title 10, United States Code.

(b) **DATA.**—The data regarding veterans published in the report under subsection (a)—

(1) shall be disaggregated by—

(A) sex;

(B) minority group member status; and

(C) minority group member status listed by sex.

(2) may not include any personally identifiable information.

(c) **MATTERS INCLUDED.**—The report under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) identification of any disparities in the use of benefits under laws administered by the Secretary; and

(2) an analysis of the cause of such disparities and recommendations to address such disparities.

(d) **MINORITY GROUP MEMBER DEFINED.**—In this section, the term “minority group member” has the meaning given that term in section 544 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 306. STUDY ON WOMEN VETERAN COORDINATOR PROGRAM.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report containing a study on the Women Veteran Coordinator program of the Veterans Benefits Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Such study shall identify the following:

(1) If the program is appropriately staffed at each regional benefits office of the Department.

(2) Whether each regional benefits office of the Department is staffed with a Women Veteran Coordinator.

(3) The position description of the Women Veteran Coordinator.

(4) Whether an individual serving in the Women Veteran Coordinator position concurrently serves in any other position, and if so, the allocation of time the individual spends in each such position.

(5) A description of the metrics the Secretary uses to determine the success and performance of the Women Veteran Coordinator.

Subtitle B—Other Matters

SEC. 321. ANTI-HARASSMENT AND ANTI-SEXUAL ASSAULT POLICY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subchapter II of chapter 5 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 533. Anti-harassment and anti-sexual assault policy

“(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a comprehensive policy to end harassment and sexual assault, including sexual harassment and gender-based harassment, throughout the Department of Veterans Affairs. This policy shall include the following:

“(1) A process for employees and contractors of the Department to respond to reported incidents of harassment and sexual assault committed by any non-Department individual within a facility of the Department, including with respect to accountability or disciplinary measures.

“(2) A process for employees and contractors of the Department to respond to reported incidents of harassment and sexual assault of any non-Department individual within a facility of the Department.

“(3) A process for any non-Department individual to report harassment and sexual assault described in paragraph (1), including an option for confidential reporting, and for the Secretary to respond to and address such reports.

“(4) Clear mechanisms for non-Department individuals to readily identify to whom and how to report incidents of harassment and sexual assault committed by another non-Department individual.

“(5) Clear mechanisms for employees and contractors of the Department to readily identify to whom and how to report incidents of harassment and sexual assault and how to refer non-Department individuals with respect to reporting an incident of harassment or sexual assault.

“(6) A process for, and mandatory reporting requirement applicable to, any employee or contractor of the Department who witnesses harassment or sexual assault described in paragraph (1) or (2) within a facility of the Department, regardless of whether the individual affected by such harassment or sexual assault wants to report such harassment or sexual assault.

“(7) The actions possible, including disciplinary actions, for employees or contractors of the Department who fail to report incidents of harassment and sexual assault described in paragraph (1) or (2) that the employees or contractors witness.

“(8) On an annual or more frequent basis, mandatory training for employees and contractors of the Department regarding how to report and address harassment and sexual assault described in paragraphs (1) and (2), including bystander intervention training.

“(9) On an annual or more frequent basis, the distribution of the policy under this subsection and anti-harassment and anti-sexual assault educational materials by mail or email to each individual receiving a benefit under a law administered by the Secretary.

“(10) The prominent display of anti-harassment and anti-sexual assault messages in each facility of the Department, including how non-Department individuals may report harassment and sexual assault described in paragraphs (1) and (2) at such facility and the points of contact under subsection (b).

“(11) The posting on internet websites of the Department, including the main internet website regarding benefits of the Department and the main internet website regarding health care of the Department, of anti-harassment and anti-sexual assault banners specifically addressing harassment and sexual assault described in paragraphs (1) and (2).

“(b) **POINTS OF CONTACT.**—The Secretary shall designate, as a point of contact to receive reports of harassment and sexual assault described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (a)—

“(1) at least one individual, in addition to law enforcement, at each facility of the Department (including Vet Centers under section 1712A of this title), with regard to that facility;

“(2) at least one individual employed in each Veterans Integrated Service Network, with regards to facilities in that Veterans Integrated Service Network;

“(3) at least one individual employed in each regional benefits office;

“(4) at least one individual employed at each location of the National Cemetery Administration; and

“(5) at least one individual employed at the Central Office of the Department to track reports of such harassment and sexual assault across the Department, disaggregated by facility.

“(c) **ACCOUNTABILITY.**—The Secretary shall establish a policy to ensure that each facility of the Department and each director of a Veterans Integrated Service Network is responsible for addressing harassment and sexual assault at the facility and the Network. Such policy shall include—

“(1) a remediation plan for facilities that experience five or more incidents of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or combination thereof, during any single fiscal year; and

“(2) taking appropriate actions under chapter 7 or subchapter V of chapter 74 of this title.

“(d) **DATA.**—The Secretary shall ensure that the in-take process for veterans at medical facilities of the Department includes a survey to collect the following information:

“(1) Whether the veteran feels safe at the facility and whether any events occurred at the facility that affect such feeling.

“(2) Whether the veteran wants to be contacted later by the Department with respect to such safety issues.

“(e) **WORKING GROUP.**—(1) The Secretary shall establish a working group to assist the Secretary in implementing policies to carry out this section.

“(2) The working group established under paragraph (1) shall consist of representatives from—

“(A) veterans service organizations;

“(B) State, local, and Tribal veterans agencies; and

“(C) other persons the Secretary determines appropriate.

“(3) The working group established under paragraph (1) shall develop, and the Secretary shall carry out—

“(A) an action plan for addressing changes at the local level to reduce instances of harassment and sexual assault;

“(B) standardized media for veterans service organizations and other persons to use in print and on the internet with respect to reducing harassment and sexual assault; and

“(C) bystander intervention training for veterans.

“(f) **REPORTS.**—The Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of

the Senate and the House of Representatives an annual report on harassment and sexual assault described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (a) in facilities of the Department. Each such report shall include the following:

“(1) Results of harassment and sexual assault programming, including the End Harassment program.

“(2) Results of studies from the Women’s Health Practice-Based Research Network of the Department relating to harassment and sexual assault.

“(3) Data collected on incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault.

“(4) A description of any actions taken by the Secretary during the year preceding the date of the report to stop harassment and sexual assault at facilities of the Department.

“(5) An assessment of the implementation of the training required in subsection (a)(7).

“(6) A list of resources the Secretary determines necessary to prevent harassment and sexual assault at facilities of the Department.

“(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘non-Department individual’ means any individual present at a facility of the Department who is not an employee or contractor of the Department.

“(2) The term ‘sexual harassment’ has the meaning given that term in section 1720D of this title.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding after the item relating to section 532 the following new item:

“533. Anti-harassment and anti-sexual assault policy.”.

(c) DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT.—Section 1720D(f) of such title is amended by striking “repeated.”.

(d) DEADLINE.—The Secretary shall commence carrying out section 533 of such title, as added by subsection (a), not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 322. SUPPORT FOR ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE A FOCUS ON PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO WOMEN VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

Section 2044(e) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4) There is authorized to be appropriated \$20,000,000 for fiscal year 2020 to provide, under subsection (a), financial assistance to organizations that have a focus on providing assistance to women veterans and their families.”.

SEC. 323. GAP ANALYSIS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO WOMEN VETERANS WHO ARE HOMELESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall complete an analysis of programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs that provide assistance to women veterans who are homeless or precariously housed to identify the areas in which such programs are failing to meet the needs of such women.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the analysis completed under subsection (a).

SEC. 324. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP ON LEGAL SERVICES FOR WOMEN VETERANS.

(a) PARTNERSHIP REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a partnership with at least one nongovernmental organization to provide legal services to women veterans.

(b) FOCUS.—The focus of the partnership established under subsection (a) shall be on the 10 highest unmet needs of women veterans as set forth in the most recently completed Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups for Veterans (CHALENG for Veterans) survey.

SEC. 325. PROGRAM TO ASSIST VETERANS WHO EXPERIENCE INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE OR SEXUAL ASSAULT.

(a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a program to assist former members of the armed forces who have experienced or are experiencing intimate partner violence or sexual assault in accessing benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, including coordinating access to medical treatment centers, housing assistance, and other benefits from the Department.

(b) COLLABORATION.—The Secretary shall carry out the program under subsection (a) in collaboration with—

(1) intimate partner violence shelters and programs;

(2) rape crisis centers;

(3) State intimate partner violence and sexual assault coalitions; and

(4) such other health care or other service providers that serve intimate partner violence or sexual assault victims as determined by the Secretary, particularly those providing emergency services or housing assistance.

(c) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—In carrying out the program under subsection (a), the Secretary may conduct the following activities:

(1) Training for community-based intimate partner violence or sexual assault service providers on—

(A) identifying former members of the Armed Forces who have been victims of intimate partner violence or sexual assault;

(B) coordinating with local service providers of the Department; and

(C) connecting former members of the Armed Forces with appropriate housing, mental health, medical, and other financial assistance or benefits from the Department.

(2) Assistance to service providers to ensure access of veterans to intimate partner violence and sexual assault emergency services, particularly in underserved areas, including services for Native American veterans (as defined in section 3765 of title 38, United States Code).

(3) Such other outreach and assistance as the Secretary determines necessary for the provision of assistance under subsection (a).

(d) INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT OUTREACH COORDINATORS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In order to effectively assist veterans who have experienced intimate partner violence or sexual assault, the Secretary may establish local coordinators to provide outreach under the program required by subsection (a).

(2) LOCAL COORDINATOR KNOWLEDGE.—The Secretary shall ensure that each coordinator established under paragraph (1) is knowledgeable about—

(A) the dynamics of intimate partner violence and sexual assault, including safety concerns, legal protections, and the need for the provision of confidential services;

(B) the eligibility of veterans for services and benefits from the Department that are relevant to recovery from intimate partner violence and sexual assault, particularly emergency housing assistance, mental health care, other health care, and disability benefits; and

(C) local community resources addressing intimate partner violence and sexual assault.

(3) LOCAL COORDINATOR ASSISTANCE.—Each coordinator established under paragraph (1)

shall assist intimate partner violence shelters and rape crisis centers in providing services to veterans.

SEC. 326. STUDY AND TASK FORCE ON VETERANS EXPERIENCING INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE OR SEXUAL ASSAULT.

(a) NATIONAL BASELINE STUDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Attorney General, shall conduct a national baseline study to examine the scope of the problem of intimate partner violence and sexual assault among veterans and spouses and intimate partners of veterans.

(2) MATTERS INCLUDED.—The study under paragraph (1) shall—

(A) include a literature review of all relevant research on intimate partner violence and sexual assault among veterans and spouses and intimate partners of veterans;

(B) examine the prevalence of the experience of intimate partner violence among—

(i) women veterans;

(ii) veterans who are minority group members (as defined in section 544 of title 38, United States Code, and including other minority populations as the Secretary determines appropriate);

(iii) urban and rural veterans;

(iv) veterans who are enrolled in a program under section 1720G of title 38, United States Code;

(v) veterans who are in intimate relationships with other veterans; and

(vi) veterans who are described in more than one clause of this subparagraph;

(C) examine the prevalence of the perpetration of intimate partner violence by veterans; and

(D) include recommendations to address the findings of the study.

(3) REPORT.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which the Secretary completes the study under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on such study.

(b) TASK FORCE.—Not later than 90 days after the date on which the Secretary completes the study under subsection (a), the Secretary, in consultation with the Attorney General and the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall establish a national task force (in this section referred to as the “Task Force”) to develop a comprehensive national program, including by integrating facilities, services, and benefits of the Department of Veterans Affairs into existing networks of community-based intimate partner violence and sexual assault services, to address intimate partner violence and sexual assault among veterans.

(c) CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS.—In carrying out this section, the Task Force shall consult with—

(1) representatives from veteran service organizations and military service organizations;

(2) representatives from not fewer than three national organizations or State coalitions with demonstrated expertise in intimate partner violence prevention, response, or advocacy; and

(3) representatives from not fewer than three national organizations or State coalitions, particularly those representing underserved and ethnic minority communities, with demonstrated expertise in sexual assault prevention, response, or advocacy.

(d) DUTIES.—The duties of the Task Force shall include the following:

(1) To review existing services and policies of the Department and develop a comprehensive national program to address intimate partner violence and sexual assault prevention, response, and treatment.

(2) To review the feasibility and advisability of establishing an expedited process to secure emergency, temporary benefits, including housing or other benefits, for veterans who are experiencing intimate partner violence or sexual assault.

(3) To review and make recommendations regarding the feasibility and advisability of establishing dedicated, temporary housing assistance for veterans experiencing intimate partner violence or sexual assault.

(4) To identify any requirements regarding intimate partner violence assistance or sexual assault response and services that are not being met by the Department and make recommendations on how the Department can meet such requirements.

(5) To review and make recommendations regarding the feasibility and advisability of providing direct services or contracting for community-based services for veterans in response to a sexual assault, including through the use of sexual assault nurse examiners, particularly in underserved or remote areas, including services for Native American veterans.

(6) To review the availability of counseling services provided by the Department and through peer network support, and to provide recommendations for the enhancement of such services, to address—

(A) the perpetration of intimate partner violence and sexual assault; and

(B) the recovery of veterans, particularly women veterans, from intimate partner violence and sexual assault.

(7) To review and make recommendations to expand services available for veterans at risk of perpetrating intimate partner violence.

(e) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not less frequently than annually thereafter by October 1 of each year, the Task Force shall submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Congress a report on the activities of the Task Force, including any recommendations for legislative or administrative action.

(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “Native American veteran” has the meaning given that term in section 3765 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term “State” has the meaning given that term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman 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 to insert extraneous material on H.R. 3224, as amended.

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 rise in support of H.R. 3224, the Deborah Sampson Act, introduced by Representative JULIA BROWNLEY, the chairwoman of the Veterans Affairs' Health Subcommittee.

This bill comprises 15 bipartisan bills that transform and improve comprehensive access to healthcare, bene-

fits, and other resources for America's 2 million women veterans.

This bill is named after Deborah Sampson, a Revolutionary War veteran from Massachusetts who served in the Continental Army for 17 months and was wounded in battle more than once.

Deborah Sampson was neither the first nor the only woman to serve in the Continental Army, nor was she the first woman to be granted a pension by Congress, but she was the most persistent.

Over 38 years, Congress granted her a pension, backpay, and ultimately her husband was granted a survivor's pension after her death.

Mr. Speaker, it is because of the similar persistence of women warriors who followed in Deborah Sampson's footsteps that we are now considering this bill today.

The Deborah Sampson Act creates an Office of Women's Health that reports directly to the Undersecretary of Health. This office will be responsible for internal oversight and resource allocation, including inputs to the annual budgeting process.

Currently, 10 percent of VA facilities do not have gender-specific care for women. H.R. 3224, as amended, also increases staffing and training for women's health primary care providers so that every single woman veteran has access to gender-specific care at her nearest VA facility.

Mr. Speaker, 75 percent of women veterans do not use VA care, often because they don't realize that they are eligible. This legislation seeks to expand communication outreach capabilities of the department to connect more women to VA benefits and healthcare.

Mr. Speaker, the Deborah Sampson Act also authorizes counseling in retreat settings, expands counseling at vet centers for members of the Reserve and National Guard who are survivors of military sexual trauma, and improves resources for veterans experiencing intimate-partner violence and women veterans facing homelessness.

Throughout this Congress we have addressed the issue of widespread sexual harassment and assault at VA facilities. At least one in four women veterans experience sexual and gender harassment at VA facilities, and that must end.

No veteran, caregiver, employee, contractor, or other public visitor should experience sexual harassment or assault at VA.

H.R. 3224, as amended, requires that VA develop a comprehensive policy that includes bystander intervention, mandatory reporting mechanisms for employees, confidential reporting mechanisms for veterans, and holds leadership accountable for addressing sexual harassment and assault at VA facilities.

Today, nearly one in four new recruits joining the military is a woman. Women veterans are the fastest growing demographic in the veterans' com-

munity, and VA must be prepared to welcome them.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support H.R. 3224, and 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. 3224, as amended, the Deborah Sampson Act.

For as long as the United States has been a reality, brave women have been stepping up to serve on behalf of her and defending her from her enemies.

This bill is named after one of those amazing women, Deborah Sampson, who so believed in the ideals of the American Revolution that she disguised herself as a man so that she could join in the fight for freedom and independence.

Deborah Sampson's spirit of bravery, patriotism, and commitment to service are still very much alive in the approximately 2 million women veterans in the United States today and the almost 400,000 women serving on Active Duty or in the Guard and Reserves.

Those women have fought in defense of the American Dream—on the frontlines, in the Pentagon, and everywhere in between, in every branch of the armed services. And, once they leave the military, they are, increasingly, seeking care from the Department of Veterans Affairs. In fact, the number of women using the VA healthcare system has more than tripled since 2001 and is expected to continue rising significantly in the years ahead.

VA leaders have been working to make the department more welcoming to women veterans, but the fact remains that the VA healthcare system was designed for men.

That is, perhaps, most upsettingly evidenced by the VA study published last December that found that a full quarter of the women veterans who seek care from the VA are subjected to inappropriate or unwanted comments from male veterans on VA grounds.

That is tragic and unacceptable, just like it is anytime the VA falls short of providing the high-quality care, benefits, and services that women veterans have earned and certainly deserve, which still, sadly, happens all too often.

The Deborah Sampson Act is legislation introduced by Congresswoman JULIA BROWNLEY from California—and she is to be applauded for that—the chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Health and the bipartisan Women Veterans Task Force that would help put an end to this.

The bill would create an Office of Women's Health within the VA, require VA to establish an environment of care standards for women veterans and ensure that VA medical facilities are retrofitted to meet those standards, require and fund VA programs to train providers in VA medical facilities and in the community on women's health,

and improve access to care for women veterans and their newborn children.

It also includes provisions that would help all veterans, women and men alike, who experience military sexual trauma, intimate-partner violence, sexual assault, or sexual harassment to get the support and care that they need.

Mr. Speaker, there have been a lot of allegations made by Chairman TAKANO, and I make the following remarks with a heavy heart.

There have been a lot of allegations made by Chairman TAKANO and others in the 2 weeks since the Deborah Sampson Act was marked up in the committee about how I and my Republican colleagues feel about this legislation and about the women that it is intended to serve.

So let me be crystal clear. I stand here in strong support of the Deborah Sampson Act and all the good it would do for the millions of women veterans that it would serve.

I intend to call for a recorded vote on this bill, and I fully expect the vote to prove that there is overwhelming bipartisan support for this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, when I left the Army in 1974, I returned home to Tennessee to finish my residency in obstetrics and gynecology and spend the better part of my life caring for women in private practice.

My dedication to ensuring that women, whether they be civilian or veteran, have the care that they need is personal, deeply felt, and informed by three decades of direct action on behalf of the women who are my patients, my friends, my family, my neighbors, my colleagues, and my fellow veterans.

That is why it is so disappointing that, when my Republican colleagues and I walked out of the committee markup where this bill was being considered in protest to the chairman's actions surrounding it, he decided to launch a baseless, identity-politics fueled attack on me and other Republican members of the committee by alleging that we were walking out on women veterans.

Nothing can be further from the truth. The chairman knows full well that our decision to leave that markup had nothing to do with our support for the Deborah Sampson Act, much less our support for women veterans, and everything to do with the unprecedented partisanship that he displayed when this bill was being considered by our committee.

So I would like to take this opportunity this afternoon to correct the record.

Chairman TAKANO has called this bill historic and monumental, yet, during the committee's consideration of it, he allowed one Democrat member, Congresswoman BROWNLEY, exactly 4 minutes to talk about it before cutting off all debate for every other member in the room by invoking a procedural tactic that hadn't been used by our committee in more than a decade.

And I will say this: I never used this when I was chairman, nor did Chairman MILLER.

He did that to avoid debate on certain Republican amendments that he erroneously characterized as toxic and partisan. They were offered in good faith to address barriers to care for veteran women and men across the country that we have been requesting the chairman to act on for the better part of a year.

One of the amendments that the chairman refused to debate or vote on was offered by Congressman ANDY BARR from Kentucky to prevent those charged with a serious crime, including violent or sexual crimes against children, from caring for children while their veteran parent is receiving care from VA until their case has been favorably resolved.

The lack of childcare services is a serious barrier to care for veterans, including many women veterans, as the chairman himself has mentioned many times.

Our committee rightly acted on a bill, H.R. 840, which passed the House in February, to break down that barrier by authorizing VA to provide childcare for veterans who are engaged in VA treatment. But if the veterans cannot rest assured that their children are safe in the VA childcare program, they won't use it—they won't use the care—and the lack of childcare services will continue to prevent veterans from getting the care that they need.

Congressman BARR's amendment would close a loophole in that bill that would allow an individual charged with a serious offense—like child molestation—but who is awaiting his or her day in court to be responsible for caring for a veteran's child in a VA childcare program while their case is pending before the courts.

Mr. Speaker, I know that there are a lot of things that we cannot agree on, but protecting vulnerable children should never be one of those things. Yet Chairman TAKANO has repeatedly refused to address this issue and employed a rarely used procedural tactic in our committee to disallow debate and votes on it twice in recent months.

He has also failed to even respond to 11 committee members who wrote him in July asking for a legislative hearing on Congressman BARR's legislation. It defies understanding.

Another amendment that the chairman has repeatedly refused to allow our committee to debate was offered by Congressman CHIP ROY from Texas to prohibit VA from sending the name of a veteran or other beneficiary to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Instant Criminal Background Check System, NICS, solely because VA has determined that a person has a service-connected disability or solely because a fiduciary has been appointed on their behalf, without the order or finding of a judge, a magistrate, or other judicial authority that the person is a danger to themselves or others.

Infringing on a law-abiding American citizen's constitutionally protected rights should never occur in a free society unless a very high bar has been met. For example, criminals must be convicted in a court of law before their names are provided to the NICS list; but, under current practice, VA sends veterans' names to the NICS list if they have been appointed a fiduciary to help manage their compensation benefits.

This is because, once VA decides that an individual needs help with their finances, even though there may be no evidence the individual is a danger to themselves or anyone else, a VA bureaucrat sends that person's name to the FBI to be added to the NICS list and the veteran loses their second amendment right to own a firearm. And these are the very people who gave us those rights, protected those rights.

Legislation that the House passed on a party-line vote earlier this year, H.R. 1112, would compound this injustice by requiring VA to also report a veteran or beneficiary to the NICS if they have been adjudicated by VA as having a mental illness when the veteran files for a disability claim—for example, PTSD or depression.

I have personally heard from veterans across the country—and I mean from Long Island to Los Angeles—who tell me that they don't seek VA care and benefits that they have earned through their hard-fought service for our country because they fear they will lose their Second Amendment rights if they do so.

This is unacceptable at any time and is particularly unacceptable during a national suicide crisis when we know that 14 of the 20 veteran and service-member suicide deaths per day already occur among those who are not engaged in VA care prior to their deaths.

Veterans risk their lives to protect our rights. The least we can do for them is to protect theirs. But Chairman TAKANO has once again refused to do that, despite making a public vow 8 months ago before the American Legion that he would act, as chairman, to protect the Second Amendment rights of our Nation's veterans.

He also, once again, failed to respond to 12 committee members who wrote him in July asking for a legislative hearing to discuss veterans' Second Amendment issues.

There are precious few avenues available to the minority party in Congress to influence the legislative agenda of the majority party.

□ 1800

Since February, my Republican colleagues and I have been asking Chairman TAKANO, publicly and privately, to address these issues in our committee. Our requests have been ignored. Our letters have gone unanswered.

The only remaining option we have left is to attempt to amend bills being marked up by the committee so that we can have an open debate and an up-

or-down vote on these issues. If we win, we win. If we lose, we lose.

We attempted to amend the Deborah Sampson Act with these amendments 2 weeks ago, on the advice of the Parliamentarian about the appropriateness of these particular amendments, which address serious issues facing female and male veterans alike in each one of our States and districts, to this particular bill. But the chairman denied us even this opportunity.

That kind of partisanship has never been how this committee has operated as long as I have been there. Under the 8 previous years of Republican chairmen, debate was never cut off when Democratic members offered difficult amendments during committee mark-ups. We allowed our Democratic colleagues the opportunity to have their say, and we took tough votes when we needed to.

Mr. Speaker, I wish that we could have had such a different conversation today, the day after Veterans Day, than this one. But I would be remiss in my duty as ranking member if I did not call out this behavior and ways in which it fails our Nation's veterans.

Chairman TAKANO has spoken movingly about how he wants us to use his chairmanship to stand up for the rights of minority veterans, and I commend him for that and have stood alongside him in doing that work, including in May, when we stood side-by-side to launch the bipartisan Women Veterans Task Force.

Yet, I urge him now, in carrying out that commitment, not to spurn the historical bipartisan traditions of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, not to trounce on the rights of the minority members of that committee, not to cut corners in favor of expediency over doing our due diligence, and not to cast aspersions against me or any other member of our committee when we could be debating the issues at hand like our constituents sent us here to do.

Despite our deep disagreements here, I consider Chairman TAKANO a friend, and I know him to be a good and fair man who is motivated by a sincere desire to do the right thing for the millions of veterans and their families who have sacrificed so much for this great Nation. That desire is shared by me and every member of our committee, Republican and Democrat alike. I do not doubt that for a second.

I also do not doubt our ability, under the chairman's leadership, to put this unfortunate recent chapter of the committee's history behind us and return to the productive bipartisan tradition that our committee has known and respected throughout the United States Congress and the Nation. In doing so, we will, once again, live up to the example that our Nation's veterans, including Deborah Sampson herself, have set.

I thank the chairman in advance for that. I stand ready to assist him however I can, as ranking member and as his friend.

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

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

I appreciate the final comments that the ranking member made, I believe in good faith and sincerity, and they were words of generosity. But I have to rebut some of the claims that he has made.

While I spent 6 years of my time in Congress in the minority, and in the minority on this committee, I can tell you that the minority staff and I, and other members of the minority, did offer amendments in good faith, but we never did so in order to derail or to obstruct passage of important and meaningful legislation. Therefore, the ranking member, while he was chairman, can point to many great pieces of legislation, including the Forever GI Bill and numerous other bills. It was a very productive Congress in the last Congress because the minority worked with him.

Look, bipartisan spirit means that the minority also works in good faith. Ms. BROWNLEY, in order to bring the Deborah Sampson Act to the floor under suspension, made some significant concessions, for which there was nothing offered in return.

Mr. BARR's amendment on crimes against children has been offered on the floor as a motion to recommit, interesting enough, to Ms. BROWNLEY's bill on childcare on the floor. That bill was voted down. It was voted down on the House floor, and I can only believe that this very same legislative language was offered as an amendment to the Deborah Sampson bill in defiance of the House already expressing its will on that bill.

I refute the contention that it was offered in good faith before we brought Ms. BROWNLEY's legislation on the Deborah Sampson Act in committee.

The ranking member fails to mention that three of the amendments related to antilabor legislation, which was hostile to labor. To say that this was offered in good faith when he knows that the legislation we were bringing forward was intended to be suspension legislation, normally, the majority and the minority come to an agreement for a very expeditious legislative hearing when it comes to suspension bills.

Finally, I will mention that I watched the ranking member try to subvert the landmark H.R. 8, the universal background checks bill, by raising this issue of the NICS list and trying to whip up opposition by our veterans service organizations, so I have seen him act in a different context against H.R. 8.

Why he sought in committee to attach legislation related to guns to a women's health bill and to expanding opportunities for women veterans to utilize fully the benefits they have earned, I cannot fully comprehend that attempt.

I can say, in many instances, I responded to the ranking member's re-

quests to actually go outside of regular order for the minority's benefit.

Let me say that I want to use this time now to yield 3 minutes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BROWNLEY), the author of this truly historic legislation, chairwoman of our Subcommittee on Health, and also the author of the legislation.

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for bringing my bill, the Deborah Sampson Act, to the floor. And I thank the ranking member for his support as well.

In 1782, Deborah Sampson disguised herself as a man so she could serve in the Revolutionary War to protect and defend our democracy. She was wounded in that war. Her forehead had a gash from a sword, and she was shot in the leg. But serving as a man made her invisible.

Too many decades later, Congress finally granted her petitions for the benefits she deserved, and she became one of the first American women recognized for her military service.

Women have served on land, air, and sea in every conflict in our Nation's history, yet their remarkable and brave service is often overlooked.

Through my work as chair of the Women Veterans Task Force, I have met with countless women veterans across the country who, like Deborah Sampson, feel invisible. Their service often goes unnoticed, while veteran men around them are always thanked.

Sadly, women veterans are often harassed when they go to the VA for help. This denies them the equitable access to the benefits and care they have earned and deserve.

On a recent visit to VA's only women-centric residential substance abuse rehabilitation program, an Army veteran told me the program saved her life. When women-focused resources exist, women veterans use them, and they thrive.

That is why this bill is vital for America's 2 million women veterans. It will ensure that women have consistent access to comprehensive, gender-specific care and services. It will help stop harassment and ensure that women veterans are fully recognized for their service.

In 1836, John Quincy Adams stood on the House floor and called Debra Sampson's "heroism, fidelity, and courage" of the "very highest and noblest order." Congress recognized Debra Sampson's service and, in doing so, ensured that she was no longer invisible.

To America's women veterans of today, I stand here to say: We see you, and you are invisible no longer.

I would like to thank Representatives Allred, Brindisi, Correa, Cunningham, Delgado, Levin, Lee, Pappas, Rose, Underwood, Velazquez, and Wild, who contributed to this legislation.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3224 to fully recognize and honor women veterans' service.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 9½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Tennessee has 6½ minutes remaining.

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

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Lexington, Kentucky (Mr. BARR), my good friend who is a member of our Veterans' Affairs Committee. He has been a tireless supporter of veterans. I have been in his district on several occasions, and the veterans have no better friend than Congressman BARR.

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend, Dr. ROE. I wish the gentleman a happy belated Veterans Day, and I hope he had a good weekend. I certainly did back home in Lexington, Kentucky, at Veterans Park with the Veterans Park Elementary School choir singing to our great veterans back home.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3224, as amended, the Deborah Sampson Act.

As my colleagues before me have already pointed out, women have served our country since the very earliest days of the American Revolution. But as the fastest growing segment of our veteran population, they are only now starting to get the recognition that they deserve.

I am proud to be here today to support this bill that will ensure that the Department of Veterans Affairs provides them the care and benefits that their service and their sacrifices have entitled them to.

And I commend the gentlewoman from New York for her leadership on this important legislation.

I do have to say, Mr. Speaker, however, that any characterization that my Republican colleagues on the Veterans' Affairs Committee and I feel anything less than pride in the many women who have served and the many women who continue to serve today, and a steadfast commitment to support them and to meet their needs, is simply untrue. Had my colleagues or I been allowed to speak on this bill in committee, that would have been very evident to any Member of this House.

What my colleagues and I do object to are the overly partisan tactics that were deployed by the majority when this important bill was being considered.

I am new to the Veterans' Affairs Committee in this Congress, but I know that the committee has a long tradition of bipartisanship, where Members check their party affiliations at the door and do not shy away from debates or disagreements in the spirit of living up to the very democratic ideals that our veterans fought to defend. Unfortunately, we seem to have lost sight of that great tradition this year.

As Dr. ROE referenced in his comments earlier, I have been trying since February to address an unintended consequence of a House-passed bill that could allow an accused child molester who is awaiting prosecution to care for a veteran's child in a VA childcare program.

I do not know any parent in any political party who would want one of their own children to be cared for by someone who has been charged with a serious crime, like a sexual assault against a minor, before they have been fully cleared. Yet, the majority has twice used parliamentary procedures rarely if ever seen in the Veterans' Affairs Committee to refuse to allow our committee to consider my legislation to prevent that from happening to the child of one of our Nation's veterans.

Most recently, the majority did that when this bill, the Deborah Sampson Act, was being considered. Their actions were so unexpected that my colleagues and I left the markup when it became clear that the chairman was not going to allow us, or any other Member, the opportunity to speak, much less offer amendments, and declared that we were done voting on the bill.

I resent the comment that this amendment was not offered in good faith.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman from Kentucky another 30 seconds.

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I can assure you, as the former president of Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky, this amendment was offered very much in good faith.

It is disappointing, and it is deeply ironic, given that lack of childcare, while certainly not solely a woman's issue, is a well-known barrier to care for many women veterans, as my Democratic colleagues have pointed out over this past year.

□ 1815

Given that, it continues to astound me that the chairman would not allow us to even discuss my amendment—much less vote on it—and then immediately send a press release out after the markup accusing me and my fellow Republicans of walking out on the women veterans that my amendment would have helped to better serve.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, it is the essence of bad faith to stand on this floor and imply that Democrats do not want or care about the safety of our children.

Let's be clear that the gentleman from Tennessee offered this as a motion to recommit, this language, to Ms. BROWNLEY's bill and then, after fervently arguing why it was so necessary to be included in Ms. BROWNLEY's bill, turned around and voted with every other Member of this Chamber for Ms. BROWNLEY's bill. I cite that as evidence that there are some crocodile tears being cried here.

I now yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. UNDERWOOD), my good friend and a member of the House Veterans Affairs' Subcommittee on Health.

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3224, the Deborah Sampson Act.

This past Sunday, our office honored over 200 Vietnam war period veterans in my district in northern Illinois at a pinning ceremony to show our appreciation for their service to our country.

Today, the day after Veterans Day, I am so proud to be on the House floor to continue our work on behalf of veterans.

I would first like to thank Representative BROWNLEY and my other colleagues who have worked so hard to compile this important bill in the House.

In addition to providing better access to resources and benefits offered by the VA, the Deborah Sampson Act contains several provisions to ensure that women veterans have equitable access to high-quality, gender-specific healthcare.

I am proud that my bill, the Caring for Our Women Veterans Act, is included in the Deborah Sampson Act.

We know that the VA is committed to providing care to all veterans, but many VA facilities are not sufficiently equipped to provide comprehensive care to women veterans. The Caring for Our Women Veterans Act, now sections 305 to 307 of the Deborah Sampson Act, will empower the VA to fulfill its mission to honor all veterans.

The legislation requires VA to report locations where gender-specific services are used, how facilities can be improved, and where specialty staff is most needed to effectively care for women veterans.

This legislation will provide VA with the data it needs to effectively upgrade clinics and hospitals; to hire, train, and retain staff; and, most importantly, to provide earned healthcare to women veterans. These changes are long overdue, and it is now even more pressing that this legislation is passed.

Women have served honorably in the Armed Forces since the founding of these United States, and women veterans are the fastest growing group within the veteran population.

We have a collective responsibility to care for our veterans when they return home, and the Deborah Sampson Act helps achieve that by removing barriers that women veterans face on a daily basis. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support my bill, the Caring for Our Women Veterans Act, and the underlying Deborah Sampson Act.

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA), my good friend.

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3224, the Deborah

Sampson Act, as amended. I am proud to join my colleague, Representative BROWNLEY of California, in support of this most important bill to improve the healthcare provided for America's more than 2 million women veterans.

I thank the chairwoman of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health for including my bipartisan bill, Improving Oversight of Women Veterans' Care Act.

In 2016, the Government Accountability Office reported that the Veterans Health Administration had limited information on the VA medical centers' compliance with certain health standards for women veterans and access to gender-specific care provided by non-VA doctors.

In response, this legislation requires an annual report on the access of gender-specific services provided under community care contracts, including the average wait and driving times.

This bill is also directing the VA to establish a report on facilities' compliance with environment of care standards.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 20 seconds to the gentleman from California.

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to pass H.R. 3224.

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. WILD), my good friend.

Ms. WILD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this bill.

Today, in my community and across our country, far too many Americans lack adequate access to fair housing, quality healthcare, and simple legal services, and too many of those Americans are veterans.

Today, women continue to take on new roles and responsibilities in every branch of our armed services. According to Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, more than 345,000 women have deployed since 9/11.

When these women return home, they face different challenges than their male counterparts, and they are disproportionately affected by crises that affect veterans of both genders, like homelessness, with women veterans making up the fastest growing portion of the homeless vet population.

Last week, I had the privilege of speaking with women veterans in my district about these issues and other issues, and I heard how critical these problems are for them.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 20 seconds to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Ms. WILD. That is why I am so proud to have introduced the Improving Legal Services for Female Veterans Act, which is included in the Deborah Sampson Act.

The very least that our men and women in uniform should be able to expect once they come home is that they won't have to fight for basic dignity, support, and opportunity after they put their lives on the line for our country.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, certainly I think, on our side of the aisle, we are going to call for a recorded vote on this. This bill will pass overwhelmingly, and I congratulate Congresswoman

BROWNLEY, who is a good friend, for bringing this legislation forward. She has worked tirelessly for this, and I think you are going to see great support. The VA has a long way to go in doing this.

I will say this. If I am privileged enough to get reelected to this body and to be placed on the Veterans' Affairs Committee again and to chair this committee, I will make this statement right here on the floor now: I will not treat the minority the same way we have been treated.

The only way we have been able to bring legislation up on this floor when we are shut out is the amendment process, and we can debate it and vote it up or down. That is what Americans do.

We should bring these bills up, and if they don't float on their merit in the majority, I am a big boy, I understand that. If you lose, you lose, and if you win, you win. But we should be allowed to be heard.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear that the ranking member recommends to his colleagues and all Members of the House that they support this excellent legislation by Representative BROWNLEY.

The minority knew in committee that this was excellent legislation. I am sorry to see that they chose procedural games to play politics with an excellent piece of legislation that they now say they are supporting, and I am very pleased that they are going to support this legislation.

I urge my colleagues to pass this excellent bill. We worked hard to put this legislation in the form that would be acceptable to all Members of the House, and that is why we are moving this legislation under suspension of the rules.

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

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3224, the Deborah Sampson Act, which removes barriers faced by women veterans accessing health care and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Our country has more than 2 million women veterans who live in every Congressional district, including the Northern Mariana Islands.

And the number of women veterans seeking VA health care has doubled since 2000.

While the women veteran population continues to grow, the VA has not kept up in providing the care and services tailored to their unique health care needs.

The Deborah Sampson Act, which I cosponsored, improves women's care at the VA by requiring at least one designated women's health provider in each VA facility, retrofitting existing medical facilities to improve privacy and environmental care conditions, and expanding access to newborn care. The bill also increases funding for legal and support services to focus on unmet needs among women veterans, like prevention of eviction and foreclosure and child support issues.

Passage of H.R. 3224 is critical to ensuring the VA has the capacity and resources to meet the current and future needs of women veterans.

I thank the gentlelady from California, Ms. BROWNLEY, for her leadership on this legislation and urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3224.

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. 3224, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

CONTINUATION OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO IRAN—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 116-79)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days before the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to Iran declared in Executive Order 12170 of November 14, 1979, is to continue in effect beyond November 14, 2019.

Our relations with Iran have not yet normalized, and the process of implementing the agreements with Iran,

dated January 19, 1981, is ongoing. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12170 with respect to Iran.

DONALD J. TRUMP.
THE WHITE HOUSE, November 12, 2019.

CONTINUATION OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO PROLIFERATION OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION—MES- SAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 116-80)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days before the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice, stating that the national emergency with respect to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction that was declared in Executive Order 12938 of November 14, 1994, is to continue in effect beyond November 14, 2019.

DONALD J. TRUMP.
THE WHITE HOUSE, November 12, 2019.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed. Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 4162,
H.R. 3224, and

Agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, if ordered.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

GI BILL PLANNING ACT OF 2019

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4162) to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the period under which an election must be made for entitlement to educational assistance under the All-Volunteer Educational Assistance Program of Department of Veterans Affairs, to phase

out the use of such program, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 408, nays 0, not voting 22, as follows:

[Roll No. 610]
YEAS—408

Abraham	Costa	Hastings
Adams	Courtney	Hayes
Aderholt	Cox (CA)	Heck
Aguilar	Craig	Hern, Kevin
Allen	Crawford	Herrera Beutler
Allred	Crenshaw	Hice (GA)
Amash	Crist	Higgins (LA)
Amodei	Crow	Higgins (NY)
Armstrong	Cuellar	Hill (AR)
Arrington	Cunningham	Himes
Axne	Curtis	Holding
Babin	Davidis (KS)	Hollingsworth
Bacon	Davidson (OH)	Horn, Kendra S.
Baird	Davis (CA)	Horsford
Balderson	Davis, Rodney	Houlihan
Banks	DeFazio	Hoyer
Barr	DeGette	Hudson
Barragán	DeLauro	Huffman
Bass	DelBene	Huizenga
Beatty	Delgado	Hunter
Bera	Demings	Jackson Lee
Bergman	DeSaulnier	Jayapal
Beyer	DesJarlais	Jeffries
Biggs	Deutch	Johnson (GA)
Bilirakis	Diaz-Balart	Johnson (LA)
Bishop (GA)	Dingell	Johnson (OH)
Bishop (NC)	Doggett	Johnson (SD)
Bishop (UT)	Doyle, Michael	Johnson (TX)
Blumenauer	F.	Jordan
Blunt Rochester	Duncan	Joyce (OH)
Bonamici	Dunn	Joyce (PA)
Bost	Emmer	Kaptur
Boyle, Brendan	Engel	Katko
F.	Escobar	Keating
Brady	Eshoo	Keller
Brindisi	Espallat	Kelly (MS)
Brooks (AL)	Estes	Kelly (PA)
Brooks (IN)	Evans	Kennedy
Brown (MD)	Ferguson	Khanna
Brownley (CA)	Finkenauer	Kildee
Buchanan	Fitzpatrick	Kilmer
Buck	Fleischmann	Kim
Bucshon	Fletcher	Kind
Budd	Flores	King (IA)
Burchett	Fortenberry	King (NY)
Burgess	Foster	Kinzinger
Bustos	Fox (NC)	Kirkpatrick
Butterfield	Frankel	Krishnamoorthi
Byrne	Fudge	Kuster (NH)
Calvert	Fulcher	Kustoff (TN)
Carbajal	Gaetz	LaHood
Cárdenas	Gallagher	LaMalfa
Carson (IN)	Galleo	Lamb
Carter (GA)	Garamendi	Lamborn
Carter (TX)	Garcia (IL)	Langevin
Cartwright	Garcia (TX)	Larsen (WA)
Case	Gianforte	Larson (CT)
Casten (IL)	Gibbs	Latta
Castor (FL)	Gohmert	Lawrence
Castro (TX)	Golden	Lawson (FL)
Chabot	Gomez	Lee (CA)
Cheney	Gonzalez (OH)	Lee (NV)
Chu, Judy	Gooden	Lesko
Cicilline	Gosar	Levin (CA)
Cisneros	Gottheimer	Levin (MI)
Clarke (MA)	Granger	Lewis
Clarke (NY)	Graves (GA)	Lieu, Ted
Clay	Graves (LA)	Lipinski
Cleaver	Graves (MO)	Loeback
Cline	Green (TN)	Loftgren
Cloud	Green, Al (TX)	Long
Clyburn	Griffith	Lowenthal
Cohen	Grijalva	Lowey
Cole	Grothman	Lucas
Collins (GA)	Guest	Luetkemeyer
Comer	Guthrie	Lujan
Conaway	Haaland	Luria
Connolly	Hagedorn	Lynch
Cook	Harder (CA)	Malinowski
Cooper	Harris	Maloney,
Correa	Hartzler	Carolyn B.

Maloney, Sean	Pressley	Staubert
Marshall	Price (NC)	Stefanik
Massie	Quigley	Steil
Mast	Raskin	Steube
Matsui	Ratcliffe	Stevens
McAdams	Reed	Stewart
McBath	Reschenthaler	Stivers
McCarthy	Rice (NY)	Suozy
McCaul	Rice (SC)	Swalwell (CA)
McClintock	Richmond	Takano
McCollum	Riggleman	Taylor
McGovern	Roby	Thompson (CA)
McHenry	Rodgers (WA)	Thompson (MS)
McKinley	Roe, David P.	Thompson (PA)
McNerney	Rogers (AL)	Tipton
Meadows	Rogers (KY)	Titus
Meeks	Rose (NY)	Tlaib
Meng	Rose, John W.	Tonko
Meuser	Rouda	Torres (CA)
Miller	Rouzer	Torres Small
Mitchell	Roy	(NM)
Moolenaar	Roybal-Allard	Trahan
Mooney (WV)	Ruiz	Trone
Moore	Ruppersberger	Underwood
Morelle	Rutherford	Upton
Moulton	Ryan	Van Drew
Mucarsel-Powell	Sanchez	Vargas
Mullin	Sarbanes	Veasey
Murphy (FL)	Scalise	Vela
Murphy (NC)	Scanlon	Velázquez
Nadler	Schakowsky	Wagner
Napolitano	Schiff	Walberg
Neal	Schneider	Walden
Neguse	Schrader	Walker
Newhouse	Schrier	Walorski
Norcross	Schweikert	Waltz
Norman	Scott (VA)	Wasserman
Nunes	Scott, Austin	Schultz
O'Halleran	Scott, David	Watkins
Ocasio-Cortez	Sensenbrenner	Watson Coleman
Omar	Serrano	Weber (TX)
Palazzo	Sewell (AL)	Webster (FL)
Pallone	Shalala	Welch
Palmer	Sherrill	Wenstrup
Panetta	Shimkus	Westerman
Pappas	Simpson	Wexton
Pascrell	Sires	Wild
Payne	Slotkin	Williams
Pence	Smith (MO)	Wilson (SC)
Perlmutter	Smith (NE)	Womack
Perry	Smith (NJ)	Woodall
Peters	Smith (WA)	Soto
Peterson	Soto	Wright
Phillips	Spanberger	Yarmuth
Pingree	Spano	Yoho
Porter	Speier	Young
Posey	Stanton	Zeldin

NOT VOTING—22

Davis, Danny K.	McEachin	Timmons
Dean	Olson	Turner
Gabbard	Pocan	Visclosky
Gonzalez (TX)	Rooney (FL)	Waters
Hurd (TX)	Rush	Wilson (FL)
Kelly (IL)	Sherman	Wittman
Loudermilk	Smucker	
Marchant	Thornberry	

□ 1859

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DEBORAH SAMPSON ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. BROWNLEY of California). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3224) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for increased access to Department of Veterans Affairs medical care for women veterans, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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, as amended.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 399, nays 11, not voting 20, as follows:

[Roll No. 611]

YEAS—399

Abraham	Curtis	Jackson Lee
Adams	Davidson (KS)	Jayapal
Aderholt	Davis (CA)	Jeffries
Aguilar	Davis, Rodney	Johnson (GA)
Allen	Dean	Johnson (LA)
Allred	DeFazio	Johnson (OH)
Amodei	DeGette	Johnson (SD)
Armstrong	DeLauro	Johnson (TX)
Arrington	DelBene	Jordan
Axne	Delgado	Joyce (OH)
Babin	Demings	Joyce (PA)
Bacon	DeSaulnier	Kaptur
Baird	DesJarlais	Katko
Balderson	Deutch	Keating
Banks	Diaz-Balart	Keller
Barr	Dingell	Kelly (MS)
Barragán	Doggett	Kelly (PA)
Bass	Doyle, Michael	Kennedy
Beatty	F.	Khanna
Bera	Duncan	Kildee
Bergman	Dunn	Kilmer
Beyer	Emmer	Kim
Bilirakis	Engel	Kind
Bishop (GA)	Escobar	King (IA)
Bishop (UT)	Eshoo	King (NY)
Blumenauer	Español	Kinzinger
Blunt Rochester	Estes	Kirkpatrick
Bonamici	Evans	Krishnamoorthi
Bost	Ferguson	Kuster (NH)
Boyle, Brendan	Finkenauer	Kustoff (TN)
F.	Fitzpatrick	LaHood
Brady	Fleischmann	LaMalfa
Brindisi	Fletcher	Lamb
Brooks (AL)	Flores	Lamborn
Brooks (IN)	Fortenberry	Langevin
Brown (MD)	Foster	Larsen (WA)
Brownley (CA)	Fox (NC)	Larson (CT)
Buchanan	Frankel	Latta
Bucshon	Fudge	Lawrence
Budd	Fulcher	Lawson (FL)
Burchett	Gaetz	Lee (CA)
Burgess	Gallagher	Lee (NV)
Bustos	Gallego	Lesko
Butterfield	Garamendi	Levin (CA)
Byrne	Garcia (IL)	Levin (MI)
Calvert	Garcia (TX)	Lewis
Carbajal	Gianforte	Lieu, Ted
Cardenas	Gibbs	Lipinski
Carson (IN)	Gohmert	Loebsack
Carter (GA)	Golden	Lofgren
Carter (TX)	Gomez	Long
Cartwright	Gonzalez (OH)	Lowenthal
Case	Gooden	Lowe
Casten (IL)	Gottheimer	Lucas
Castor (FL)	Granger	Luetkemeyer
Castro (TX)	Graves (GA)	Lujan
Chabot	Graves (LA)	Luria
Cheney	Graves (MO)	Lynch
Chu, Judy	Green (TN)	Malinowski
Cicilline	Green, Al (TX)	Maloney
Cisneros	Griffith	Carolyn B.
Clark (MA)	Grijalva	Maloney, Sean
Clarke (NY)	Grothman	Marshall
Clay	Guest	Mast
Cleaver	Guthrie	Matsui
Cline	Haaland	McAdams
Cloud	Hagedorn	McBath
Clyburn	Harder (CA)	McCarthy
Cohen	Hartzler	McCaul
Cole	Hastings	McClintock
Collins (GA)	Hayes	McCollum
Comer	Heck	McGovern
Conaway	Hern, Kevin	McHenry
Connolly	Herrera Beutler	McKinley
Cook	Higgins (LA)	McNerney
Cooper	Higgins (NY)	Meadows
Correa	Hill (AR)	Meeks
Costa	Himes	Meng
Courtney	Holding	Meuser
Cox (CA)	Hollingsworth	Miller
Craig	Horn, Kendra S.	Mitchell
Crawford	Horsford	Moolenaar
Crenshaw	Houlihan	Mooney (WV)
Crist	Hoyer	Moore
Crow	Hudson	Morelle
Cuellar	Huffman	Moulton
Cunningham	Huizenga	Mucarsel-Powell

Mullin	Rouda	Takano
Murphy (FL)	Rouzer	Thompson (CA)
Murphy (NC)	Roy	Thompson (MS)
Nadler	Roybal-Allard	Thompson (PA)
Napolitano	Ruiz	Tipton
Neal	Ruppersberger	Titus
Neguse	Rutherford	Tlaib
Newhouse	Ryan	Tonko
Norcross	Sánchez	Torres (CA)
Nunes	Sarbanes	Torres Small
O'Halleran	Scalise	(NM)
Ocasio-Cortez	Scanlon	Trahan
Olson	Schakowsky	Trone
Omar	Schiff	Underwood
Palazzo	Schneider	Upton
Pallone	Schrader	Van Drew
Palmer	Schrier	Vargas
Panetta	Schweikert	Veasey
Pappas	Scott (VA)	Vela
Pascrell	Scott, Austin	Velázquez
Payne	Scott, David	Wagner
Pence	Sensenbrenner	Walberg
Perlmutter	Serrano	Walden
Perry	Sewell (AL)	Walker
Peters	Shalala	Walorski
Peterson	Sherrill	Waltz
Phillips	Shimkus	Wasserman
Pingree	Simpson	Schultz
Porter	Sires	Waters
Posey	Slotkin	Watkins
Pressley	Smith (MO)	Watson Coleman
Price (NC)	Smith (NE)	Weber (TX)
Quigley	Smith (NJ)	Webster (FL)
Raskin	Smith (WA)	Welch
Ratcliffe	Soto	Wenstrup
Reed	Spanberger	Westerman
Reschenthaler	Spano	Wexton
Rice (NY)	Speier	Wild
Rice (SC)	Stanton	Williams
Richmond	Staubert	Wilson (SC)
Riggelman	Stefanik	Womack
Roby	Steil	Woodall
Rodgers (WA)	Steube	Wright
Roe, David P.	Stevens	Yarmuth
Rogers (AL)	Stewart	Yoho
Rogers (KY)	Stivers	Young
Rose (NY)	Suozy	Zeldin
Rose, John W.	Swalwell (CA)	

NAYS—11

Amash	Gosar	Massie
Biggs	Harris	Norman
Buck	Hice (GA)	Taylor
Davidson (OH)	Hunter	

NOT VOTING—20

Bishop (NC)	Marchant	Thornberry
Davis, Danny K.	McEachin	Timmons
Gabbard	Pocan	Turner
Gonzalez (TX)	Rooney (FL)	Visclosky
Hurd (TX)	Rush	Wilson (FL)
Kelly (IL)	Sherman	Wittman
Loudermilk	Smucker	

□ 1909

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, which the Chair will put de novo.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

AFFORDABLE DRUG COSTS

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to praise my colleagues in this Chamber for the support of the Lower Drug Costs Now Act.

This bill will make it easier for elderly and disabled citizens to get the life-saving and life-preserving medications they need at prices they can afford.

It would finally give Medicare the power to negotiate directly with the drug companies to get these prices lower. Once they agree on a new price, this bill would make that price available to the American people with private insurance as well as those with Medicare. Then it would take some of the savings from these lowered prices and use it to find new cures for cancer and other diseases through NIH.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of this bill and my party's continued commitment to people over profits.

□ 1915

HONORING OUR VETERANS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, we marked the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. This momentous day marks a turning point in history.

I am thankful for the leadership of President Ronald Reagan with Pope John Paul II and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher for this triumph.

Veterans worked to put their vision of democracy into action with victory over communism by peace through strength. U.S. military veterans can cite that we have more countries today living in freedom and democracy than in the history of the world.

Yesterday, we observed Veterans Day, an opportunity to recognize freedom is not free. From tearing down the Berlin Wall 30 years ago to the recent operation in Syria to remove the murderous leader of ISIS, the continued resolve our servicemembers have to protect American families is steadfast. We will honor these sacrifices and veterans and military families, and they shall always be appreciated.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

CAREER COUNSELORS

(Mr. LANGEVIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, in schools across my home State of Rhode Island and across the country, career counselors provide students with the guidance they need to navigate their academic and career pathways. It is therefore critical that these counselors have up-to-date information about all the options available to their students, including career and technical education, or CTE.

When counselors ensure students are aware of high-quality CTE programs and local workforce trends, they can make informed choices about their futures, whether that means pursuing a bachelor's degree or an apprenticeship. That is why, during National Career Development Week, I am proud to introduce the Counseling for Career Choice Act with my good friend and CTE Caucus co-chair, "GT" THOMPSON.

Our bipartisan bill would encourage States to develop career counseling frameworks with the input of educators, businesses, and other community leaders to provide counselors with the resources and training to best support their students. That will ultimately help lead to them reaching their career goals in life.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to cosponsor our legislation.

VETERANS DAY

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor our Nation's veterans, the men and women who have made the decision to commit their lives to service and to defend our great Nation, among America's most courageous.

This past July, I had the honor and privilege of traveling to Fort Drum, New York, to attend the final reenlistment and promotion of my son, Logan, to sergeant first class of the United States Army. My wife, Penny, and I could not be more proud.

There are more than 20 million veterans living in the United States today, and, as elected officials, we have the opportunity and responsibility to equip them to succeed while they are defending our Nation and to ease their burdens when they return to civilian life.

Our men and women in uniform have committed their lives to protecting this great Nation, and we are forever indebted to them for their service and their sacrifice.

CELEBRATING THE 550TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF GURU NANAK SAHIB

(Mr. SUOZZI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SUOZZI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my greeting to my friends in the Sikh community who are celebrating the 550th anniversary of the birth of Guru Nanak Sahib, the founder of the Sikh religion.

"Sat Sri Akal."

According to Sikh tradition, Guru Nanak's birth and many events in his life demonstrate that he had been marked with divine grace. During his life, he traveled to many places proclaiming the message of one God who dwells in each and every one of his creations and constitutes eternal truth.

Guru Nanak set up a unique spiritual, social, and political platform based upon equality, fraternal love, goodness, and virtue—attributes we could use more of in our world today.

The anniversary of Guru Nanak's birth is the perfect time to reflect on the contributions of the Sikh community to world peace and understanding.

The strength of the United States lies in our rich diversity. We are truly blessed with the people of many faiths and cultures, including the Sikhs, who have contributed so much to the fabric of our American communities and the entire world.

Mr. Speaker, "Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguruji ki Fateh." Purity belongs to the Creator, all victory belongs to Him.

HABERSHAM SCHOOL STATE CHAMPION VOLLEYBALL TEAM

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Habersham School for winning the State volleyball championship in Georgia on October 19, 2019. I could not be more proud of their excellent representation of the First Congressional District of Georgia. Now a powerhouse team in the Georgia Association of Private and Parochial Schools has won back-to-back titles.

In the championship match this year, a number of Habersham players rose to the challenge on the State's largest stage: Krista Poppell had 33 assists and 10 digs; Jordan Christy chipped in 28 kills; Makenzie Sparks had 5 kills; and Anna Thompson included 4 kills.

The team had an overall 32-6 record for the year.

Congratulations to every member of the volleyball team at Habersham School.

FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY, AND JUSTICE FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS IN TURKEY

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, we honored the men and women of the United States military, the veterans that we so much admire and respect.

I had the privilege of attending a number of veterans' commemorations, and that is why I intend to reintroduce my Battle Buddy bill, called the New Battle Buddy bill, to ensure that those leaving the Armed Forces and those already veterans have a buddy to assist them in times of crisis.

They are freedom loving, and we are reminded of the words of President John F. Kennedy who said: The price of freedom is high, but Americans are willing to pay the price.

That is why I also congratulate freedom-loving Turkish Americans and express my sadness and disappointment that the President of Turkey now comes to the United States, where, in his own country, freedom is not real. The locking up of political opposition, journalists and others, the question is: Why would he be extended an invitation for a state visit?

It is important for the United States to stand for her values of freedom, democracy, and justice. It is time to free the political prisoners in Turkey and, as well, to respond to the devastation of the Kurds.

BEVERLY HURD, VETERAN OF THE MONTH

(Mr. SPANO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SPANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the inspiring story of a World War II veteran from my district. At 102 years young, Beverly Hurd is a unique personification of what heroism is about.

In 1944, Bev put her teaching career on hold and enlisted in the U.S. Navy. While stationed at Corry Field in Pensacola, Florida, she was able to apply her teaching skills as a ground school instructor. During her time there, she developed critical classified reconnaissance films that were used in troop training.

Once discharged, Bev used her GI Bill to earn her teaching degree and return to the classroom. She went from serving in uniform to serving at home and, for nearly 40 years, educated generations of great minds.

Beverly Hurd modeled selflessness and sacrifice at a time when the doors were barely open for females to do so, and she played a critical role, both in protecting democracy and in expanding the role of women in our military service.

I thank Bev for her service, her sacrifice, and for being a great role model for generations of younger American women.

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF FALL OF BERLIN WALL

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, this week, freedom lovers around the world celebrate the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Constructed in 1961, the infamous Berlin Wall symbolized Soviet brutality and forced separation between liberty and tyranny. Yet, no wall could contain the persistent surge for liberty by the captive people of Central and Eastern Europe.

In Poland's shipyards, a workers' solidarity movement, led by visionary and valiant labor leader Lech Walesa, brought democracy to the Polish people and millions of others as the Soviet Union collapsed.

In Leipzig, Germany, 100,000 protestors and their peaceful demonstrations led to the once-unimaginable reunification of a civilized Germany.

Yet, as democracy spread, many assumed liberty's work in the region was done and that the roots of democracy were firmly entrenched.

Tragically, yet again, maligned Russian influence haunts the region as Putin wages his illegal war in Ukraine, today's scrimmage line for liberty on the European continent. Outmoded ethno-national narratives are being fed that, in the past, led to centuries of bloody conflict.

Mr. Speaker, now more than ever, democratic nations must unite so that liberty, justice, and equality is for all people across our globe.

HIRE VETS MEDALLION

(Mr. CLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was Veterans Day, and while we were all back in our district and while we should thank our veterans every day for standing in defense of our Nation, November 11 is a day when we all can join together as Americans to thank these courageous heroes.

I rise today to congratulate one specific business, Tactical and Survival Specialties, Incorporated, of Harrisonburg for being awarded the U.S. Department of Labor's HIRE Vets Medallion.

This prestigious honor is the only program within the Federal Government that recognizes the meaningful and verifiable efforts undertaken by job creators to hire and retain our veterans.

Tactical and Survival Specialties, Incorporated, was founded by retired U.S. Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer Bill Strang in 1980, and the business is one of the oldest tactical equipment suppliers in the United States. TSSi is committed to providing state-of-the-art equipment to military, law enforcement, and disaster response professionals all over the world.

I applaud TSSi on being one of a select few awardees across the Nation, and I thank all the employers who have demonstrated outstanding efforts to hire, train, and retain our veterans.

AMERICAN LEGION POST 469, LONGPORT, NEW JERSEY

(Mr. VAN DREW asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to thank the American Legion Post 469 of Longport, south Jersey, for their work to honor our wounded veterans and their families with their annual Wounded Warrior Week in south Jersey.

During the week, the Legion hosts a wounded warrior and their family with an all-expenses-paid vacation to south Jersey that includes a parade with a police escort and numerous preplanned outings that include: fishing trips, days at the beach, and nights on the famous Ocean City, New Jersey, boardwalk.

All of this is a celebration that brings together the south Jersey community to honor our heroes in the military and to display the gratitude the citizens of the United States have for the many sacrifices of our soldiers and the many sacrifices that they make.

I thank the American Legion Post 469 for their continuous efforts to uplift our heroes in the Armed Forces and for having a positive impact on the south Jersey community.

I also thank Joseph Hahn for being a hero and thank the wonderful community that has hosted this year after year. And may God bless them and may God bless our heroes.

□ 1930

COMMEMORATING NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

(Mr. GROTHMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, as some of our other Members have, I rise to commemorate the observance of National Apprenticeship Week.

Whether you are talking to people who are manufacturers, whether you are talking to people in the medical community, you know that one of the biggest problems we have in America today is we don't have enough people to fill the vital jobs that are necessary for our economy and necessary for the health of our citizens.

To a certain extent, this is because the educational system has let people down, allowing them to spend tens of thousands of dollars and go tens of thousands of dollars in debt without getting the skills needed in these two vital areas.

For too long, we have just focused on a vague 4-year degree path, but we are right now in a position in which we are ruining people's lives or putting them in a very difficult position as they become 30 years old, 35 years old, and still don't have a job commensurate with repaying these loans.

Apprenticeships are good for employers, good for workers, and good for our country.

As Members of Congress, people on the Education Committee and others must do more to expand and promote the apprenticeship program.

DACA BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT

(Mr. ENGEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, it is with great frustration that I rise today to speak on the Supreme Court hearing arguments today in three cases relating to former President Obama's DACA policy.

President Trump's decision to rescind DACA has thrust fear into hundreds of thousands of Dreamers. These individuals are active members of our society who pay taxes, create jobs, and help drive our Nation forward. To subject these individuals to the threat of deportation is absolutely wrong.

I have heard directly from many constituents who depend on DACA, and I am heartbroken by the trauma and fear they now face.

My colleagues and I did our job earlier this year in passing H.R. 6, the American Dream and Promise Act; however, Senator MCCONNELL has failed to consider this important legislation. As a result, we are now dependent on the Supreme Court offering a favorable decision that upholds DACA.

I urge Senator MCCONNELL to bring H.R. 6 for a vote and hope the Supreme Court will give a favorable decision on these cases.

CALLING FOR THE RELEASE OF AUSTIN TICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MORELLE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. 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 the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia? There was no objection.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize my equal partner in this Special Order, my very good friend from Texas, Representative AL GREEN.

Representative GREEN represents the parents and, for that matter, the place where Austin Tice, the person about whom we are speaking today, was born.

He and I have partnered because Austin Tice, though born in Texas, moved to the District of Columbia. Like many in the House and Senate, we have grave concerns about Austin Tice and want to express those concerns and call upon those who are keeping him in Syria to let him go.

Mr. Speaker, I can't say enough about how strongly bipartisan this matter is—bipartisan, yes—and bicameral. There are dozens upon dozens of Members of the House and the Senate who have written the President to ask him to do all he can to bring Austin Tice home from what we believe is captivity in Syria.

Despite the difficulties our country is having, as I speak, with Syria, this, we

believe, is not a lost cause. In fact, we are encouraged that there are Americans who Syria has let come home. Sam Goodwin is one. Canadian Kristian Baxter is another.

So we do more than hold out hope that we can bring Austin Tice home.

So, let me explain who Austin Tice is and why he has attracted such concern and interest in the House of Representatives and in the Senate.

First of all, I want to pay tribute to his mother and father, Marc and Debra Tice, who have never lost hope that they can bring their son home, have visited Members of the House and Senate, and have never stopped seeking his return to the United States.

Let me tell you why he is of special concern to me. Austin Tice not only lived in the District of Columbia and will continue to live here when he returns; Austin Tice was a U.S. marine. He served in the Armed Forces of the United States.

When he came home, he enrolled in Georgetown Law school and had only a year to go when he left the law school, because he so yearned to be a reporter, and went to Syria in the early days of the civil war.

Now, because he didn't speak to a lawyer first, he entered Syria without a visa. That is why he is being held. It is not the kind of reason you would expect someone to be held in a foreign country.

After all, Syria holds more American hostages, than any country in the world or any group that is holding people—we think about half a dozen.

You wouldn't think that not having a valid visa could be anything but easily corrected, but he has been there, we believe—now he will turn 38, or he may have turned 38 by now—for 7 years with no word from him.

And that is why we come to the floor of the House tonight, because we are very concerned because we cannot be in touch with him. Despite working through the appropriate intermediary, the Czechoslovakian embassy, we have not been able to receive word.

Austin Tice left for Lebanon, by car, from Damascus. Then he fell into rebel hands and was detained at the checkpoint. That is the last we have heard of him.

January 3, the very first day of the 116th Congress, my partner and I introduced a resolution for Syria to return Austin Tice, and that was as soon as the House commenced this session.

Frankly, I am concerned that, as I note in our House resolution, that there has been a video clip on YouTube. That clip shows Austin Tice blindfolded and being prodded up a hillside by masked militants.

You can imagine, since we haven't heard from him since, why we are on the floor this evening.

The Syrian Government has not acknowledged that they are even detaining Austin Tice or his whereabouts. Officials of the United States, however, believe that Austin Tice is alive, and

they believe that he is being held either by the government of Bashar al-Assad or by some group affiliated with that government.

The FBI has offered a \$1 million reward for information leading to the return of Austin Tice, and we are pleased that so many journalism organizations are working for his return.

It is important to note that Austin Tice was anything but a combatant. He was a journalist. He only went to Syria because he wanted to talk with the people who were living through an awful civil war. He was freelance, so he wasn't working through any powerful media, and his concern and his interest in journalism is what drove him, not any undermining of Syria or even views on the Syrian Government. He was acting as a journalist to find out what was happening.

Now, we recognize that Syria does not have a policy of never releasing American citizens. We refer to Sam Goodwin, 30 years old, who also made a mistake. He crossed—just like Austin Tice, he just made a mistake. He crossed the border from Iraq into northeast Syria without a visa because he was trying to visit every country in the world, all the innocence of that. And it was that kind of innocence that I think we should assign to Austin Tice because he is much like Sam Goodwin in that regard.

We call upon the Syrian Government to understand Austin Tice in that context, the naivete of a young man without legal advice, simply seeking knowledge, not seeking to undermine a government or to in any way interfere with the government.

There are others who have been held and who are believed to be in custody whose families are beginning to speak out. It is important to note that many families whose relatives are held in Syria do not speak out because they are concerned that, in doing so, they will be acting against the best interests of the family member held.

So, you can see how concerned the parents of Austin Tice must be that they have felt they had to speak out after 7 years.

Bear in mind that the United States has leverage with Syria, because this country is the largest single humanitarian donor to Syria. We are providing or have provided more than \$8 billion in humanitarian assistance for those displaced inside of Syria and the region since the start of that crisis in Syria.

The U.S. Government itself is supporting emergency food assistance, shelter, safe drinking water, urgent medical care, humanitarian protection activities, and other urgent relief. And I believe, if the Syrian Government understands or considers humanitarian aid from the United States, they will see that they have nothing to lose by freeing this American citizen.

Last month, the President told reporters that he himself was interested in working on securing the release of hostages in Syria. However, we do not

know what action the President has taken and call upon him to become involved, as he said he would.

The only intervention we know of is his intervention into the captivity in North Korea of Otto Warmbier, but by the time he got home, it was too late, and he died shortly after being released.

However, we believe that this Austin Tice is alive and can, in fact, come home safe to us.

We believe that, in any negotiations with Syria, the fate of our hostages should be front and center. We are pleased that Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM has indicated exactly that as well, again showing the bipartisan and bicameral concern about those being held in Syria.

On August the 11th of this year, Austin Tice's parents wrote an op-ed that appeared in papers around the country on the birthday of Austin Tice. They said: "We wish we could remind him of how glad we are he was born, how blessed we are to be his parents, and how truly we believe the world is a better place for having him in it."

Those are the words of his parents.

We are on the floor of the House today to speed Austin Tice home.

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Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my partner to come to the floor now, Representative AL GREEN, who, of course, is the Representative from the home State of Austin Tice's parents and where Austin Tice was born and raised.

I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN).

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for more than her kind words. I thank her for her many years of service here in the House of Representatives. She has acquitted herself as a Congressperson par excellence: Yale, M.A.; Yale, L.L.B.; in Congress for, lo, these many years, yet not able to vote as other Congresspeople do.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the gentlewoman and I will see the day that she will cast that first vote. I thank her for all of her endeavors. I especially thank her for what she is doing for Austin Tice.

The Tice family, Marc and Debra, are the equivalent of family with me. I have known them for many years now. I know how sincere they are with the efforts to bring their son home.

I know of their trips to Lebanon. I know that they have corresponded with people that some of us might not find suitable for such correspondence. But because they want their son, they are willing to talk to anyone who has intelligence that might lead to his return.

I know that they have made a difference in the lives of others who have friends, relatives, children, if you will, captured because they have worked with the State Department to help fashion protocols. They have worked with two Presidents. They want their

son home, but they also want to see justice for all persons who are being held captive.

Their son, Austin, is an all-American lad, at 38 years of age now. I am 71. Anybody under 71 is young to me.

He is an all-American person, if you will. Yes, he has served his country in the military. Yes, he was an Eagle Scout. Yes, he did attend Georgetown, Georgetown Law, as a matter of fact. Yes, he was a freelance journalist.

He was one of those persons who would dare to go to distant places, dare to risk life and limb so that we might know the truth about circumstances in places where the eyes of cameras do not pierce.

Yes, he was a person who had the courage, intestinal fortitude, to go into Syria without the consent of the government. I wish he hadn't done it, but I understand why he did it. I understand that he wanted to let people know about the conditions.

I am not sure that he went with preconceived notions, but I am sure of this: that he would tell the truth, that he would present the truth, that we would know the truth, whatever that truth might be.

I regret that he has been held captive now for some 7 years. He truly is a great American.

But more than this, for me, he represents the son I never had. I have no children. But if I had a son, I would want him to be like Austin Tice. I would want my son to have the courage to not measure his life by days and years, not measure his life by heart-throbs, passions, and tears. I would want my son to use the truest measure under God's Sun, and that is, what for others in your lifetime have you done?

Austin Tice was trying to help somebody. He wasn't there to help himself. He wanted to help others. That is the kind of son I would like to have, a courageous person who would dare to go where others dare not, a person who understood the risk but also understood the need.

Sometimes people like this have to stand alone, but they know that it is better to stand alone than not stand at all.

He is a hero. I miss him. His parents miss him. This country misses him.

I would ask that those who can reach the proper authorities in Syria—perhaps it is the President. Perhaps there are people who can get to the President. But I would ask that you would send this message: As a gesture of goodwill, let Austin Tice come home. As a gesture of an attempt to span some chasms that have been created, let us bring Austin Tice back.

This could be the genesis of something bigger than we know, giving Austin Tice his freedom.

I can tell you this: There are some Members of Congress who will be appreciative. There are American people who won't forget it. And there is an opportunity available to mend some fences.

I pray that this word will get to the appropriate authorities.

Mr. President, if this word gets to you, I would have you know that I am the kind of Congressperson who is willing to come to Syria. I am willing to come and be there to thank you and to welcome Austin Tice back into the hands of an agent of the United States Government.

This is a great opportunity. I beg that we take advantage of it.

Mr. and Mrs. Tice, I want you to know that we have not given up. We will not give in. We want Austin returned, and we will do everything, and we will leave no stone unturned, until this takes place.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for the time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I don't think there could have been a more eloquent statement than the statement we have just heard from my good friend, AL GREEN.

I am inclined to believe that if the Syrian authorities were listening, even they could not resist the eloquence, the depth of Representative GREEN's very intelligent but heartfelt statement.

I know that statement is much appreciated by Austin Tice's parents, who have had to go these 7 years alone, with only your help as their Member of Congress.

I am also grateful to the Members of Congress who, after all, don't necessarily represent anyone connected with Austin Tice, as AL GREEN and I do, for their generosity in coming to the floor. I would like to call upon Representative LORI TRAHAN from Massachusetts to ask her to say a few words at this time.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Mrs. TRAHAN).

Mrs. TRAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) for their dedication to the Tice family.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to an issue of critical importance for our country. Our fellow American, Austin Tice, is in his eighth year of captivity in Syria, where we believe he was unjustly detained and is reported to be held by the Syrian Government or its affiliates.

Austin was risking his health and safety as a freelance reporter, endeavoring to shed light on the suffering of the Syrian people for the world to see. His reporting has appeared in *The Washington Post*, *McClatchy*, and other news outlets.

As a fellow graduate of Georgetown's School of Foreign Service, Austin was also a former Marine Corps captain who served tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. Austin was no stranger to risk.

Regardless, he knew the importance of the work he was undertaking. His dedication to service represents the very best our country has to offer.

There is every reason for us to believe that Austin is still alive, and I have joined with my colleagues to call

on our administration to use the full resources of the United States Government to bring Austin home.

I had the privilege of meeting Austin's parents, Marc and Debra, a couple of months ago. I am awestruck by their hope, their perseverance, and their commitment to seeing their son returned home once and for all.

I am comforted that there is strong bipartisan support behind this effort. I know we can get this done if we work together.

I again thank the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia. I appreciate so much her organizing this Special Order and a coalition of bipartisan legislators to keep focus on this very important issue. We won't stop until we bring Austin Tice home.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Massachusetts whose relationship with Austin Tice—she didn't know him, but there is a school tie there.

It shows you that people, when they hear about Austin Tice's captivity, are inclined to the eloquence of Mrs. TRAHAN, who just spoke about him, spoke about him without knowing him, spoke with such enviable and praiseworthy remarks.

I thank her so much. I know that I speak for his parents in thanking her as well.

Mr. Speaker, I now want to introduce one of my good friends from the region. We were so pleased to welcome her into our delegation, and I am anxious to hear what she has to say because she, too, is neither from Texas nor the District of Columbia, and yet, with selflessness, she has asked to express her views on the captivity of Austin Tice.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Virginia (Ms. SPANBERGER), my good friend, at this time.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman HOLMES NORTON for organizing this Special Order. I am grateful for the comments that she has made.

To the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN), his passionate plea to see Austin Tice freed was moving, and I am proud to associate myself with many of his comments.

I rise today because Austin Tice has been in captivity for 2,647 days. Those have been 2,647 days of fear and anguish for his parents, his friends, his classmates, and his community. They have also represented 2,647 days of Austin's remarkable life and his determination and his will to live despite his captivity.

Austin is a journalist with a deep sense of service. He is also a veteran. Seven years ago, he traveled to Syria to report on the plight of Syria's children. He wanted to shed light on the consequences of a complex and unrelenting war on the youth of Syria. And in Syria, he was abducted. It was that 2,647 days ago that he was abducted.

He remains held in Syria, and we have every reason to believe that Austin is still alive. He is being held in

Syria. In September, I joined a letter sent by Republicans and Democrats directly to the President of the United States. In that letter, we called on the administration to use every diplomatic tool in our toolbox to secure Austin's safe return home.

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Austin's parents have been among his strongest advocates. They have made countless trips to Washington, D.C., and across the Middle East working to secure his release. They have been pillars of strength as they have fought to bring their son home.

I had the opportunity and the honor to meet Marc when he was in Washington, D.C.; and to see the tenacity and strength and devotion to his child was awe inspiring. It also makes me understand how he could be a parent to a young man who would go out and seek adventure and seek truth and seek information as a journalist.

It is my hope that we can come together as a body to bring Austin Tice home. I never met Austin Tice, but I am in awe of his story as an adventurer, as a journalist, as a veteran, as someone who has traveled the world seeking information and stories.

I have been compelled to take part in this event tonight, and I thank my colleagues for their tireless efforts on behalf of Austin Tice, their work to bring him home, their work to bring a voice to his story and knowledge of his continued capture and detainment in Syria. I thank them for their work, and I look forward to continuing, in small part, to work with them where I am able, where I can be of aid to bring information and light to Austin's story and to continue to be an advocate to bring him home.

It is my hope that in some days we will be able, here on the House floor, to celebrate the homecoming of an American, of a veteran, of a journalist, of a man who sought to tell the story of children in Syria.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to thank my good friend, Representative SPANBERGER, for those compelling remarks. Once again, we are hearing from a Member who, as she says, did not know Austin Tice.

I hope that Debra and Marc Tice, when they see Representative SPANBERGER give such eloquent and intelligent and deeply felt remarks, are comforted to know that they are not alone in seeking the release of their son.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of Members, not to mention all of the many Members of the House and Senate, who have signed on letters to the President for help with Austin Tice, but it is worth noting again that, on the very first day of Congress, Rep. AL GREEN introduced H. Res. 17.

That resolution, introduced with Representative AL GREEN, sought, from

the very beginning of the 116th Congress, to draw attention to Austin Tice, and we will not cease drawing just that kind of attention until we have learned where Austin Tice is and when he is coming home.

The resolution that we introduced expressed concern over the detention of Austin Tice and laid out many of the factual matters that the Members have offered here today. In that resolution, we not only expressed our concern regarding the detention of Austin Tice, we asked the State Department and the intelligence community and the interagency Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell to jointly continue investigations and to pursue all information. We have every reason to believe that that is being done by our agencies.

We encouraged, in our resolution, the State Department and the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs to engage directly with Syrian officials to facilitate Austin's safe release. In our resolution, we encourage the State Department to work with foreign governments known to have diplomatic influence with the Government of Syria, and we request the State Department and the intelligence community to continue to work with and to inform Congress and Austin Tice's family regarding his safe release and his condition at this time.

We, I think, in bringing this very young man to the attention of the American people, we have shown our concern and have shown that we remain hopeful.

In this case, no word is good word; it is word, that he is alive, we believe. The best word would be word to the parents, Debra and Marc Tice, that he is on his way home safe and sound.

Let me pledge on behalf of the many Members of the House and Senate who have written the President, let me assure these parents, Marc and Debra Tice: This Special Order devoted to your son, Austin Tice, is not the end of the work we will continue to do until we bring your son, Austin Tice, home. We appreciate the devotion you have shown as parents, and we mean to honor that devotion by continuing to do all we can in the Congress to make sure that Austin Tice is returned to you safe and sound.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlelady from the District of Columbia, the Honorable ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, for leading this special order today on the life of Austin Tice.

In November 2016, I had the privilege of meeting for the first time, Austin Tice's mother, Debra. It was at the Newseum, where Reporters Without Borders and the Newseum were launching a campaign that ran a banner on the Newseum's facade featuring Austin.

The banner was showing on the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes

Against Journalists. The banner had a simple message next to a photo of Austin's face, "Held captive for being a journalist since August 2012."

Austin Tice is the only American journalist being held captive in Syria. The banner at the Newseum is supposed to continue to run until he is safely returned home to his family.

Today, November 12, 2019, Austin remains in captivity. I had the privilege of meeting his parents Marc and Debra Tice in September. They brought me up-to-date on Austin's captivity, and the many efforts to press for his freedom.

Austin Tice is a graduate of the Georgetown School of Foreign Service and many of Georgetown's students and faculty have taken up his cause. He served as a Marine officer and returned home to study at the Georgetown School of Law. But when he saw the carnage inside Syria, he felt a calling to report on the Syrian human crisis. Working as a freelance journalist and photographer for McClatchey newspapers, his images, interviews and reports soon appeared in the Washington Post, McClatchey, Agence France-Presse and other news media.

He intended to leave Syria after his 31st birthday, on August 11, 2012, after he filed his last story. On August 14th, he left for Lebanon by car from Damascus. Shortly after, we know that he was stopped and detained at a checkpoint, most likely in rebel control. Five weeks later, a video was posted on a pro-government website by people who appeared to be Islamist militants. There has been no contact with his captors.

Marc and Debra continue their efforts to find and release their son. The State Department believes that he is still alive. Other countries have offered their services as intermediaries. And national and international campaigns have been mounted to support him, his family, and the many other journalists from many nations who are in captivity or held hostage around the world.

Congress has sent several letters, introduced bills, and like today, taken to the floor of the House of Representatives to raise his case and declare our sympathy and solidarity with his family, friends and colleagues.

We will not stop until Austin is free and reunited with his family.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 7 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, November 13, 2019, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

BUDGETARY EFFECTS OF PAYGO LEGISLATION

Pursuant to the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (PAYGO), Mr. YARMUTH hereby submits, prior to the vote on passage, the attached estimate of the costs of H.R. 4625, the Protect the GI Bill Act, as amended, for printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

ESTIMATE OF PAY-AS-YOU-GO EFFECTS FOR H.R. 4625

	By fiscal year, in millions of dollars—											
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2020–2024	2020–2029
Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Impact	7	32	37	10	-10	-16	-14	-15	-16	-17	77	0

Components may not sum to totals because of rounding.

Pursuant to the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (PAYGO), Mr. YARMUTH hereby submits, prior to the vote on passage, the attached estimate of the costs of H.R. 4162, the GI Bill Planning Act of 2019, as amended, for printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

ESTIMATE OF PAY-AS-YOU-GO EFFECTS FOR H.R. 4162

	By fiscal year, in millions of dollars—											
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2020–2024	2020–2029
Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Impact	-6	6	12	11	11	-4	-4	-5	-10	-11	34	0

Components may not sum to totals because of rounding.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table and referred as follows:

2881. A letter from the Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Dairy Program, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department’s final rule — Establishment of a Milk Donation Reimbursement Program [Doc. No.: AMS-DA-19-0001] (RIN: 0581-AD87) received November 7, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Agriculture.

2882. A letter from the Deputy Chief Financial Officer, Department of Energy, transmitting a letter reporting violations of the Antideficiency Act by the Department of Energy, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1517(b); Public Law 110-161, Sec. 1517(b); (121 Stat. 2285); to the Committee on Appropriations.

2883. A letter from the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter authorizing Vice Admiral Charles A. Richard, United States Navy, to wear the insignia of the grade of admiral, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 777a(b)(4); Public Law 111-383, Sec. 505(a)(1); (124 Stat. 4208); to the Committee on Armed Services.

2884. A letter from the Under Secretary, Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department’s report on Career Progression Tracks of the Armed Forces for Women in Combat Arms Units, pursuant to Public Law 114-328, Sec. 597; (130 Stat. 2154); to the Committee on Armed Services.

2885. A letter from the Chief, Law Enforcement Division, Department of the Army, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department’s final rule — Military Police Investigation [Docket ID: USA-2018-HQ-0023] (RIN: 0702-AB01) received November 4, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Armed Services.

2886. A letter from the Acting Principal Director, Defense Pricing and Contracting, Defense Acquisition Regulations Systems, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department’s final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Repeal of DFARS Provision Related to Disclosure of Information for Litigation Support (DFARS

Case 2019-D021) [Docket: DARS-2019-0065] (RIN: 0750-AK58) received November 1, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Armed Services.

2887. A letter from the Acting Principal Director, Defense Pricing and Contracting, Defense Acquisition Regulations System, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department’s final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Nonmanufacturer Rule for 8(a) Participants (DFARS Case 2019-D004) [Docket: DARS-2019-0015] (RIN: 0750-AK39) received November 1, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Armed Services.

2888. A letter from the Acting Principal Director, Defense Pricing and Contracting, Defense Acquisition Regulations Systems, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department’s final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Reliability and Maintainability in Weapon System Design (DFARS Case 2019-D003) [Docket: DARS-2019-0026] (RIN: 0750-AK38) received November 1, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Armed Services.

2889. A letter from the Acting Principal Director, Defense Pricing and Contracting, Defense Acquisition Regulations System, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department’s final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Modification of DFARS Clause “Obligation of the Government” (DFARS Case 2018-D046) [Docket: DARS-2019-0029] (RIN: 0750-AK11) received November 1, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Armed Services.

2890. A letter from the Acting Principal Director, Defense Pricing and Contracting, Defense Acquisition Regulations Systems, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department’s final rule — Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Modification of DFARS Clause “Protection Against Compromising Emanations” (DFARS Case 2019-D015) [Docket: DARS-2019-0061] (RIN: 0750-AK52) received November 1, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Armed Services.

2891. A letter from the Assistant to the Board, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve

System, transmitting the Board’s Major final rule — Changes to Applicability Thresholds for Regulatory Capital and Liquidity Requirements [Regulations Q, WW; Docket No.: R-1628] (RIN: 7100-AF21) received November 4, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Financial Services.

2892. A letter from the Administrator, Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department’s final rule — Authorizing Electronic Payments of Civil Money Penalties (RIN: 1235-AA28) received November 7, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and Labor.

2893. A letter from the Deputy Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting the Department’s final rule — Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Paying Benefits received November 4, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and Labor.

2894. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Department’s Country Reports on Terrorism 2018, pursuant to Sec. 140 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for FY 1988 and 1989, as amended (22 U.S.C. 2656f); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

2895. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 23-132, “School Sunscreen Safety Temporary Amendment Act of 2019”, pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

2896. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 23-134, “Primary Date Alteration Amendment Act of 2019”, pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

2897. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 23-155, “Al and Mary Arrighi Way Designation Act of 2019”, pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

2898. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 23-156, “Educational Research Practice Partnership Technical Temporary

Amendment Act of 2019", pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

2899. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. Act 23-152, "Joy Evans Therapeutic Center Designation Act of 2019", pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

2900. A letter from the Auditor, Office of the District of Columbia Auditor, transmitting a final report: BEGA Mishandled Whistleblower Complaint on Housing Procurement, pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 455(d); (87 Stat. 803); to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

2901. A letter from the Auditor, Office of the District of Columbia Auditor, transmitting a final report: D.C. Department of Health Has Systems to Monitor Nursing Homes But Some Risks Remain, pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 455(d); (87 Stat. 803); to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

2902. A letter from the National President, Women's Army Corps Veterans' Association, transmitting the Association's annual audit from MDA Professional Group, PC for the year ending June 30, 2019, pursuant to 36 U.S.C. 3111; Public Law 98-584, Sec. 12; (98 Stat. 3099); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

2903. A letter from the Secretary, Judicial Conference of the United States, transmitting the Electronic Public Access Fee Schedule, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 1913 note; Public Law 102-140, Sec. 303(b); (105 Stat. 810); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

2904. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives: Airbus SAS Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2019-0404; Product Identifier 2019-NM-007-AD; Amendment 39-19754; AD 2019-20-01] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received November 1, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

2905. A letter from the Under Secretary, Acquisition and Sustainment, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's Small Business Strategy, October 2019, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2283 note; Public Law 115-232, Sec. 851(b)(2)(A); (132 Stat. 1884); jointly to the Committees on Armed Services and Small Business.

2906. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's Major final rule and interim final rule — Medicare Program; CY 2020 Revisions to Payment Policies under the Physician Fee Schedule and Other Changes to Part B Payment Policies; Medicare Shared Savings Program Requirements; Medicaid Promoting Interoperability Program Requirements for Eligible Professionals; Establishment of an Ambulance Data Collection System; Updates to the Quality Payment Program; etc.. [CMS-1715-F and IFC] (RIN: 0983-AT72) received November 5, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

2907. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's Major final methodology — Basic Health Program; Federal Funding Methodology for Program Years 2019 and 2020 [CMS-2407-FN] (RIN: 0938-ZB42) received November 5, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

2908. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's Major final rule — Medicare Program: Changes to Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment and Ambulatory Surgical Center Payment Systems and Quality Reporting Programs; Revisions of Organ Procurement Organizations Conditions of Coverage; Prior Authorization Process and Requirements for Certain Covered Outpatient Department Services; Potential Changes to the Laboratory Date of Service Policy; etc. [CMS-1717-FC] (RIN: 0938-AT74) received November 5, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

2909. A letter from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's Major final rule — Medicare Program; End-Stage Renal Disease Prospective Payment System, Payment for Renal Dialysis Services Furnished to Individuals With Acute Kidney Injury, End-Stage Renal Disease Quality Incentive Program, Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics and Supplies (DMEPOS) Fee Schedule Amounts, DMEPOS Competitive Bidding Program (CBP) Amendments, Standard Elements for a DMEPOS Order, etc. [CMS-1713-F] (RIN: 0938-AT70) received November 5, 2019, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi: Committee on Homeland Security. H.R. 3699. A bill to codify the Transportation Security Administration's responsibility relating to securing pipelines against cybersecurity threats, acts of terrorism, and other nefarious acts that jeopardize the physical security or cybersecurity of pipelines, and for other purposes (Rept. 116-279). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Ms. VELAZQUEZ: Committee on Small Business. H.R. 1615. A bill to transfer the responsibility of verifying small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans or service-disabled veterans to the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 116-280, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. TAKANO: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 3224. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for increased access to Department of Veterans Affairs medical care for women veterans; with an amendment (Rept. 116-281). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Ms. WATERS: Committee on Financial Services. H.R. 3141. A bill to limit the collection of annual premiums under the FHA program for mortgage insurance for single family housing, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 116-282). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

DISCHARGE OF COMMITTEE

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs discharged from further consideration.

H.R. 1615 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. HUFFMAN (for himself, Mr. CASE, and Mr. GROTHMAN):

H.R. 5032. A bill to amend chapter 73 of title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a rural recruitment office within the Department of Veterans Affairs to recruit health care professionals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BYRNE:

H.R. 5033. A bill to expand the eligibility of veterans for hospital care and medical services provided by non-Department of Veterans Affairs medical providers under the Veterans Choice Program; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. COHEN (for himself, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, Ms. BONAMICI, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. WILD, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, and Ms. NORTON):

H.R. 5034. A bill to amend the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act to prohibit debt collectors from collecting, or attempting to collect, on a debt of a consumer with respect to which the statute of limitations has expired, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 5035. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to extend expiring provisions relating to the retransmission of signals of television broadcast stations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. PAPPAS (for himself, Ms. LEE of California, Mrs. HAYES, Ms. NORTON, Mr. CASTEN of Illinois, Mr. NADLER, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. MOORE, Mr. RUSH, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. CISNEROS, Mr. WELCH, Ms. TLAIB, Ms. SHALALA, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Ms. ESCOBAR, Mr. COHEN, Ms. SPEIER, Ms. PRESSLEY, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. POCAN, Ms. HAALAND, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. DELLAURO, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. KHANNA, Ms. DEGETTE, Mr. RYAN, Ms. MENG, Ms. SANCHEZ, Ms. DELBENE, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. HASTINGS, Mrs. LEE of Nevada, Mrs. FLETCHER, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. SOTO, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. TRONE, Mr. SIRES, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. GOMEZ, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. COOPER, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. FOSTER, Ms. SCHRIER, Ms. MUCARSEL-POWELL, Ms. FRANKEL, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. BASS, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mrs. DEMINGS, Ms. SHERRILL, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. JAYAPAL, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mrs. LOWEY,

Ms. WEXTON, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. KEATING, Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. GALLEG0, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Mr. GRJALVA, Mr. LEVIN of Michigan, Mr. RASKIN, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. CRIST, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mrs. TRAHAN, and Mr. KILDEE):

H.R. 5036. A bill to prohibit the Secretary of Health and Human Services from taking any action to implement, enforce, or otherwise give effect to the final rule, entitled "Protecting Statutory Conscience Rights in Health Care; Delegations of Authority"; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina (for himself, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. HOLDING, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Ms. FOX of North Carolina, Mr. WALKER, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. MEADOWS, Ms. ADAMS, and Mr. BUDD):

H.R. 5037. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3703 North Main Street in Farmville, North Carolina, as the "Walter B. Jones, Jr. Post Office"; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Ms. LOFGREN (for herself, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. NADLER, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. COX of California, Mr. BAIRD, Mr. COSTA, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. HARDER of California, Mr. COLE, Mr. BRINDISI, Mr. CURTIS, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mrs. RODGERS of Washington, Ms. SLOTKIN, Mr. MITCHELL, Mr. CORREA, Mr. NUNES, Ms. TORRES SMALL of New Mexico, Mr. REED, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Ms. STEFANIK, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. UPTON, Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. YOUNG, Ms. CRAIG, Mr. WALDEN, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. SPANBERGER, Mr. VELA, Mrs. TORRES of California, Ms. SCHRIER, Mr. SMUCKER, Mr. PETERS, Mr. TIPTON, and Mr. CROW):

H.R. 5038. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide for terms and conditions for nonimmigrant workers performing agricultural labor or services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, Education and Labor, and Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. LIPINSKI:

H.R. 5039. A bill to lower the prices of excessively costly life-sustaining prescription drugs under part D of the Medicare program by requiring the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate their prices, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CURTIS (for himself and Mr. HUFFMAN):

H.R. 5040. A bill to direct the Director of the Bureau of Land Management to study the effects of drone incursions on wildfire suppression, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by

the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. MCBATH (for herself, Ms. MOORE, Mr. COLE, and Mr. KATKO):

H.R. 5041. A bill to amend the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act to make improvements; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

By Mr. CLYBURN (for himself, Ms. ADAMS, and Mr. CLAY):

H.R. 5042. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform rules related to qualified opportunity zones; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BEYER (for himself, Mr. PANETTA, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY):

H.R. 5043. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to impose a surtax on high income individuals; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BOST (for himself, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. BRINDISI, Mr. BANKS, Mr. CISNEROS, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. PAPPAS, Mr. COX of California, and Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois):

H.R. 5044. A bill to grant a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the men and women of the United States Armed Forces and Merchant Marine, as well as citizen and non-citizen civilians who served honorably with the U.S. military, who were surrendered, captured, or abandoned to become prisoners of war (POWs) of Imperial Japan throughout the Japanese Empire in the Pacific Theater of World War II from December 7, 1941 to September 2, 1945; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CORREA (for himself, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. KILMER, Ms. NORTON, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY):

H.R. 5045. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide child care assistance to veterans receiving certain training or vocational rehabilitation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CROW (for himself, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Mr. BACON, Mr. GALLEG0, Mr. WALTZ, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. GOLDEN, Mr. MAST, Mr. CISNEROS, Mr. BAIRD, Ms. HOULAHAN, Mr. RESCHENTHALER, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. STEUBE, Mr. LAMB, Mr. TAYLOR, Mr. ROSE of New York, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Ms. SLOTKIN, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. KINZINGER, Mrs. LURIA, Mr. RIGGLEMAN, Ms. SPANBERGER, Mr. YOUNG, Ms. SHERRILL, Mr. STEWART, Mr. GUTHRIE, and Mr. BANKS):

H.R. 5046. A bill to authorize the location of a memorial on the National Mall to commemorate and honor the members of the Armed Forces that served on active duty in support of the Global War on Terrorism, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. DEFAZIO (for himself and Ms. TITUS):

H.R. 5047. A bill to require the Administrator of General Services to conduct an annual audit of properties leased to private parties, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. DELGADO (for himself, Ms. STEFANIK, Mr. YOUNG, and Mr. MAST):

H.R. 5048. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide aid to counties for establishment, expansion, and improve-

ment of veterans' cemeteries; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. FOSTER (for himself, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. QUIGLEY, and Ms. TITUS):

H.R. 5049. A bill to secure Federal access to scientific literature and other subscription services by requiring Federal agencies and legislative branch research arms to make recommendations on increasing agency library access to serials, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois (for himself, Mr. GROTHMAN, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, and Mr. GREEN of Texas):

H.R. 5050. A bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act to extend the consumer credit protections provided to members of the Armed Forces and their dependents under title 10, United States Code, to all consumers; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. GONZALEZ of Ohio:

H.R. 5051. A bill to increase transparency and accountability with respect to World Bank lending for China, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. LUJÁN (for himself, Mr. GOMEZ, Mr. YOUNG, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. LIPINSKI, Ms. NORTON, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. JACKSON LEE, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY):

H.R. 5052. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to include local government minimum wage requirements in determining the hourly minimum wage applicable for purposes of the work-study allowance under the educational assistance programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. SCANLON (for herself, Mr. ARMSTRONG, Mr. RESCHENTHALER, Mr. KATKO, and Mr. JEFFRIES):

H.R. 5053. A bill to exempt juveniles from the requirements for suits by prisoners, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SCHRADER (for himself, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. WALDEN, Mr. BLUMENAUER, and Mr. DEFAZIO):

H.R. 5054. A bill to ensure that United States Government personnel, including members of the Armed Forces and contractors, assigned to United States diplomatic missions are given the opportunity to designate next-of-kin for certain purposes in the event of the death of the personnel; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. SHERMAN (for himself and Mr. ZELDIN):

H.R. 5055. A bill to amend the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 to prohibit the use of guarantee fees as offsets; to the Committee on Rules, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. STEUBE (for himself, Mr. ROSE of New York, and Mr. COX of California):

H.R. 5056. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to allow individuals who are entitled to Post-9/11 educational assistance to use such assistance to repay Federal student loans; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. TONKO (for himself and Mr. MCKINLEY):

H.R. 5057. A bill to clarify the treatment of pass-through status under the Medicare outpatient payment system for certain drugs; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways

and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. FRANKEL (for herself, Ms. LEE of California, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. LEVIN of Michigan, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Ms. TLAIB, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. NORTON, Ms. WILD, Mr. PAPPAS, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. TITUS, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mrs. TORRES of California, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. COHEN, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. PETERS, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. KENNEDY, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. KEATING, and Mr. BROWN of Maryland):

H. Res. 688. A resolution recognizing 25 years since the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, Egypt and reaffirming the goals and ideals of the ICPD Programme of Action, including comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. GARAMENDI (for himself, Mr. COSTA, Ms. STEVENS, Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. SPANBERGER, and Mr. COOK):

H. Res. 689. A resolution recognizing the significance of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, to Sikh Americans and Sikhs worldwide; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Ms. CLARKE of New York (for herself and Ms. KELLY of Illinois):

H. Res. 690. A resolution commending Alice Allison Dunnigan for her barrier-breaking career in journalism; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Mr. KING of New York (for himself, Mr. YOHO, Mr. ENGEL, and Mr. SUOZZI):

H. Res. 691. A resolution honoring the accomplishments and charitable contributions of Peter Morgan Alonso of the New York Mets upon his being named the National League Jackie Robinson Rookie of the Year; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

By Mr. LOEBSACK (for himself, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. MOULTON, and Mr. SOTO):

H. Res. 692. A resolution expressing support for the designation of the week beginning on November 11, 2019, as “National School Psychology Week”; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

PRIVATE BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

Mr. DOGGETT introduced A bill (H.R. 5058) for the relief of Alirio Palacios Gamez, Hilda Veronica Ramirez Mendez, and Jayro Ivan Juarez Ramirez; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. HUFFMAN:

H.R. 5032.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, clause 2 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. BYRNE:

H.R. 5033.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18 of the U.S. Constitution: The Congress shall have Power to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof

By Mr. COHEN:

H.R. 5034.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, section 8, clause 3 (relating to the power to regulate foreign and interstate commerce).

By Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 5035.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution: the Congress shall have Power “to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several State, and with the Indian Tribes.”

By Mr. PAPPAS:

H.R. 5036.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section 8 Clause 10 provides Congress with the power “to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.”

By Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina:

H.R. 5037.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 7 of the United States Constitution, known as the Postal Clause, empowers Congress to “establish Post Offices and Post Roads”

By Ms. LOFGREN:

H.R. 5038.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 4 provides Congress with the power to establish a “uniform rule of Naturalization.”

By Mr. LIPINSKI:

H.R. 5039.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3.

By Mr. CURTIS:

H.R. 5040.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article VI, Section 3, Clause 2

By Mrs. MCBATH:

H.R. 5041.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Commerce Clause (Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution): Congress has the power “to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian Tribes.”

By Mr. CLYBURN:

H.R. 5042.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. BEYER:

H.R. 5043.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8: The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

By Mr. BOST:

H.R. 5044.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mr. CORREA:

H.R. 5045.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

(1) The U.S. Constitution including Article 1, Section 8.

By Mr. CROW:

H.R. 5046.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 17—

To exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States, and the Acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of the Government of the United States, and to exercise like Authority over all Places purchased by the Consent of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards, and other needful Buildings

By Mr. DEFAZIO:

H.R. 5047.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1, Clause 3, and Clause 18 of the Constitution.

By Mr. DELGADO:

H.R. 5048.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8, Clause 1 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. FOSTER:

H.R. 5049.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clauses 1 and 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois:

H.R. 5050.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. GONZALEZ of Ohio:

H.R. 5051.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. LUJÁN:

H.R. 5052.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Ms. SCANLON:

H.R. 5053.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. SCHRADER:

H.R. 5054.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Const. art. 1, §1; and

U.S. Const. art. 1, §8, cl. 18.

By Mr. SHERMAN:

H.R. 5055.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

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By Mr. STEUBE:

H.R. 5056.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;

To establish a uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States;

To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;

To provide for the Punishment of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United States;

To establish Post Offices and Post Roads;

To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries;

To constitute Tribunals inferior to the supreme Court;

To define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offenses against the Law of Nations;

To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water;

To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years;

To provide and maintain a Navy;

To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces;

To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions;

To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;

To exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States, and the acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of the Government of the United States, and to exercise like Authority over all Places purchased by the Consent of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards, and other needful Buildings; And

To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. TONKO:

H.R. 5057.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mr. DOGGETT:

H.R. 5058.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 3: Mrs. DINGELL and Ms. FINKENAUER.
H.R. 20: Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina and Mr. GIANFORTE.

H.R. 38: Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina.

H.R. 141: Ms. FRANKEL.

H.R. 172: Mr. BIGGS.

H.R. 180: Ms. FUDGE.

H.R. 230: Mrs. DEMINGS.

H.R. 309: Mr. FOSTER, Ms. SPEIER, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. TAKANO, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. MUCARSEL-POWELL, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. HAALAND, Mr. KILDEE, and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN.

H.R. 350: Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina.

H.R. 554: Ms. STEVENS.

H.R. 557: Mr. VELA.

H.R. 587: Mr. MCCAUL.

H.R. 763: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.

H.R. 836: Mr. ALLRED.

H.R. 912: Mr. MULLIN and Mrs. FLETCHER.

H.R. 934: Mr. HUFFMAN.

H.R. 935: Ms. Sánchez, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. SUOZZI, and Ms. BROWNLEY of California.

H.R. 943: Mr. JORDAN and Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.

H.R. 945: Mr. SOTO.

H.R. 962: Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina.

H.R. 1002: Mr. CORREA, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. PINGREE, Ms. SCHRIER, and Mr. WELCH.

H.R. 1003: Ms. JOHNSON of Texas.

H.R. 1011: Mr. TED LIEU of California and Ms. MCCOLLUM.

H.R. 1154: Ms. SEWELL of Alabama.

H.R. 1171: Mr. SCHNEIDER.

H.R. 1228: Mr. WELCH.

H.R. 1289: Ms. BROWNLEY of California.

H.R. 1367: Mr. HARDER of California, Mr. POCAN, and Mr. MCEACHIN.

H.R. 1398: Mr. FERGUSON, Ms. SCHRIER, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. OLSON, Mr. CUNNINGHAM, and Mr. SOTO.

H.R. 1497: Mr. SIREN and Mr. PAYNE.

H.R. 1498: Mr. VARGAS and Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 1550: Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota.

H.R. 1597: Mr. CLAY, Mr. FLORES, Ms. HAALAND, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, and Mr. DELGADO.

H.R. 1643: Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi and Ms. HAALAND.

H.R. 1688: Mr. STAUBER.

H.R. 1700: Mr. GOODEN.

H.R. 1709: Mr. FITZPATRICK.

H.R. 1767: Mr. SUOZZI, Mr. AMODEI, Ms. HOULAHAN, Mr. CICILLINE, and Mr. RUPPERSBERGER.

H.R. 1773: Mr. TAYLOR and Mrs. RADEWAGEN.

H.R. 1869: Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 1873: Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. BERA, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. PENCE, and Ms. WEXTON.

H.R. 1878: Ms. FRANKEL and Ms. LEE of California.

H.R. 1975: Mrs. RODGERS of Washington.

H.R. 1981: Mr. LARSEN of Washington.

H.R. 1992: Ms. ESCOBAR and Mr. KIND.

H.R. 2014: Mr. BIGGS.

H.R. 2086: Mr. LAHOOD.

H.R. 2137: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

H.R. 2150: Ms. BARRAGÁN.

H.R. 2155: Mr. CARSON of Indiana.

H.R. 2207: Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina.

H.R. 2214: Mr. CUELLAR.

H.R. 2235: Mr. OLSON, Mr. RYAN, and Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.

H.R. 2264: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H.R. 2283: Mr. UPTON, Ms. LOFGREN, and Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 2311: Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 2315: Mrs. BEATTY.

H.R. 2339: Ms. JUDY CHU of California and Ms. DEAN.

H.R. 2354: Mr. PANETTA and Mr. LEVIN of California.

H.R. 2382: Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. COLE, and Mr. GIANFORTE.

H.R. 2402: Mr. SHERMAN.

H.R. 2408: Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 2442: Mr. BLUMENAUER and Ms. JUDY CHU of California.

H.R. 2482: Mrs. LOWEY and Mr. LOEBSACK.

H.R. 2509: Mr. SIMPSON and Mr. STEWART.

H.R. 2517: Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.

H.R. 2550: Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia and Mr. CORREA.

H.R. 2571: Mr. BURGESS.

H.R. 2584: Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois and Mr. LOEBSACK.

H.R. 2651: Mr. SOTO.

H.R. 2653: Mr. CISNEROS.

H.R. 2731: Mr. KELLY of Mississippi and Mr. CASTRO of Texas.

H.R. 2747: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ and Ms. LEE of California.

H.R. 2767: Mr. CROW and Ms. JUDY CHU of California.

H.R. 2771: Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, and Mr. MULLIN.

H.R. 2775: Mr. HIGGINS of New York.

H.R. 2802: Ms. HOULAHAN and Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 2818: Mr. LOWENTHAL and Ms. PINGREE.

H.R. 2846: Mr. CROW.

H.R. 2863: Mr. MALINOWSKI and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.

H.R. 2881: Mr. MCCAUL.

H.R. 2895: Ms. CRAIG.

H.R. 2896: Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 2953: Mr. BISHOP of Utah.

H.R. 2975: Mr. LYNCH.

H.R. 2985: Mr. WILLIAMS and Ms. ESHOO.

H.R. 2991: Mr. SOTO.

H.R. 3077: Mr. KHANNA, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mrs. FLETCHER, Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH, Ms. SHALALA, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. HUFFMAN, and Mr. PETERSON.

H.R. 3121: Ms. JAYAPAL.

H.R. 3157: Mr. RUPPERSBERGER and Mr. POCAN.

H.R. 3165: Mr. LEVIN of Michigan and Mr. LUJÁN.

H.R. 3219: Ms. BROWNLEY of California.

H.R. 3224: Mr. DELGADO, Mr. LEVIN of California, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. LAMB, Ms. HAALAND, Mr. BEYER, and Ms. HOULAHAN.

H.R. 3235: Ms. LOFGREN.

H.R. 3303: Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 3350: Mr. CONNOLLY and Mr. GOSAR.

H.R. 3373: Ms. WILD.

H.R. 3378: Ms. SHALALA.

H.R. 3381: Mr. DESAULNIER.

H.R. 3391: Mr. KHANNA, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mrs. DINGELL, and Mrs. TORRES of California.

H.R. 3396: Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER.

H.R. 3458: Mr. HECK.

H.R. 3463: Ms. TORRES SMALL of New Mexico and Ms. SEWELL of Alabama.

H.R. 3473: Ms. MENG.

H.R. 3495: Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. ROY, Mr. FLORES, Mr. HAGEDORN, and Mr. PENCE.

H.R. 3497: Mr. SIMPSON.

H.R. 3509: Mr. GOLDEN and Mr. NORCROSS.

H.R. 3555: Mr. MOULTON.

H.R. 3593: Ms. JAYAPAL.

H.R. 3600: Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire.

H.R. 3612: Mr. GARAMENDI, Ms. SCHA-KOWSKY, and Mr. MALINOWSKI.

H.R. 3689: Mr. SOTO.

H.R. 3735: Mr. RESCHENTHALER.

H.R. 3749: Mr. CROW.

H.R. 3760: Mrs. DEMINGS and Mr. MEEKS.

H.R. 3762: Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. DEFAZIO, and Mr. MCKINLEY.

H.R. 3796: Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania and Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD.

H.R. 3824: Ms. UNDERWOOD and Mr. KINZINGER.

H.R. 3934: Mr. CUELLAR.

H.R. 3951: Mr. CLEAVER.

H.R. 3957: Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD and Mr. SOTO.

H.R. 3961: Ms. UNDERWOOD, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. PAPPAS, Ms. DEGETTE, and Ms. MENG.

H.R. 3968: Mr. SMITH of Missouri.
 H.R. 3975: Mr. CARSON of Indiana and Mr. WOMACK.
 H.R. 3977: Mr. HARDER of California and Mr. O'HALLERAN.
 H.R. 4009: Mr. STIVERS.
 H.R. 4052: Mr. MALINOWSKI.
 H.R. 4056: Ms. MCCOLLUM and Ms. CRAIG.
 H.R. 4073: Mr. DOGGETT.
 H.R. 4097: Ms. NORTON and Ms. SPANBERGER.
 H.R. 4161: Mr. MARCHANT.
 H.R. 4187: Mr. BISHOP of Utah.
 H.R. 4193: Mr. TED LIEU of California.
 H.R. 4194: Mr. PANETTA and Mr. TONKO.
 H.R. 4230: Mr. SIREs and Ms. WILD.
 H.R. 4248: Mr. WELCH.
 H.R. 4280: Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, and Mr. HASTINGS.
 H.R. 4296: Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi and Mr. CARSON of Indiana.
 H.R. 4321: Ms. JACKSON LEE.
 H.R. 4331: Mr. YOHO and Mr. TED LIEU of California.
 H.R. 4348: Ms. KAPTUR.
 H.R. 4393: Mr. SOTO, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, and Mr. DEFazio.
 H.R. 4404: Mr. CARSON of Indiana.
 H.R. 4429: Mr. BALDERSON, Mr. MULLIN, and Mr. PAYNE.
 H.R. 4477: Mr. COHEN.
 H.R. 4487: Mr. HARDER of California and Mr. COOK.
 H.R. 4489: Mrs. TRAHAN, Mr. HARDER of California, Ms. HAALAND, Ms. DELBENE, and Ms. KELLY of Illinois.
 H.R. 4523: Ms. JAYAPAL.
 H.R. 4540: Mr. FOSTER, Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. ESCOBAR, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. CISNEROS, Mr. LOWENTHAL, and Mrs. BEATTY.
 H.R. 4581: Mr. BAIRD.
 H.R. 4591: Mr. HUFFMAN.
 H.R. 4618: Mr. WELCH.
 H.R. 4625: Mr. COHEN.
 H.R. 4639: Ms. DEAN and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi.
 H.R. 4674: Mr. CASTEN of Illinois and Mr. SIREs.
 H.R. 4680: Mr. POCAN, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. ESCOBAR, Ms. MATSUI, and Mr. TRONE.
 H.R. 4681: Mr. CLAY and Mr. SUOZZI.
 H.R. 4685: Mr. SUOZZI.
 H.R. 4691: Ms. MUCARSEL-POWELL.
 H.R. 4694: Ms. SPANBERGER.
 H.R. 4704: Mr. TRONE.
 H.R. 4722: Mr. ROUDA, Ms. PRESSLEY, and Ms. DELBENE.
 H.R. 4724: Mr. GRIJALVA.
 H.R. 4754: Mr. GROTHMAN and Mr. MEEKS.
 H.R. 4764: Mr. SWALWELL of California and Mr. HASTINGS.
 H.R. 4768: Mr. CUELLAR and Ms. HAALAND.

H.R. 4795: Mr. FITZPATRICK.
 H.R. 4804: Ms. LEE of California.
 H.R. 4810: Mrs. WALORSKI and Mr. BILL-RAKIS.
 H.R. 4820: Mr. CUELLAR.
 H.R. 4861: Mr. TONKO.
 H.R. 4884: Mr. MCGOVERN.
 H.R. 4890: Mr. CISNEROS, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, and Mr. POCAN.
 H.R. 4903: Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina, Mr. WRIGHT, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. WALKER, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. MULLIN.
 H.R. 4906: Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, and Ms. SLOTKIN.
 H.R. 4913: Mr. WELCH and Mr. OLSON.
 H.R. 4914: Mr. COLE.
 H.R. 4924: Mr. SHERMAN.
 H.R. 4934: Mr. BUCK, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. BAIRD, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mrs. LESKO, and Mr. OLSON.
 H.R. 4945: Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH and Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.
 H.R. 4959: Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania, Mr. STEWART, and Mrs. RODGERS of Washington.
 H.R. 4980: Mr. DUNN and Ms. MATSUI.
 H.R. 4995: Mr. CARSON of Indiana.
 H.R. 5004: Ms. JUDY CHU of California.
 H.R. 5006: Mr. ROGERS of Alabama.
 H.R. 5011: Mr. CLEAVER and Mr. SUOZZI.
 H.R. 5014: Ms. JACKSON LEE.
 H.R. 5017: Mr. ROUDA.
 H.R. 5018: Mr. GAETZ, Mr. HICE of Georgia, and Mr. POSEY.
 H.R. 5021: Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. Garcia of Illinois, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, and Ms. TLAIB.
 H.R. 5026: Mr. FITZPATRICK and Ms. SCANLON.
 H.J. Res. 38: Mr. PANETTA.
 H.J. Res. 78: Mr. NORMAN, Mr. WEBER of Texas, and Mr. BABIN.
 H.J. Res. 79: Mr. PANETTA, Mr. ALLRED, and Mr. COSTA.
 H. Con. Res. 20: Ms. WILD and Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina.
 H. Con. Res. 37: Mr. SMITH of Washington.
 H. Con. Res. 49: Mr. THOMPSON of California.
 H. Res. 23: Ms. TLAIB and Mr. LEWIS.
 H. Res. 49: Mr. TRONE and Mr. WATKINS.
 H. Res. 152: Ms. SCANLON.
 H. Res. 255: Mr. CHABOT.
 H. Res. 259: Mr. POCAN.
 H. Res. 446: Mr. RASKIN and Ms. SPANBERGER.
 H. Res. 517: Mr. AGUILAR, Ms. JAYAPAL, and Mr. NORCROSS.
 H. Res. 672: Mr. TRONE, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas, and Mrs. RODGERS of Washington.
 H. Res. 673: Mr. HECK, Mrs. BEATTY, and Mrs. DINGELL.

H. Res. 676: Mr. DUNCAN.

H. Res. 678: Mr. GAETZ, Mr. HICE of Georgia, Mr. BALDERSON, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. RIGGLEMAN, Mr. WRIGHT, and Mr. VAN DREW.
 H. Res. 686: Mr. GOSAR.

PETITIONS, ETC.

Under clause 3 of rule XII, petitions and papers were laid on the clerk's desk and referred as follows:

59. The SPEAKER presented a petition of Mr. Gregory D. Watson, a citizen of Austin, TX, relative to Urging Congress to propose, pursuant to Article V, an amendment to the United States Constitution that would, in addition to congressional proposal, likewise allow an identically-worded suggested federal constitutional amendment, approved by the legislatures of at least two-thirds of the several states, as an alternate means of proposing future amendments and that would further provide for a same-day nationwide referendum as the exclusive method of ratifying any further amendments; etc.; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

60. Also, a petition of City Council of Pittsburgh, PA, relative to Resolution No. 526, imploring the Pennsylvania General Assembly, as well as the Congress of the United States, to pass within the next 30 days common-sense safety measures; and to work across the aisle and enact critical legislation; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

61. Also, a petition of Legislature of Guam, relative to Substitute Resolution No. 94-35 (COR), "Relative to seeking compensation for cancer and other illnesses caused by exposure to ionizing radiation; and to further expressing the support of I Mina'trentai Singko Na Liheslaturan Guahan (the 35th Legislature) for the passage of S. 947 and H.R. 3783, the "Radiation Exposure Compensation Act Amendments of 2019", introduced by the U.S. Senate on March 28, 2019, and the U.S. House of Representatives on July 16, 2019, which would amend the "Radiation Exposure Compensation Act" to include Guam as a downwind area"; jointly to the Committees on the Judiciary, Education and Labor, and Energy and Commerce.

62. Also, a petition of City Commission of Traverse City, MI, relative to a Resolution urging the United States Congress to enact the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019; jointly to the Committees on Ways and Means, Energy and Commerce, and Foreign Affairs.