

average of 100 Americans every single day. Also, there are close to 100,000 Americans injured every year from gun violence, yet we do very little to prevent these preventable injuries and deaths.

I am proud to come from a State with effective gun laws. In New Jersey, we have strong background checks, a ban on high-capacity magazines, and an extreme risk protection order for possible victims. That is why New Jersey has one of the lowest firearm death rates in America. If we had national laws such as the ones in New Jersey, we could save lives and spare families the hurt and horrors of gun violence.

HELPING VETERANS WITH TRAINED SERVICE DOGS

(Mr. CUNNINGHAM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Madam Speaker, for far too long, we have failed to serve veterans struggling with the invisible wounds of war, veterans who nearly gave everything to us.

From veterans who served in Vietnam and Korea to those who have recently returned home from Afghanistan and Iraq, Congress has done too little to curb the often-devastating effect post-traumatic stress can have in the lives of the brave men and women who served our Nation in combat.

That is why I am proud today to rise in support of my colleague Representative STEVE STIVERS' bipartisan bill, which will help veterans in the Lowcountry and across this Nation manage the symptoms of post-traumatic stress by pairing them with trained service dogs.

With the help of a service dog, many veterans with severe post-traumatic stress are able to return to work, attend college, and spend more meaningful time with their families and their loved ones. The brave men and women who voluntarily raised their right hands and swore an oath to defend our Nation deserve nothing less than the opportunity to succeed when they return home.

The PAWS Act is a critical step in the right direction. I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this bipartisan legislation.

AMERICANS WILL JUDGE

(Mr. HOYER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, "I solemnly swear that in all things appertaining to the trial of the impeachment of Donald John Trump, President of the United States, now pending, I will do impartial justice according to the Constitution and laws."

That is the oath Senators swore on January 16. It is the oath created by Senators when they tried the first im-

peachment of a President in 1868. It is an oath rooted in the Revolution fought by their grandparents to create a republic of laws, not kings. It is an oath whose power derives from its common sense: that a juror must always be impartial for a trial to be fair. And it is an oath made necessary by the fact that Senators are not, as we are not, under normal circumstances, impartial in our work.

The words chosen for this oath recognize that when our Constitution calls Senators to try impeachment, it calls them away from their role as partisans. When that oath is taken, Senators are supposed to step back from the affiliation of party or political kinship with or opposition to the President on trial. They are required, as the oath plainly states, to "do impartial justice according to the Constitution and laws."

Madam Speaker, this afternoon, Senators will be asked to vote on the two Articles of Impeachment the House presented on abuse of power and the obstruction of Congress. After voting to refuse to hear evidence and call witnesses with pertinent information, nearly all Republican Senators have already announced that they will vote against the articles.

In doing so, many of them acknowledge that what President Trump did was wrong and inappropriate. They accept that it was wrong for him to withhold military aid to Ukraine until the President of that country promised to interfere in the American elections.

The evidence of President Trump's abuse of power and attempt to solicit foreign interference in the 2020 elections is clear enough that Republican Senators cannot and have not denied the facts, yet they cannot bring themselves to confront this President and are choosing party over country.

The Senator from Alaska, in explaining her decision to vote to block witnesses and evidence, tried to deflect responsibility from the consequences of her actions, writing: "I have come to the conclusion that there will be no fair trial in the Senate." I agree with that. She further said: "It is sad for me today to admit that, as an institution, the Congress has failed."

Madam Speaker, the Congress has not failed. The House did its job, whether you agree or not. In regular order, by a vote of this House, we impeached the President of the United States based upon our oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.

The House did its job and did so with the solemnity required when undertaking the process of impeachment, which we did not seek but accepted as our responsibility under the Constitution. We held hearings, called witnesses, and subpoenaed documents. Many of the witnesses and documents, of course, were withheld by the White House.

It is the Senate that will fail if Senators do not uphold their oaths to im-

partial justice. It is the Senate, Madam Speaker, that will fail if it does not hold this President accountable for using a hold on military aid to compel an ally to interfere in our election for his own personal gain.

History will judge poorly those who choose fear of their party over the courage to do the right thing. Neither the Speaker nor myself, nor the whip, JIM CLYBURN, urged any member in our party to vote any way on impeachment. There was no lobbying. There was no pressure. Our members voted consistent with their oath of office and the conviction that that vote was required by that oath to protect and defend the Constitution.

Americans will judge. I am often asked why the House passed Articles of Impeachment even knowing that the odds were slim that Senate Republicans would set aside partisanship and hear the case as impartial jurors. It is because I know future generations will look back on this chapter in our history and ask: Who stood up for the Constitution and the laws? Who stood up for the values our Founders charged us to keep? Who refused to shrink from the heavy responsibilities of their oath? I can be proud that the House did its job, followed the law, defended our Constitution.

We did not convict; that is not our role. Essentially, what we said was there was probable cause that powers had been abused and certainly cause to see that the President refused to cooperate with the constitutional responsibilities of the House of Representatives.

I am also proud of the House managers, as all of my colleagues on the Democratic side of the aisle are proud of our managers who made their case. They made their case with intellect. They made their case with evidence that had been adduced here in the House. They made their case and appealed to Senators to hold this President accountable, as our Founders intended.

Almost everybody has watched a trial either in person or on television. A trial is not an opening argument and a closing argument with nothing in between. Seventy-five percent of our people wanted to have witnesses because that was their understanding of what a trial is, not just argument at the beginning and argument at the end, but evidence for jurors who have pledged to be impartial to consider. Any judge in this country would agree that opening and closing statements alone are not a trial.

Nevertheless, the House managers proved their case. The truth is clear. The American people know what that truth is and know what this President has done. And they will remember who on this day abided by the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

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.

PUPPIES ASSISTING WOUNDED
SERVICEMEMBERS FOR VET-
ERANS THERAPY ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4305) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on dog training therapy, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4305

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 “Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers for Veterans Therapy Act” or the “PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) According to the analyses of veteran suicide published by the Department of Veterans Affairs in August 2016 and titled “Suicide Among Veterans and Other Americans”, and in June 2018, titled “VA National Suicide Date Report”—

(A) an average of 20 veterans died by suicide each day in 2014;

(B) mental health disorders, including major depression and other mood disorders, have been associated with increased risk for suicide;

(C) since 2001, the proportion of users of the Veterans Health Administration with mental health conditions or substance use disorders has increased from approximately 27 percent in 2001 to more than 40 percent in 2014; and

(D) overall, suicide rates are highest among patients with mental health and substance use disorder diagnoses who are in treatment and lower among those who received a mental health diagnosis but were not at risk enough to require enhanced care from a mental health provider.

(2) The Department of Veterans Affairs must be more effective in its approach to reducing the burden of veteran suicide connected to mental health disorders, including post-traumatic stress disorder (in this section referred to as “PTSD”), and new, rigorous scientific research provides persuasive weight to the growing anecdotal evidence that service dogs ameliorate the symptoms associated with PTSD, and in particular, help prevent veteran suicide.

(3) Several organizations have proven track records of training service dogs for veterans with severe PTSD and dramatically improving those veterans’ quality of life, ability to re-enter society, and, most importantly, their chances of survival.

**SEC. 3. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
PILOT PROGRAM ON DOG TRAINING
THERAPY.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Commencing not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of the Act, subject to the availability of ap-

propriations, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program under which the Secretary shall make grants to one or more appropriate non-government entities for the purpose of assessing the effectiveness of addressing post-deployment mental health and post-traumatic stress disorder (in this section referred to as “PTSD”) symptoms through a therapeutic medium of training service dogs for veterans with disabilities.

(b) DURATION OF PILOT PROGRAM.—The pilot program required by subsection (a) shall be carried out during the five-year period beginning on the date of the commencement of the pilot program.

(c) CONDITIONS ON RECEIPT OF GRANTS.—As a condition of receiving a grant under this section, a non-government entity shall—

(1) submit to the Secretary certification that the entity is an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 that—

(A) provides service dogs to veterans with PTSD; and

(B) is accredited by, or adheres to standards comparable to those of, an accrediting organization with demonstrated experience, national scope, and recognized leadership and expertise in the training of service dogs and education in the use of service dogs;

(2) agree to cover all costs in excess of the grant amount;

(3) agree to reaccept or replace the service dog the organization provided to the veteran, if necessary, as determined by the organization and the veteran;

(4) provide a wellness certification from a licensed veterinarian for any dog participating in the program;

(5) employ at least one person with clinical experience related to mental health;

(6) ensure that veterans participating in the pilot program receive training from certified service dog training instructors for a period of time determined appropriate by the organization and the Secretary, including service skills to address or alleviate symptoms unique to veterans’ needs;

(7) agree to provide both lectures on service dog training methodologies and practical hands-on training and grooming of service dogs;

(8) agree that in hiring service dog training instructors to carry out training under the pilot program, the non-government entity will give a preference to veterans who have successfully graduated from PTSD or other residential treatment program and who have received adequate certification in service dog training;

(9) agree not to use shock collars or prong collars as training tools and to use positive reinforcement training;

(10) agree that upon the conclusion of training provided using the grant funds—

(A) the veteran who received the training will keep the dog unless the veteran and the veteran’s health provider decide it is not in the best interest of the veteran;

(B) if the veteran does not opt to own the dog, the entity will be responsible for caring for and appropriately placing the dog;

(C) the Department of Veterans Affairs will have no additional responsibility to provide for any benefits under this section; and

(D) the Department of Veterans Affairs will have no liability with respect to the dog;

(11) provide follow-up support service for the life of the dog, including a contact plan between the veteran and the entity to allow the veteran to reach out for and receive adequate help with the service dog and the organization to communicate with the veteran to ensure the service dog is being properly cared for; and

(12) submit to the Secretary an application containing such information, certification,

and assurances as the Secretary may require.

(d) VETERAN ELIGIBILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For the purposes of this section, an eligible veteran is a veteran who—

(A) is enrolled in the patient enrollment system in the Department of Veterans Affairs under section 1705 of title 38, United States Code;

(B) has been recommended for the pilot program under this section by a qualified health care provider or clinical team based on the medical judgment that the veteran may potentially benefit from participating; and

(C) agrees to successfully complete training provided by an eligible organization that receives a grant under this section.

(2) RELATIONSHIP TO PARTICIPATION IN OTHER PROGRAM.—Veterans may participate in the pilot program in conjunction with the compensated work therapy program of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(3) CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT.—To remain eligible to participate in the program, a veteran shall see the health care provider or clinical team of the Department of Veterans Affairs treating the veteran for PTSD at least once every six months to determine, based on a clinical evaluation of efficacy, whether the veteran continues to benefit from the program.

(e) COLLECTION OF DATA.—In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall—

(1) develop metrics and other appropriate means to measure, with respect to veterans participation in the program, the improvement in psychosocial function and therapeutic compliance of such veterans and changes with respect to the dependence on prescription narcotics and psychotropic medication of such veterans;

(2) establish processes to document and track the progress of such veterans under the program in terms of the benefits and improvements noted as a result of the program; and

(3) in addition, the Secretary shall continue to collect these data over the course of five years for each veteran who has continued with the dog he or she has personally trained.

(f) GAO BRIEFING AND STUDY.—

(1) BRIEFING.—Not later than one year after the date of the commencement of the pilot program under subsection (a), the Comptroller General of the United States shall provide to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a briefing on the methodology established for the program.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 270 days after the date on which the program terminates, the Comptroller General shall submit to the committees specified in paragraph (1) a report on the program. Such report shall include an evaluation of the approach and methodology used for the program with respect to—

(A) helping veterans with severe PTSD return to civilian life;

(B) relevant metrics, including reduction in metrics such as reduction in scores under the PTSD check-list (PCL-5), improvement in psychosocial function, and therapeutic compliance; and

(C) reducing the dependence of participants on prescription narcotics and psychotropic medication.

(g) DEFINITION.—For the purposes of this section, the term “service dog training instructor” means an instructor who provides the direct training of veterans with PTSD and other post-deployment issues in the art and science of service dog training and handling.