

“(B) A Hispanic-serving institution, as such term is defined in section 502(a)(5) of such Act (20 U.S.C. 1101a(5)).

“(C) A Tribal College or University, as such term is defined in section 316(b)(3) of such Act (20 U.S.C. 1059c(b)(3)).

“(D) A predominantly Black institution, as such term is defined in section 318(b)(6) of such Act (20 U.S.C. 1059e(b)(6)).

“(E) A Native American-serving, nontribal institution, as such term is defined in section 319(b)(2) of such Act (20 U.S.C. 1059f(b)(6)).

“(F) An Alaska Native-serving institution or Native Hawaiian-serving institution, as such terms are defined in section 317(b) of such Act (20 U.S.C. 1059d(b)).

“(G) An Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institution, as such term is defined in section 320(b) of such Act (20 U.S.C. 1059g(b)).”

(c) APPLICATION.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to the information provided under section 3698 of title 38, United States Code, beginning on the date that is two years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

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. 4852.

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. 4852, the G.I. and Veterans Education Empowerment Act, also known as the GIVE Act.

H.R. 4852, introduced by Representative TORRES, provides veterans with more information about educational institutions prior to their enrollment. Too often veterans find their educational institutions are not good fits for their educational goals and drop out or transfer to other institutions after wasting time and benefits.

After transferring, veterans lose credits from their transferring institutions or simply give up on acquiring a new skill set altogether because an institution does not meet their needs.

Madam Speaker, the GIVE Act addresses an overlooked cause for veterans dropping out or transferring to other institutions: cultural incongruence.

I have observed countless instances where veterans begin their studies only to find out that they are not comfortable on the campus of their educational institution.

Congress created the GI Bill Comparison Tool to provide veterans with more information when they consider where they will pursue a postsecondary education. While the GI Bill Compari-

son Tool provides veterans with data on tuition and costs, accreditation, and cautionary information, there are gaps in the information regarding campus culture.

For example, the GI Bill Comparison Tool does not inform a Catholic veteran, who may be interested in attending a Catholic institution, if an institution is affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church.

Madam Speaker, small pieces of information like that are critical to helping veterans assimilate to life on campus.

Data on campus culture are collected by the Department of Education but are not currently displayed on the GI Bill Comparison Tool website. Now, if enacted, the GIVE Act will require VA to provide prospective student veterans with information on whether an institution is minority serving, gender specific, or has a religious affiliation.

Madam Speaker, this bill will simply require the GI Bill Comparison Tool to display information to help veterans choose the right school the first time.

□ 1630

This bill will also help veterans choose a campus that is aligned with their values and reduce the number of transfers due to cultural incompatibility.

We owe it to our veterans to give them the most accurate and relevant information that will allow them to efficiently obtain a new skill set so they can reenter the labor force and find meaningful opportunities.

Madam Speaker, I thank Representative TORRES for her work on this important issue.

Madam Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 4852, and 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, today, I rise in support of H.R. 4852, the G.I. and Veterans Education Empowerment, or GIVE, Act.

This bill would require the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide additional information on schools listed on the GI Bill Comparison Tool. The tool was first authorized by legislation sponsored by Congressman GUS BILIRAKIS from Florida, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, in 2013 to give service-members and veterans the opportunity to compare information on GI Bill-eligible schools to determine which school is right for them.

The tool is modeled off the Department of Education's College Navigator website, which contains information about tuition and fee costs, policies on transferring credits, and whether an institution is private, nonprofit, or public.

H.R. 4852 would add three additional data points to the tool to ensure that it captures information about whether an

institution is affiliated with a religion, serves a specific group of minorities, or is gender-specific.

As the old saying goes, information is power. I am sure that this additional information will help GI Bill users choose the right school to fit their specific needs and, ultimately, ensure their success in higher education and beyond.

Madam Speaker, I thank Congresswoman NORMA TORRES from California for her work on this legislation, and I urge all of my colleagues to support it.

Madam Speaker, having used the GI Bill myself many, many years ago, it is an invaluable tool for our veterans. We know that the GI Bill was really one of the major things that helped create the America we live in today, as post-World War II veterans left, came out, used the GI Bill, went to college, and really helped create this great country we live in.

Two years ago, we passed a bill that would make the GI Bill forever, so that if you lose your job when you are 45 years old or 50 years old, if you are a veteran, you can go back and use that GI Bill to retrain and continue your education.

This bill helps further clarify and helps veterans use that information better for themselves and their families.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I again urge all of my colleagues to pass H.R. 4852.

Our veterans deserve to have the most accurate information available to them as they are making their choices about the institutions where they would like to use their GI Bill.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill, 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. 4852.

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. Madam 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.

LEGAL SERVICES FOR HOMELESS VETERANS ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3749) to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make grants to entities that provide legal services for homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.
The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3749

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 “Legal Services for Homeless Veterans Act”.

SEC. 2. LEGAL SERVICES FOR HOMELESS VETERANS AND VETERANS AT RISK FOR HOMELESSNESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 20 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 2022 the following new section:

“§ 2022A. Legal services for homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness

“(a) GRANTS.—Subject to the availability of appropriations provided for such purpose, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall make grants to eligible entities that provide legal services to homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness.

“(b) CRITERIA.—(1) The Secretary shall—
“(A) establish criteria and requirements for grants under this section, including criteria for entities eligible to receive such grants; and

“(B) publish such criteria and requirements in the Federal Register.

“(2) In establishing criteria and requirements under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

“(A) take into consideration any criteria and requirements needed with respect to carrying out this section in rural communities, Tribal lands, and the territories and possessions of the United States; and

“(B) consult with organizations that have experience in providing services to homeless veterans, including veterans service organizations, the Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Veterans Legal Corps, and other organizations the Secretary determines appropriate.

“(c) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—The Secretary may make a grant under this section to an entity applying for such a grant only if the applicant for the grant—

“(1) is a public or nonprofit private entity with the capacity (as determined by the Secretary) to effectively administer a grant under this section;

“(2) demonstrates that adequate financial support will be available to carry out the services for which the grant is sought consistent with the application;

“(3) agrees to meet the applicable criteria and requirements established under subsection (b)(1); and

“(4) has, as determined by the Secretary, demonstrated the capacity to meet such criteria and requirements.

“(d) USE OF FUNDS.—Grants under this section shall be used to provide homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness the following legal services:

“(1) Legal services related to housing, including eviction defense, representation in landlord-tenant cases, and representation in foreclosure cases.

“(2) Legal services related to family law, including assistance in court proceedings for child support, divorce, estate planning, and family reconciliation.

“(3) Legal services related to income support, including assistance in obtaining public benefits.

“(4) Legal services related to criminal defense, including defense in matters symptomatic of homelessness, such as outstanding warrants, fines, and driver’s license revocation, to reduce recidivism and facilitate the overcoming of reentry obstacles in employment or housing.

“(5) Legal services related to requests to upgrade the characterization of a discharge

or dismissal of a former member of the Armed Forces under section 1553 of title 10.

“(6) Such other legal services as the Secretary determines appropriate.

“(e) FUNDS FOR WOMEN VETERANS.—For any fiscal year, not less than ten percent of the amount authorized to be appropriated for grants under this section shall be used to provide legal services described in subsection (d) to women veterans.

“(f) REPORTS.—On a biennial basis, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on grants under this section. To the extent feasible, each such report shall include the following with respect to the year covered by the report:

“(1) The number of homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness assisted.

“(2) A description of the legal services provided.

“(3) A description of the legal matters addressed.

“(4) An analysis by the Secretary with respect to the operational effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of the services provided.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 2022 the following new item:

“2022A. Legal services for homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness.”.

(c) CRITERIA.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish the criteria and requirements in the Federal Register pursuant to subsection (b)(1) of section 2022A of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

SEC. 3. ADDITIONAL AMOUNT FOR SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR VETERAN FAMILIES GRANT PROGRAM TO SUPPORT 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 each of fiscal years 2022 through 2024 for the provision of financial assistance under subsection (a) to organizations that have a focus on providing assistance to women veterans and their families.”.

SEC. 4. 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).

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. 3749, 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. 3749, as amended, the Legal Services for Homeless Veterans Act.

Over the past decade, Congress and the Obama and Trump administrations have prioritized ending veteran homelessness. However, while rates of veteran homelessness have fallen, even one veteran without shelter is unacceptable.

This committee is committed to providing services to prevent homelessness and to assist veterans who become homeless by providing them housing and access to healthcare and social services.

According to the Project CHALLENGE, otherwise known as Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups, and VA survey, legal services are one of the top unmet needs for homeless veterans. H.R. 3749 directly addresses that need.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 3749, as amended, is sponsored by Congressman PANNETTA and includes legislation authored by Congresswoman BEATTY, Congresswoman WILD, and Congressman LEVIN. It authorizes VA to provide grants or enter into cooperative agreements with eligible entities that provide legal services to homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness.

The VA would be required to consult with organizations that have experience providing services to homeless veterans when establishing these criteria and requirements, and these grants or cooperative agreements would only be available to highly rated public or nonprofit entities.

Additionally, at least 10 percent of the funds made available each fiscal year for this grant program must be reserved for providing legal services to homeless women veterans. As we know, women veterans are the fastest growing population of homeless veterans.

Finally, this legislation authorizes \$20 million of the funding for the Supportive Services for Veteran Families grant program to go to organizations that assist homeless veterans with children. The SSVF program has been one of the most effective tools to address veteran homelessness since its creation by President Obama, and I thank this administration and Congress for supporting it.

Madam Speaker, southern California is ground zero for addressing veteran homelessness. Riverside, California, in my own district, reached functional zero veteran homelessness, but many communities surrounding my district need additional resources and programs

to reach functional zero. Providing legal services to veterans who need them also prevents those veterans who are at risk of becoming homeless.

Madam Speaker, I thank Congressman PANETTA, Congresswoman BEATTY, Congresswoman WILD, and Congressman LEVIN, the chair of our Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, for their advocacy and work to pass legislation that will end veteran homelessness.

Madam Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to support H.R. 3749, as amended, and 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, today, I rise in support of H.R. 3749, as amended, the Legal Services for Homeless Veterans Act.

This bill would authorize a new legal services grant program for homeless veteran providers.

The Department of Veterans Affairs would administer this grant program to organizations serving homeless veterans that provide legal services for issues regarding housing, family matters, criminal defense, and upgrading military discharges. Grantees would provide these services to veterans who are or who are at risk of becoming homeless.

This bill would also require that not less than 10 percent of grant funds go toward providing legal services for veterans who are women.

The committee's oversight of the homeless program has found that simple legal services can be a barrier to reintegration for the homeless or at-risk veterans because they can prevent them from gaining meaningful employment and stable housing.

I believe that providing grants to homeless veteran providers that offer legal services to this vulnerable population would be providing another avenue for these veterans to appropriately work through their legal issues and, hopefully, move closer to independence.

The bill would also direct \$20 million from VA's Supportive Services for Veteran Families program to grantees that provide services specifically for homeless women veterans.

It would further require an advanced study on what type of services are available for homeless women veterans and how to ensure these services are meeting their needs.

While I am supportive of this new program grant as well as the steps the bill would take to help homeless women veterans, I am concerned that there is no limit to the amount of medical service dollars that could be spent on this new program. I worry that if we continue to use the medical service account as a cash cow for new, unfunded priorities, other veteran programs eventually could be negatively impacted.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. PANETTA), my good friend and also the author of H.R. 3749, a veteran himself.

Mr. PANETTA. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman and ranking member. I appreciate this opportunity to talk about something that both of these gentlemen have discussed and support. I appreciate that, so I thank the gentlemen very much.

Madam Speaker, today, I rise in support as well of H.R. 3749, the Legal Services for Homeless Veterans Act.

This is a bill that directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide grants to organizations that provide legal services to homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness.

The grant funds will be used to provide legal services related to housing, such as legal services related to family law; legal services related to income support; legal services related to criminal defense, including defense in matters symptomatic of homelessness; and legal services related to requests to upgrade discharge characterizations.

The legislation also authorizes appropriations of at least \$20 million for additional aid to women veterans experiencing housing instability and homelessness. As you heard from the chairman, women are the fastest growing group not just of homeless veterans but in the military and in our veterans' communities. And, as you heard, they are more likely to be single parents.

While serving as a local prosecutor, before my time here in Congress, in Monterey County, and working as a board member for the Veterans Transition Center of Monterey County, an organization which offers veterans not just transitional housing but, of course, case management programs to get them up on their feet and back into the communities where they can continue to serve, I worked firsthand with many veterans who had certain legal issues that brought them to the brink or pushed them right into, unfortunately, homelessness.

It is essential that Congress now ensure that our veterans are properly supported, have access to legal aid, and, yes, get the benefits that they have earned. We can then keep a roof over their heads.

For veterans in my district and across this country, this bill will provide them aid that really can help them during such events as Veterans Stand Down, a biennial event that we have in our district that provides much-needed legal assistance and helps our community's veterans get back on solid ground, be accepted into housing, drive legally, and make sure that they can find a job.

Madam Speaker, as a former veteran, I do urge my colleagues to support my bill to provide veterans the resources necessary to help them resolve legal issues and get back on their feet so that they can get back to being an integral part of our community and, of course, our country.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I thank the members of the For Country Caucus for endorsing this legislation. As a co-chair and founder of this caucus, the membership and I have worked to provide a platform for military veteran members to work across the aisle, to improve governance, and to enact productive policy, just like we have done here.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to have this bill introduced through the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, which I do believe does the exact same thing, and I thank both of these gentlemen for bringing this bill to the floor.

□ 1645

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

Madam Speaker, I strongly support this bill and appreciate Mr. PANETTA's leadership on it.

When I got to Congress in 2009, there were over 100,000 homeless veterans in this country. That number has been reduced by 70 percent. And, as the chairman said, zero is the right number; that is the correct number of homeless veterans.

This will go a long way to reestablishing many other things that the committee has done to help this, but this is a major step in helping when you are trying to get legal services with a lease or with many other things, with family issues.

I strongly encourage my colleagues 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.

Madam Speaker, I want to echo the sentiment of my colleague, Ranking Member ROE. We have both said in public and acknowledged the tremendous progress the VA has made in reducing homelessness. It began with the commitment under President Obama and has been continued under President Trump.

We have not done enough, I fear, to celebrate the tremendous reduction in homelessness across our country with respect to veteran homelessness. It still persists in my home State of California. We have a number of initiatives teed up, which, I trust, we are going to cooperate on.

The VA gets knocked around a lot for its shortcomings, but I have to say that this is one of the accomplishments that we have to celebrate more.

Mr. PANETTA's bill, H.R. 3749, is a continuation of this work. I urge all of my colleagues to join me in passing it, 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. 3749, 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 REPORTING TRANSPARENCY ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4613) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish and maintain a website of the Department that allows the public to obtain electronic copies of certain legislatively requested reports 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. 4613

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 Reporting Transparency Act”.

SEC. 2. REQUIRING PUBLIC ACCESS THROUGH DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS WEBSITE TO LEGISLATIVELY REQUESTED REPORTS OF THE DEPARTMENT.

(a) REQUIREMENT TO ALLOW ACCESS ONLINE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall establish and maintain a website of the Department that allows the public to obtain electronic copies of all legislatively requested reports required to be submitted after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) EXISTING RESOURCES.—To the extent possible, the Secretary shall carry out paragraph (1) by using existing online resources administered by the Secretary.

(b) CONTENT AND FUNCTION.—The Secretary shall ensure that the website includes the following:

(1) With respect to each legislatively requested report, each of the following:

(A) A citation to the statute requiring the report.

(B) An electronic copy of the report, including any transmittal letter associated with the report, that is platform independent and available to the public without restrictions, including restrictions that would impede the reuse of the information in the report. Where practicable, the report shall be in an open format.

(C) The ability to retrieve a report, to the extent practicable, through searches based on each, and any combination, of the following:

(i) The title of the report.

(ii) The date of publication.

(iii) Any congressional committee or subcommittee receiving the report.

(iv) The Act of Congress or conference report that requests the report.

(v) Subject tags.

(vi) A unique alphanumeric identifier for the report that is consistent across report editions.

(vii) Any serial number, Superintendent of Documents number, or other identification number for the report.

(viii) Key words.

(ix) Full text search.

(x) Any other information the Secretary determines appropriate.

(D) The date on which the report was required to be submitted to the website.

(E) The date on which the report was submitted to the website.

(F) To the extent practicable, a permanent means of accessing the report electronically.

(2) A means for bulk download of all legislatively requested reports.

(3) A means for downloading individual reports as the result of a search.

(4) In tabular form, a list of all legislatively requested reports that can be searched, sorted, and downloaded by—

(A) reports submitted within the required time;

(B) reports submitted after the date on which such reports were required to be submitted; and

(C) reports not submitted.

(c) DEADLINE.—The Secretary shall ensure that information required to be published on the website under this Act with respect to a legislatively requested report submitted after the period under subsection (a)(1) is published not earlier than 30 days after the report is submitted and not later than 45 days after the report is submitted.

(d) NOTICE ON WEBSITE OF WITHHELD REPORTS.—If, at the time a requirement or request for a legislatively requested report is made pursuant to an Act of Congress or a conference report, Congress includes in such Act or conference report, as the case may be, specific language exempting the report from publication on a website under this section, the Secretary shall publish on such website the title of the report and notice that Congress exempted the report from publication.

(e) FREE ACCESS.—The Secretary may not charge a fee, require registration, or impose any other limitation in exchange for access to the website.

SEC. 3. RELATIONSHIP TO THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to—

(1) require the disclosure of information, records, or reports that are exempt from public disclosure under section 552 of title 5, United States Code; or

(2) impose any affirmative duty on the Secretary to review legislatively requested reports submitted for publication to the website for the purpose of identifying and redacting such information or records.

(b) REDACTION OF INFORMATION.—The Secretary may redact information required to be disclosed under this Act if the information would be properly withheld from disclosure under section 552 of title 5, United States Code, and shall—

(1) redact information required to be disclosed under this Act if disclosure of such information is prohibited by law;

(2) redact only such information properly withheld under this subsection from the submission of information or from any legislatively requested report submitted under this Act;

(3) identify where any such redaction is made in the submission or report; and

(4) identify the exemption under which each such redaction is made.

SEC. 4. REPORTS REQUIRED.

(a) RECURRING REPORTS THAT THE SECRETARY RECOMMENDS DISCONTINUING.—The Secretary shall submit to Congress a report regarding recurring legislatively requested reports that the Secretary recommends discontinuing not later than—

(1) 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(2) two years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) COMPLIANCE OF VA WEBSITE WITH FEDERAL STATUTES, REGULATIONS, RULES, AND GUIDANCE.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report regarding the compliance of the website of the Department with Federal statutes, regulations, rules, and guidance regarding transparency for and access by the public and Congress, including requirements for links and information subject to section 552 of title 5, United States Code, and the Inspector General Act of 1978 (Public Law 95–452).

SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) LEGISLATIVELY REQUESTED REPORT.—The term “legislatively requested report” means a re-

port to be submitted by the Secretary to either house of Congress or any committee of Congress or subcommittee thereof pursuant to—

(A) an Act of Congress enacted not more than eight years before the date of the enactment of this Act; or

(B) a conference report adopted not more than eight years before the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) OPEN FORMAT.—The term “open format” means a file format for storing digital data based on an underlying open standard that—

(A) is not encumbered by any restrictions that would impede reuse; and

(B) is based on an underlying open data standard that is maintained by a standards organization.

(3) DEPARTMENT.—The term “Department” means the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

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 have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 4613, 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 today in support of H.R. 4613, as amended, which would require the posting of congressionally mandated reports of the Department of Veterans Affairs on the Department’s public website. The VA Reporting Transparency Act, introduced by Representatives ROSE and CISNEROS, will ensure easy public access to these reports.

Surprisingly, the Department of Veterans Affairs does not currently provide public access to many of its reports that are mandated by Congress. Rather than place its reports on its website, VA will often only transmit its reports to a few congressional committees, such as the House and Senate Committees on Veterans’ Affairs. By contrast, the VA Office of Inspector General posts its reports online within 3 days of completion.

This legislation would allow veterans and the public to access these reports online, which contain critical information about agency activities and the effectiveness of services.

It would also improve accountability. For example, in 2019, VA provided reports to Congress on the activity of the Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection and on veterans being the target of Social Security fraud.

Americans should know what actions the VA should be taking to protect VA whistleblowers and what VA has done to prevent the fraudulent use of veterans’ Social Security numbers. These