

with one agency. For decades, VA has not recognized the unique status of Native veterans and has charged them copays for care provided at VA.

For far too many Native Americans, particularly those in rural areas, the copay burden is a barrier to care. These veterans, who may be unable to access specialty care from their Tribal health systems, are then unable to access VA due to cost.

Eliminating the copay burden is a step toward upholding the treaties between the United States and Tribal nations while also bringing immediate relief to veterans unable to access care during these distressing times.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank Congressman GALLEG0 for his steadfast leadership on this issue. I encourage all of my colleagues to support H.R. 4908, as amended, 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.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4908, the Native American Veteran Parity in Access to Care Today Act, or PACT Act.

The care that the Department of Veterans Affairs provides to veterans for conditions that are related to military service are always provided at no cost to the veteran. Veterans being cared for by VA for conditions that are unrelated to their military service may be charged a copayment to offset the cost of care and encourage appropriate use of the VA healthcare system.

According to the Government Accountability Office and the National Council of American Indians, approximately one-third of American Indian and Alaska Native veterans were charged copayments from VA in fiscal year 2017. Those copayments averaged just under \$300 per veteran.

However, almost a century ago, Congress passed the Snyder Act, which guaranteed healthcare to Native Americans free of charge. In recognition of that, the Native American PACT Act would prohibit VA from charging copayments to Native American veterans regardless of whether the care they receive from the VA is for a service-connected condition or not.

There is no ethnic group that volunteers to defend the United States in uniform at a higher rate than Native Americans whose history of service to this country dates back to the Revolutionary War. This bill would increase access to care for those brave veterans and create parity between the care provided to them through the VA, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and the Indian Health Service. It would also uphold the United States Government's longstanding trust and treaty responsibilities to the Native American community.

The Native American PACT Act is sponsored by my colleague and fellow veteran, Congressman RUBEN GALLEG0 from Arizona. I am glad to stand with him in support of its passage today.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I too ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 4908, 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. 4908, 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.

□ 1400

#### CFO AUTHORITY AND COLLABORATION ACT OF 2020

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6589) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop and submit to Congress a plan to address the material weakness of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman call for the bill, as amended?

Mr. TAKANO. I am checking. I do not have "as amended." Madam Speaker, I stand by the motion that I made that we suspend the rules and pass H.R. 6589.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the title of the bill.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6589

*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 "CFO Authority and Collaboration Act of 2020".

#### SEC. 2. PLAN TO ADDRESS MATERIAL WEAKNESS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(1) develop a plan, including steps and related timelines, for fully addressing—

(A) the repeated material weakness of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

(B) the recommendations of the auditor related to entity level controls, including the organizational structure of the office of the Chief Financial Officer of the Department; and

(2) submit to the Committees on Veterans Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report containing a description of—

(A) the plan developed under paragraph (1); and

(B) the steps the Secretary plans to take to provide sufficient authority to the Chief Financial Officer of the Department to carry out the requirements of section 902 of title 31, United States Code.

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

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. 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. 6589.

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. 6589, the CFO Authority and Collaboration Act of 2020, which addresses the sometimes arcane but also very important need for strong financial management and accountability at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Madam Speaker, each year, VA spends billions of dollars in support of our Nation's veterans. Taxpayers deserve to know that each dollar is spent wisely and that each dollar is properly accounted for in order to avoid waste, fraud, and abuse.

Madam Speaker, the VA inspector general has determined what is called a "material weakness" in how the Office of the Chief Financial Officer is structured. This was a topic examined during hearings and through oversight by our Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Mrs. LEE's legislation requires a small but important fix to ensure strong financial accountability. I thank Mrs. LEE for sponsoring this bipartisan legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6589.

Madam Speaker, I wish to, at this point, withdraw the motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The motion is withdrawn.

#### DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER AUTHORITY AND COLLABORATION ACT OF 2020

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6589) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop and submit to Congress a plan to address the material weakness 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. 6589

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

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

*This Act may be cited as the "Department of Veterans Affairs Chief Financial Officer Authority and Collaboration Act of 2020".*