

It is well known that outreach continues to be a major obstacle for VA prevention efforts.

H.R. 8247 seeks to address this issue by requiring the VA to contact veterans by mail, telephone, or email to urge them to come in for a VA exam, so that they remain “actively enrolled” in the VA health care system.

These continuous check-ins are also key to addressing the startling suicide rates among veterans.

For instance, veterans are 1.5 times more likely to die by suicide than Americans who never served in the military.

For female veterans, the risk factor is 2.2 times more likely to die by suicide.

In 2017 alone, 6,100 veterans died by suicide.

H.R. 8247 improves upon the status quo of care for veterans with regards to mental health by promoting coordination between the VA and the Suicide Prevention Coordinator at the nearest VA facility.

This will help in determining if the individual in crisis is eligible for other VA benefits and make referrals for appropriate follow-on care.

Madam Speaker, I also applaud the bill's designation of the VA as the primary payer.

With this provision, we are not only removing the out-of-pocket costs for veterans with respect to emergent mental health, but we are also removing a barrier that prevents so many from seeking help.

Veterans are truly heroes walking among us.

Their sacrifices, and those of their families, allow civilians to enjoy the benefits of our freedom without a second thought.

Without the brave efforts of all the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and Coast Guardsmen and women and their families, our country would not live so freely.

I offer my deepest gratitude to our nation's troops and reservists, their families, and the 19.2 million veterans, including 28,227 in my own district.

Nine in ten military families believe the public does not understand or appreciate their sacrifices.

Today, Congress has the opportunity to show its appreciation for our military personnel by voting for H.R. 8247.

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. 8247, 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

EQUAL ACCESS TO CONTRACEPTION FOR VETERANS ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3798) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for limitations on copayments for contraception furnished by 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. 3798

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 “Equal Access to Contraception for Veterans Act”.

SEC. 2. LIMITATION ON COPAYMENTS FOR CONTRACEPTION.

Section 1722A(a)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking “to pay” and all that follows through the period and inserting “to pay—”; and

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

“(A) an amount in excess of the cost to the Secretary for medication described in paragraph (1); or

“(B) an amount for any contraceptive item for which coverage under health insurance coverage is required without the imposition of any cost-sharing requirement pursuant to section 2713(a)(4) of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 300gg–13(a)(4)).”

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 to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H.R. 3798, 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, H.R. 3798, as amended, eliminates copayments on contraceptive items at the Department of Veterans Affairs, ensuring that no veterans, especially women veterans, face economic barriers to a critical component of preventative healthcare.

I thank Congresswoman BROWNLEY for introducing this bill and for her efforts as chair of the Subcommittee on Health and the Women's Veterans Task Force.

Contraception is an essential part of healthcare, and more than 99 percent of women have used birth control at some point in their lives. Women veterans represent the fastest growing population of veterans accessing care through VA, and many are of reproductive age.

Contraception is widely available at VA, and veterans enrolled at VA can obtain oral contraceptives, shots, skin patches, vaginal rings, and long-acting reversible contraceptives, such as implants or intrauterine devices or IUDs. In addition, the VA pharmacy dispenses over-the-counter contraceptives, including condoms and emergency contraception.

Requiring a copay for contraception creates an unnecessary economic barrier to preventative healthcare. Women

veterans are more likely to live in poverty than male veterans, and transgender veterans are more likely to live in poverty than cisgender veterans. Even a small copay can be insurmountable for someone trying to make ends meet.

Madam Speaker, passing this bill is especially critical during the pandemic. During times of crisis, such as natural disaster and pandemics, the rate of unplanned pregnancy increases. When so many Americans are experiencing economic hardship, their access to healthcare should be something that they do not have to worry about. This bill has wide VSO support and is also supported by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

I, again, thank Ms. BROWNLEY for her leadership on this issue. I thank Dr. ROE and the minority staff for working with us on this bill, and I look forward to working with our Senate counterparts to get it passed into law before the 116th Congress.

Madam 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.

I rise today in support of H.R. 3798, as amended, the Equal Access to Contraception for Veterans Act.

This bill is sponsored by Congresswoman JULIA BROWNLEY from California. Congresswoman BROWNLEY is the chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Health and the bipartisan Women's Veterans Task Force, and I am grateful for her hard work and steadfast commitment to improving care for all the men and women who have served our Nation in uniform.

The Equal Access to Contraception Act would prevent the Department of Veterans Affairs from charging copayments for contraceptive items and services that veterans receive in the VA. This would create parity between the VA healthcare system and the rest of the healthcare industry, which already exempts prescriptions for contraception from cost-sharing requirements.

Prior to coming to Congress, I spent 30 years in private practice as a board-certified OB/GYN physician, so I know firsthand the importance of reproductive care and regular access to contraception. I am proud to sponsor this bill today to increase access to contraception for the growing number of women who are volunteering for the military and enrolling in the VA healthcare system following their brave service.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BROWNLEY), my good friend, the chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Health, and also the author of this important piece of legislation.

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3798, the Equal Access to Contraception for Veterans Act, my bill to ensure

that women veterans have access to the same contraception coverage as women currently serving in the military and on the same basis of women who receive private healthcare.

I thank the chairman for working with me to advance this legislation, and I am proud that my bill passed the committee with broad bipartisan support.

As you may know, because of the Affordable Care Act, all women using civilian health insurance may access basic contraceptive services, like the pill or an IUD, without a copay.

Last year, the Access to Contraception for Servicemembers and Dependents Act passed with overwhelming bipartisan support as part of the annual National Defense Authorization Act to ensure that TRICARE also provides this basic health benefit to servicemembers and their dependents. While this was an important step, women veterans currently do not receive this benefit from the VA.

Clearly, we need to make sure all women who have served our country receive the same care. My bill will fix this inequity.

The benefits of contraception are widely recognized. Choosing when or if to have a family is essential to women's health and to their economic security.

Today, there are 2 million women veterans living in the United States, and women comprise the fastest growing subpopulation of both the military and veteran populations. Yet, many of their health needs go unaddressed in a VA system that has not evolved to equitably serve a rapidly changing population.

As the chairwoman of the Women's Veterans Task Force and chair of the House Veterans' Affairs' Subcommittee on Health, members of the task force and I have worked to identify disparities in healthcare for women veterans and, where necessary, introduce, advocate for, and pass legislation that eliminates those gaps.

Mr. Speaker, our veterans have sacrificed so much for us and our country. It is way past time that we address this inequity and fix this glaring gap in care of our women veterans. I urge my colleagues to support our women veterans and vote "yes" on H.R. 3798.

Mr. Speaker, before I conclude, I, too, would just like to publicly acknowledge my gratitude to Dr. ROE. When the Speaker says the "gentleman from Tennessee," I believe he truly is a gentleman in the eyes, I think, of all Members of Congress and, certainly, particularly mine.

He is a great storyteller that underscores the point that he is making at all times. There is no question that his leadership and his advocacy for our veterans, both men and women, are untouchable and unwavering. I would say how much I have enjoyed working with him on the Committee of Veterans' Affairs, and I know that he will be missed by the entire House, but sorely missed

within the Committee of Veterans' Affairs and our daily work there.

I thank him for all that he has done. Whatever his next chapter is in his life, I hope that he and his new bride enjoy every minute of it.

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

Mr. Speaker, I very, very much appreciate the incredibly kind words. Some of those stories are probably even true that I tell.

Mr. Speaker, I would take a point of personal privilege before I close. This will probably be the last time I am down here to speak on the House floor as the ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs before this Congress adjourns in January.

Mr. Speaker, what an honor and privilege it has been. And you cannot be successful—and I think the chairman will also emphasize this—without an incredible staff. I have been so blessed with very, very, very competent people on both sides of the aisle. And it has been fun working with Ray and the gentleman's staff, and I thank him for that. They have always been respectful, and I have appreciated that.

Mr. Speaker, you know it is probably time to retire from Congress when you have delivered one of your staff members, which I have, that is on our side.

Mr. Speaker, it is not about us. It is about the veterans that we serve—all of us in this incredible body. How many times in your life do you get an opportunity to really do good for people?

I will tell you what has influenced me. I grew up in a military town, Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Clarksville, Tennessee, where the 101st Airborne is. My scoutmaster, First Sergeant Thomas E. Thayer, was killed in 1965 in Vietnam. He left four children. I saw what it did to that family. I have never forgotten that.

After my service was over—I served in Korea in 1973–1974 in the Second Infantry Division—I came back home, saw what happened to our Nation's veterans, how they were treated. That has changed.

I am thankful that this country no longer treats the veterans like they did my Vietnam brothers and sisters who served.

We had the opportunity in this committee, in a bipartisan way, as I said, to make a difference. In the last Congress, we passed the Accountability and Whistleblower Protection bill; the Appeals Modernization that has helped so many people; the Forever GI Bill, and I used the GI bill when I got out of the military, and it helped me as a young family, and I know how it transformed this country after World War II; the MISSION Act, and I could go on and on—the bills we passed yesterday and the bills we passed today, and we will pass Congresswoman BROWNLEY's bill in just a moment here.

I got an email last week. We get these all the time. We talked about the blue water Navy for, I don't know, 10

years, I guess. I get this email from a widow, who is a veteran, whose husband died in his late forties with complications of Agent Orange. He served on a service ship outside Vietnam that offloaded Agent Orange.

Finally, after all these years and the work, Mr. Speaker, we got this passed in February, I think, of 2019. She got backpay and a stipend for her and her family for the service that her husband had done. She was a veteran who had served, too, but not there. I thank the entire body for doing that because you made a difference in this veteran's life.

Mr. Speaker, I, again, thank the body, the committee, all the people who have worked, and I certainly want to support Ms. BROWNLEY's bill and her kind words—I much appreciate that—and I encourage all Members to vote for this.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, before I conclude my remarks on Ms. BROWNLEY's important piece of legislation on making contraception available on the same basis as the Department of Defense, I, too, want to add my words of praise to my colleague and my partner in the work in the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Ranking Member Dr. PHIL ROE.

Mr. Speaker, he has so much to point to, the proud list of accomplishments: The Blue Water Navy bill was something that had a chain of ownership. I happened to be the last one on the chain. I know that the gentleman put a lot of work into that.

Even as we approach the month of October, we know that, finally, they are going to implement the caregiver portion of that bill. What a tremendous expansion of caregiver benefits that were previously only available to post-9/11 veterans. I lament that it took that long, but it is here.

Let's also think about the tremendous progress we made on homelessness. It is not done, and it is not over, but we made tremendous strides nationwide in reducing veteran homelessness. We just passed today a very comprehensive bill to deal with the remains of homelessness, which remains a very serious problem in my own home State of California.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. ROE has helped shape our progress on veterans homelessness in so many areas of policy relating to our Nation's veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I join all of my colleagues in saying that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs will miss him.

I know his storytelling, but I learned late this year of his affection for the late folksinger John Prine. I know Dr. ROE plays the guitar, and I hope that before he leaves, he will regale us at some point with either one of his songs or one of the songs that he likes to play on that guitar.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 3798, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1415

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR). 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. 3798, 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.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4447, EXPANDING ACCESS TO SUSTAINABLE ENERGY ACT OF 2019; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 6270, UYGHUR FORCED LABOR DISCLOSURE ACT OF 2020; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 8319, CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2021 AND OTHER EXTENSIONS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on ordering the previous question on the resolution (H. Res. 1129) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4447) to establish an energy storage and microgrid grant and technical assistance program; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 6270) to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to require issuers to make certain disclosures relating to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, and for other purposes; and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 8319) making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2021, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 231, nays 190, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 199]
YEAS—231

Adams	Castro (TX)	DeLauro
Aguilar	Chu, Judy	DelBene
Allred	Cicilline	Delgado
Axne	Cisneros	Demings
Barragán	Clark (MA)	DeSaulnier
Bass	Clarke (NY)	Deutch
Beatty	Clay	Dingell
Bera	Cleaver	Doggett
Beyer	Clyburn	Doyle, Michael
Bishop (GA)	Cohen	F.
Blumenauer	Cornolly	Engel
Blunt Rochester	Cooper	Escobar
Bonamici	Correa	Eshoo
Boyle, Brendan	Costa	Española
F.	Courtney	Evans
Brindisi	Cox (CA)	Finkenauer
Brown (MD)	Craig	Fletcher
Brownley (CA)	Crist	Foster
Bustos	Crow	Frankel
Butterfield	Cuellar	Fudge
Carbajal	Cunningham	Gabbard
Cárdenas	Davids (KS)	Gallego
Carson (IN)	Davis (CA)	Garamendi
Cartwright	Davis, Danny K.	García (IL)
Case	Dean	García (TX)
Casten (IL)	DeFazio	Golden
Castor (FL)	DeGette	Gomez

Gonzalez (TX)	Malinowski	Sánchez
Gottheimer	Maloney,	Sarbanes
Green, Al (TX)	Carolyn B.	Scanlon
Grijalva	Maloney, Sean	Schakowsky
Haaland	Matsui	Schiff
Harder (CA)	McAdams	Schneider
Hastings	McBath	Schrader
Hayes	McCollum	Schrier
Heck	McEachin	Scott (VA)
Higgins (NY)	McGovern	Scott, David
Himes	McNerney	Serrano
Horn, Kendra S.	Meeks	Sewell (AL)
Horsford	Meng	Shalala
Houlihan	Mfume	Sherman
Hoyer	Moore	Sherrill
Huffman	Morelle	Sires
Jackson Lee	Moulton	Slotkin
Jayapal	Mucarsel-Powell	Smith (WA)
Jeffries	Murphy (FL)	Soto
Johnson (GA)	Nadler	Spanberger
Johnson (TX)	Napolitano	Speier
Kaptur	Neal	Stanton
Keating	Neguse	Stevens
Kelly (IL)	Norcross	Suozi
Kennedy	O'Halleran	Swalwell (CA)
Khanna	Ocasio-Cortez	Takano
Kildee	Omar	Omar
Kilmer	Pallone	Thompson (CA)
Kim	Panetta	Thompson (MS)
Kind	Pappas	Titus
Kirkpatrick	Pascarell	Tlaib
Krishnamoorthi	Payne	Tonko
Kuster (NH)	Perlmutter	Torres (CA)
Lamb	Peters	Torres Small
Langevin	Peterson	(NM)
Larsen (WA)	Phillips	Trahan
Larson (CT)	Pingree	Trone
Lawrence	Pocan	Underwood
Lawson (FL)	Porter	Vargas
Lee (CA)	Pressley	Veasey
Lee (NV)	Price (NC)	Vela
Levin (CA)	Quigley	Velázquez
Levin (MI)	Raskin	Visclosky
Lieu, Ted	Rice (NY)	Wasserman
Lipinski	Richmond	Schultz
Loblinsack	Rose (NY)	Waters
Lofgren	Rouda	Watson Coleman
Lowenthal	Roybal-Allard	Welch
Lowe	Ruiz	Wexton
Lujan	Ruppersberger	Wild
Luria	Rush	Wilson (FL)
Lynch	Ryan	Yarmuth

NAYS—190

Aderholt	Diaz-Balart	Jordan
Allen	Duncan	Joyce (OH)
Amash	Emmer	Joyce (PA)
Amodei	Estes	Katko
Armstrong	Ferguson	Keller
Arrington	Fitzpatrick	Kelly (MS)
Babin	Fleischmann	Kelly (PA)
Bacon	Flores	King (IA)
Baird	Fortenberry	King (NY)
Balderson	Fox (NC)	Kinziger
Banks	Fulcher	Kustoff (TN)
Barr	Gaetz	LaHood
Bergman	Gallagher	LaMalfa
Biggs	García (CA)	Lamborn
Bilirakis	Gianforte	Latta
Bishop (NC)	Gibbs	Lesko
Bishop (UT)	Gohmert	Long
Bost	Gonzalez (OH)	Loudermilk
Brady	Gooden	Lucas
Brooks (AL)	Gosar	Luetkemeyer
Brooks (IN)	Granger	Marchant
Buchanan	Graves (LA)	Marshall
Buck	Graves (MO)	Massie
Bucshon	Green (TN)	Mast
Budd	Griffith	McCarthy
Burchett	Grothman	McCauley
Burgess	Guest	McClintock
Calvert	Guthrie	McHenry
Carter (GA)	Hagedorn	McKinley
Carter (TX)	Harris	Meuser
Chabot	Hartzer	Miller
Cheney	Hern, Kevin	Moolenaar
Cline	Herrera Beutler	Mooney (WV)
Cloud	Hice (GA)	Murphy (NC)
Cole	Higgins (LA)	Newhouse
Collins (GA)	Hill (AR)	Norman
Comer	Holding	Nunes
Conaway	Hollingsworth	Olson
Cook	Hudson	Palazzo
Crawford	Huizenga	Palmer
Crenshaw	Hurd (TX)	Pence
Curtis	Jacobs	Perry
Davidson (OH)	Johnson (LA)	Posey
Davis, Rodney	Johnson (OH)	Reed
DesJarlais	Johnson (SD)	Reschenthaler

Rice (SC)	Smucker	Walden
Roby	Spano	Walker
Rodgers (WA)	Staubert	Walorski
Roe, David P.	Stefanik	Waltz
Rogers (AL)	Steil	Watkins
Rogers (KY)	Steube	Weber (TX)
Rose, John W.	Stewart	Webster (FL)
Rouzer	Stivers	Wenstrup
Roy	Taylor	Westerman
Rutherford	Thompson (PA)	Williams
Scalise	Thornberry	Wilson (SC)
Schweikert	Tiffany	Wittman
Scott, Austin	Timmons	Womack
Sensenbrenner	Tipton	Woodall
Shimkus	Turner	Yoho
Simpson	Upton	Young
Smith (MO)	Van Drew	Zeldin
Smith (NE)	Wagner	
Smith (NJ)	Walberg	

NOT VOTING—9

Abraham	Graves (GA)	Riggleman
Byrne	Mitchell	Rooney (FL)
Dunn	Mullin	Wright

□ 1500

Messrs. KING of New York and HURD of Texas changed their vote from "yea" to "nay."

Mr. PETERSON changed his vote from "nay" to "yea."

So the previous question was ordered. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

MEMBERS RECORDED PURSUANT TO HOUSE RESOLUTION 965, 116TH CONGRESS

Chu, Judy (Takano)	Moore (Beyer)
DeSaulnier (Matsui)	Mucarsel-Powell
Frankel (Clark (MA))	(Wasserman)
Grijalva (García (IL))	Schultz)
Hastings (Wasserman)	Napolitano (Correa)
Schultz)	Payne (Wasserman)
Hayes (Courtney)	Schultz)
Huffman (Thompson	Pingree (Clark (MA))
(CA))	Pocan (Raskin)
Jayapal (Raskin)	Porter (Wexton)
Kim (Davids (KS))	Richmond (Fudge)
Kirkpatrick	Roybal-Allard
(Gallego)	(Cárdenas)
Langevin (Lynch)	Rush (Underwood)
Lawson (FL) (Evans)	Serrano (Jeffries)
Lieu, Ted (Beyer)	Speier (Scanlon)
Lipinski (Cooper)	Tlaib (Dingell)
Lofgren (Jeffries)	Watson Coleman
Lowenthal (Beyer)	(Pallone)
Lowey (Tonko)	Welch (McGovern)
McEachin (Wexton)	Wilson (FL) (Adams)
Meng (Clark (MA))	

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

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

Mrs. LESKO. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3 of House Resolution 965, the yeas and nays are ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 229, nays 187, not voting 14, as follows:

[Roll No. 200]

YEAS—229

Adams	Boyle, Brendan	Castro (TX)
Aguilar	F.	Chu, Judy
Allred	Brindisi	Cicilline
Axne	Brown (MD)	Cisneros
Barragán	Brownley (CA)	Clark (MA)
Bass	Bustos	Clarke (NY)
Beatty	Butterfield	Clay
Bera	Carbajal	Cleaver
Beyer	Cárdenas	Clyburn
Bishop (GA)	Carson (IN)	Cohen
Blumenauer	Cartwright	Cornolly
Blunt Rochester	Case	Cooper
Bonamici	Casten (IL)	Correa
	Castor (FL)	Costa