

We can only hope that S. 3147, the Improving Safety and Security for Veterans Act, will serve as a first step toward better understanding what gaps in VA management existed and what actions the Department still needs to take to protect our veterans.

We also hope that this measure will serve as a foundation for helping to restore veterans' confidence in the safety, security, and quality of the care delivered at VA medical facilities.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 3147, the Improving Safety and Security for Veterans Act of 2019.

This bill was drafted in response to a tragic incident at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Clarksburg, West Virginia, where a former VA nursing assistant killed at least seven veteran patients by injecting them with lethal doses of insulin while they were under her care.

As a member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I personally grieved the loss of those veterans. I cannot fathom the pain that their loved ones must feel. My heart is with them, especially during this holiday season.

Congress must act to ensure that no other veteran, family, or community experiences such tragedy ever again.

Passing S. 3147 today will help us do that, Mr. Speaker. The bill would require VA to report to Congress on the Department's efforts to assess, monitor, and improve patient safety and quality of care throughout the VA healthcare system. It would also require the VA to report to Congress on the series of events surrounding the Clarksburg murders and the actions taken in Clarksburg and nationwide, for that matter.

We need to ensure that we learn from this tragedy and that it never, ever is repeated.

This bill is sponsored by Senator JOE MANCHIN from West Virginia and is the companion to a House bill in the House by my good friend, a great member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, and I know he supports veterans, DAVID MCKINLEY, who I will yield to in a second. DAVID is from West Virginia.

I appreciate Senator MANCHIN's and Congressman MCKINLEY's efforts to ensure that veterans in West Virginia and across the country receive care that is timely, safe, and of the very highest quality. Again, we have to thank them for their service to our country, and they are entitled to this quality of care, Mr. Speaker.

Every veteran deserves to feel confident that they will be well cared for when they walk through VA's doors. While nothing can bring back the veterans who were ruthlessly murdered in Clarksburg, I hope that the passage of this bill today will restore some of the trust that has been lost due to this heartbreaking chapter in VA's history

and ease other veterans' fears that they may have about their own safety seeking care through the VA healthcare system.

Mr. Speaker, I urge every one of my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill today. I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MCKINLEY).

Mr. MCKINLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 3147, the Improving Safety and Security for Veterans Act of 2019.

The bill is indeed the companion to H.R. 5616, which I introduced in January of this year following the death of seven veterans at our Clarksburg VA Medical Center.

A former nursing assistant at the hospital has now pled guilty to murdering these veterans by intentionally and inappropriately injecting them with insulin. Her actions are beyond the pale. Congress must do everything it can to ensure that this never happens again.

This bill was just the first step toward that goal. It will, indeed, as you heard the chairman say, provide transparency and accountability at our VA medical facilities by requiring the VA to submit to Congress detailed reports on patient safety and quality of care at those hospitals.

It will also ensure that the public is well-informed as to what occurred in Clarksburg. The public was kept in the dark for far too long during the course of this investigation.

Our veterans have sacrificed so much for our country, and they deserve the best possible care and should feel safe when they come to one of our facilities.

Congress now has the opportunity to restore the public's confidence in our Veterans Affairs system and ensure that our veterans are receiving the care they deserve.

I join with the chairman, Mr. Speaker, in saying that I urge all of our colleagues to join unanimously in supporting this bill.

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

Mrs. LURIA. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing S. 3147.

I want to thank Mr. MCKINLEY for introducing this bill in the House and Senator MANCHIN for working very diligently in the Senate to bring this legislation before us today because, as Mr. MCKINLEY said, we do need to provide assurance to our veterans about their safety in our VA health centers, both in Clarksburg and across the country.

I also want to thank Mr. BILIRAKIS, my colleague on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, for his work on this and all the bills that we have reviewed today.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in passing S. 3147, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. LURIA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 3147.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mrs. LURIA. 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.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 23 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

#### WOUNDED VETERANS RECREATION ACT

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 (S. 327) to amend the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act to provide for a lifetime National Recreational Pass for any veteran with a service-connected disability, 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. HUFFMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 401, nays 0, not voting 28, as follows:

[Roll No. 219]

YEAS—401

Adams	Bera	Brown (MD)
Aguilar	Bergman	Brownley (CA)
Allen	Beyer	Buchanan
Allred	Biggs	Buck
Amash	Bilirakis	Bucshon
Armstrong	Bishop (GA)	Budd
Arrington	Bishop (NC)	Burchett
Axne	Bishop (UT)	Burgess
Babin	Blumenauer	Bustos
Bacon	Blunt Rochester	Butterfield
Baird	Bonamici	Byrne
Balderson	Bost	Carbajal
Banks	Boyle, Brendan	Cárdenas
Barr	F.	Carson (IN)
Barragán	Brady	Carter (GA)
Bass	Brindisi	Carter (TX)
Beatty	Brooks (AL)	Cartwright