

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, sadly the Biden inflation is ongoing, and families are struggling to survive as jobs are being destroyed.

Last month I shared the Labor Department report the Consumer Price Index for August was rising at the fastest pace in 13 years. This continued in September, and here are a few price increase examples: gasoline up 42.1 percent; gas utilities up 20.6 percent; bacon up 19.3 percent; eggs up 12.6 percent; children's shoes up 11.9 percent; fresh fish and seafood up 10.7 percent.

Biden tax-and-spend policies cause inflation and destroy jobs. Clearly, the Democrat elite think they are smarter than anyone with the Democrat voters they see as ignorant making a claim that \$3.5 trillion will have zero costs.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, who successfully protected America for 20 years as the global war on terrorism continues, moving from Afghanistan to America.

AN URGENT NEED FOR ACTION IN THE CENTRAL VALLEY

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

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, in the midst of a statewide drought emergency, the Central Valley experienced considerable rainstorms this week.

While communities across my district are incredibly grateful for this rainfall, we know this relief will be short lived.

Farmers are desperate for water to grow their crops. Rural towns continue to face water shortages.

We are grateful for this rain. We need this rain. But we need this administration to understand the dire nature of our situation and take appropriate measures to capture our most precious resource.

I have asked time and time again for support from the House majority to address this issue.

I have expressed the urgent need for action to prepare for exactly the opportunity that has been pointlessly wasted this week.

The families in my district cannot continue to wait. I ask my colleagues yet again to join my efforts to improve water infrastructure and water management in California.

NUCLEAR FAMILIES SHOULD NOT BE PUNISHED

(Mr. GROTHMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk one more time about the reconciliation bill that may be before us very soon.

We began this session with a great electoral victory for Black Lives Matter, who on their website said we disrupt the western prescribed nuclear family structure.

First of all, I think that is just insulting because we have nuclear families all over the world. But in any event, I look at the reconciliation bill that is now before us, and it looks to me like a payoff to people who want to discriminate against the nuclear family.

Whether you look at the earned income tax credit, all the additional money in low-income housing, or the increase in Pell grants, they are all additional money that will be disproportionately very difficult for nuclear families to access.

I strongly reject voting for this bill because in the future we must no longer punish people who decide to live in nuclear families.

PRESIDENT BIDEN MUST ACT TO AVERT AN IMPENDING ENERGY CRISIS

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

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, this fall along with the cooler temperatures that autumn always brings, Tennesseans and Americans all across the country will be subjected to record-breaking prices to heat our homes.

Under the Biden administration, costs for natural gas, the most common resource for heating our homes, has skyrocketed.

With inflation at a 30-year high, families are already stretched thin as they pay more at the grocery store and at the gas pump, but it doesn't stop there.

Families are now expected to pay more in energy costs to heat their homes; as much as 54 percent for some households for the fall and winter months.

Rather than confronting this burgeoning energy crisis before it is too late, President Biden and Democrats are proposing disastrous energy policies that are bad for the economy, bad for the national security, and bad for Americans.

Included in their more than \$5 trillion social spending agenda is a natural gas tax and bans on domestic energy and mineral production, which will cause us to obtain these vital resources from OPEC, Russia, and even China.

As Democrats continued to push their tax-and-spend agenda, it is middle- and low-income families who will be hit the hardest by far left energy policies.

President Biden must act now to avert this impending energy crisis.

HONORING JARED KEYWORTH

(Mr. SCALISE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an American hero. Jared Keyworth from Mandeville, Louisiana, served as a senior inspector with the United States Marshals Serv-

ice and tragically lost his life in the line of duty earlier this month.

Senior Inspector Keyworth began his service with the Marshals Service in 2010 and took on assignments in Denver, Miami, and New Orleans. Most recently, he was selected to serve in the marshals' technical operations group in Baton Rouge.

Prior to Jared's service with the marshals, he served in the United States Army's Old Guard. During President Reagan's funeral, Jared escorted the riderless horse, the symbol of a fallen leader who will never ride again.

On September 28 of 2021, Jared was critically wounded while in pursuit of a violent felony offender. He passed away on October 1.

Jared will forever be in our hearts and minds, and we are eternally grateful for his service to our great country.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BLUMENAUER) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 27, 2021.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on October 27, 2021, at 9:43 a.m.:

That the Senate passed S. 1872.
That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 1899.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

CHERYL L. JOHNSON,
Clerk.

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 the yeas and nays are ordered.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

CONTINUED STATE FLEXIBILITY TO ASSIST OLDER FOSTER YOUTH

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5661) to extend flexible use of John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program funding to address pandemic-related challenges for older foster youth.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5661

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 “Continued State Flexibility To Assist Older Foster Youth Act”.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF PANDEMIC PROVISIONS AFFECTING OLDER FOSTER YOUTH.

(a) EXTENSION OF CHAFEE PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY.—Section 3 of division X of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (42 U.S.C. 677 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by striking “and 2021” and inserting “through 2022”; and

(2) in subsection (d)—

(A) by striking “During the COVID-19 public health emergency period;”;

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking “The” and inserting “Through December 31, 2021, the”;

(C) in paragraph (2), by striking “A” and inserting “Through fiscal year 2022, a”;

(D) in paragraph (3), by striking “Notwithstanding” and inserting “Through fiscal year 2022, notwithstanding”; and

(E) in paragraph (4), by inserting after the paragraph heading the following: “Through fiscal year 2022.”.

(b) EXTENSION OF STATE FUNDING FLEXIBILITY RELATED TO YOUTH AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE.—Section 4 of such division (42 U.S.C. 671 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking “2021” and inserting “2022”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

“(3) ADDITIONAL CHAFEE FUNDING FLEXIBILITIES.—Notwithstanding paragraph (2) of this subsection, a State to which additional funds are made available as a result of section 3(a) of this division may use the funds to meet any costs referred to in paragraph (1) of this subsection incurred on or before September 30, 2022, with respect to children who—

“(A) have attained 18 years of age;

“(B) are in foster care, or re-enter care; and

“(C) are not eligible for foster care maintenance payments under section 472 of the Social Security Act.”; and

(2) in subsection (e), by striking “2021” and inserting “2022”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) and the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The COVID-19 pandemic hit all of our communities hard, but for vulnerable youth in foster care, it was terrifying, especially for those youth approaching the age of independence at which they lose access to the supports that foster care provides.

When my good friend Congresswoman JACKIE WALORSKI and I teamed up last year to provide States with flexibility and funding to help these youth, we hoped and expected that the pandemic

would be over by now and that these youth would be back on track, getting an education, starting jobs, finding a place to live, and establishing independent lives.

Unfortunately, the delta variant hit hard, creating a new wave of challenges for these youth. To the current and former foster youth who reached out to us and our colleagues to share their stories, we hear you, and we are committed to continuing to respect the lessons of your lived experience in foster care.

The legislation we are considering today, the Continued State Flexibility To Assist Older Foster Youth Act will restore and continue key program flexibilities that allow States to provide greater stability and certainty to current and former youth via the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program.

The bill will give States the flexibility to continue providing the specific supports that older foster youth need to return to college, training programs, and work. It will extend flexibilities to secure housing, to gain independence through driving programs, and to allow youth who would otherwise age out of eligibility for services a little more support to weather the pandemic.

I firmly believe in the strong bipartisan partnership that Representative WALORSKI and I have built over the years to help vulnerable youth and families to improve our child welfare system.

We have a lot to do to help foster youth through this pandemic, and this legislation to allow States to make better use of the funding we provided is the first step.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this important legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I rise today in support of H.R. 5661, the Continued State Flexibility To Assist Older Foster Youth Act.

America’s most vulnerable foster youth face unique challenges even in normal times, and the COVID-19 pandemic created even more obstacles to overcome.

Nearly 20,000 youth age out of foster care every year. While the COVID pandemic has presented difficulties for all Americans, foster youth and former foster youth are particularly vulnerable, given that they are most likely to be without reliable adults and other kinds of supports in their lives.

The Continued State Flexibility To Assist Older Foster Youth Act would allow States to keep in place important flexibilities in the Chafee child welfare program so they can continue to support vulnerable foster youth in Indiana and across the country.

I am grateful to Chairman DAVIS for his continued partnership in building on our past reforms to help families thrive and this committee’s tradition of bipartisan action to protect young people in our foster care system.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. CHU).

Ms. CHU. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5661, the Continued State Flexibility To Assist Older Foster Youth Act.

We have heard directly from foster youth that aging out of the system comes with unique challenges, and that they are often left without supportive services or families to help them if they fall on hard times. This has been especially difficult throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, as older and former foster youth have experienced homelessness, been laid off from work, endured food insecurity, and navigated negative impacts on their mental health.

But States like California have devised ways to help, like letting foster youth who turn 21 continue receiving support and assistance through the child welfare agency. Additionally, at the end of last year, Congress provided States with additional funds in the year-end omnibus specifically to help this population, many of whom were not eligible for Federal stimulus payments. And in California, we are working to get this funding directly to impacted youth via direct cash payments. Unfortunately, the pandemic has made it harder to get these funds directly into the hands of the young people who need them, causing needless delays and hardship.

That is why I am happy to support H.R. 5661 to extend support to our young adults and ensure that they have all of the tools they need to make it through this unprecedented time. By extending the programmatic flexibilities in the Chafee program, which helps current and former foster youth prepare for independent adult living, we are keeping young people safe and housed and also ensuring access to supportive services for those youth affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

I have had the privilege to meet with foster youth from across the country throughout the years, and I have been impressed with their resilience and ability to advocate for themselves. But they don’t have to do it alone. I am proud to support this bill to help foster youth shape a better future for themselves and our whole country.

□ 1230

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BACON).

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleagues from Indiana and Illinois.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5661, the Continued State Flexibility To Assist Older Foster Youth Act.

We can all agree that our children and youth have suffered tremendously during this pandemic. Foster youth

that aged out of the system are hurting and feel forgotten. We can come together to support these youth through continuing States' flexibility with the Chafee funds to assist older foster youth.

The act will allow the emergency Chafee funds flexibilities that we implemented during the pandemic to continue through fiscal year 2022. It will give youth the option to reenter foster care that aged out during the pandemic, remove the living expenses cap, and expand the educational training funds to assist them.

We hear more and more from youth that need our help. As a foster-to-adopt parent, I know that our foster youth need our help, and we need to make sure that we hold to our responsibility to fully support them during this crisis. Young adults who have aged out of foster care are the number one risk for homelessness in that age group.

Mr. Speaker, we have the opportunity here to make a difference.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE).

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman so very much for yielding to me. I thank him and Ranking Member WALORSKI for bringing this bill forward.

Mr. Speaker, our foster youth are, of course, some of our Nation's most vulnerable. But do you know what? They are also our most resilient. But even the most resilient needs support. That is what this bill is all about, ensuring that those who would otherwise age out of foster care at age 18, who chose it or need it, can continue to get services—housing, workforce development, driving skills—through this pandemic.

For thousands of foster youth each year, their time in foster care, simply because they turn 18—or 21 in some States—can be a very, very unsettling moment for them.

As a result, with little or no family support, they suddenly find themselves grown, independent. But the reality is that the battle is only beginning in these youths' lives. Having already suffered trauma, including family separation, they find themselves without any type of safety net during this particularly trying time in any person's life. And to be sure, these are inspiring young people, but again, they need support to help ensure brighter futures.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about one of these youth who I had the pleasure to get to know. His story is full of struggles and victories, but they are not the exception. This was Mr. "DJay" Joi.

I first met DJay when he shadowed me during Foster Youth Day a few years ago. He had such a great heart, great personality, extremely intelligent, that he quickly became a part of my own personal family.

DJay's drive and resilience helped him create a bright future for himself. He knew firsthand the difficulties facing those aging out of the foster care

system, challenges that he shared with me.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentlewoman.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, this bill is a good step. But let's recognize and address the supports we need to provide foster youth. We need to require all States to raise the maximum age to 21 for those who choose to keep receiving foster care supportive services. We need to think about permanently removing the barriers or the cap on the use of Chafee funds for housing.

KAREN BASS and I have a bill that would immediately allow former foster youth to keep Medicaid coverage through age 26. Healthcare is a critical need.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman and the ranking member, and I urge all Members to support this great initiative.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE).

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5661, the Continued State Flexibility To Assist Older Foster Youth Act.

As co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth, this issue is incredibly important to me. In my home State of Michigan, there are approximately 13,000 children in foster care. Unfortunately, they have been at particular risk during this COVID-19 pandemic.

This legislation would take meaningful action to ensure that States have the opportunity to assist children in foster care by extending pandemic-related provisions passed under the Consolidated Appropriations Act for an additional year.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that these flexibilities will help States, like my own Michigan, provide foster children with the assistance they need.

We must do everything in our power to assist and support at-risk youth. It is necessary that we follow through on this commitment to them.

Mr. Speaker, I often remind people: Foster children are a ward of the State and are our responsibility.

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

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN).

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Continued State Flexibility To Assist Older Foster Youth Act.

Last month, I hosted a townhall with the National Foster Youth Institute for current and former foster youth across the country. Their stories of

hardship broke my heart. I was not surprised, though, because these young people are among the most vulnerable in our society, often lacking the same social safety net that you or I could rely on in a crisis.

Surveys throughout the pandemic have shown foster youth face elevated financial, housing, and food insecurity; decreased educational and workforce participation; and increased isolation. This bill before us today extends crucial flexibilities for the Chafee Foster Care Program that we put in place last December, allowing States to better meet the needs of current and former foster youth.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill and help young people access this much-needed assistance.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers.

I will simply say that I am very pleased that we are considering this important legislation that would provide additional help to foster children and give States the flexibility that they need to provide all the assistance during this pandemic that foster children can make use of.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my ranking member tremendously for the bipartisanship we have been able to effect, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, in December, we worked together to take action to help foster youth through the pandemic so they could build a stronger, more stable future. That bill, called the Supporting Foster Youth Through the Pandemic Act, provided much-needed additional support for foster youth and families, at-risk pregnant women and mothers, and kinship caregivers, including grandparents.

Mr. Speaker, the bill included \$400 million in funding to assist States in supporting foster youth transitioning to adulthood during the pandemic. That relief has provided a lifeline for thousands of youth to get back to school, back into jobs, and on the path of self-sufficiency.

As COVID-19 continues to spur instability, young people with experience in foster care still face significant challenges to meet their basic needs and to access critical funds and services.

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, 75 percent of these funds remain unobligated by States as of September 30, 2021, and States have another year to spend. In recognition of the needs of foster youth, this bill would extend those key programmatic flexibilities for another year.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support these vulnerable foster youth by voting for H.R. 5661, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5661.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REAL JUSTICE FOR OUR VETERANS ACT OF 2021

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4035) to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to prioritize veterans court treatment programs that ensure equal access for racial and ethnic minorities and women, and for other purposes, as amended.

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

H.R. 4035

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 "Real Justice for Our Veterans Act of 2021".

SEC. 2. EQUAL ACCESS TO VETERANS COURT TREATMENT PROGRAMS FOR RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES AND WOMEN.

Section 2991(i)(2) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10651(i)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(C) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this subparagraph, the Attorney General shall submit to Congress a report on the effectiveness of veterans treatment court programs. In preparing such a report, the Attorney General shall conduct a national multi-site evaluation of such programs, including an assessment of—

"(i) the population served by such programs;

"(ii) whether such programs use evidence-based treatments for substance use and mental health, including medication for addiction treatment;

"(iii) recidivism rates of participants in such programs;

"(iv) program completion rates; and

"(v) whether racial and ethnic minorities and women have equal access to such programs and an equal opportunity to complete such programs, including by collecting and analyzing data related to admission in such programs and completion of such programs, to ensure there are not disparities related to race, ethnicity, or sex."

SEC. 3. VETERANS PILOT PROGRAM ON PROMISING RETENTION MODELS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Attorney General, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, shall carry out a pilot program to make grants to eligible units of local government to improve retention in veterans treatment court programs (as such term is defined in section 2991 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10651)) and drug court programs.

(b) ELIGIBILITY.—In order to be eligible for a grant under subsection (a), a unit of local government shall operate a veterans treatment court program or a drug court.

(c) APPLICATION.—A unit of local government seeking a grant through the pilot program under subsection (a) shall submit to the Attorney General an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the At-

torney General may reasonably require, including—

(1) a description of the therapeutic or treatment modality that the unit of local government plans to implement and data to support the use of the therapeutic or treatment modality, including information showing how the therapeutic or treatment modality will promote retention in and completion of veterans treatment court programs and drug court programs; and

(2) detailed plans on how the applicant would test the efficacy of the therapeutic or treatment modality.

(d) REPORTING METRICS.—Not later than 180 days after receiving a grant under subsection (a), a unit of local government shall submit to the Attorney General a report, which includes demographic information of participants in the veterans treatment court program, and completion rates of such participants. The Attorney General shall develop guidelines for the report required under this subsection.

(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated \$3,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2027 to carry out this section.

SEC. 4. ADMISSION OF VETERANS TO DRUG COURTS.

In the case of a jurisdiction that does not operate a veterans treatment court program (as such term is defined in section 2991 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10651)), but that does operate a drug court under part EE of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10611 et seq.), a veteran who would be eligible to participate in a veterans treatment court program may participate in the drug court, including a veteran who is a violent offender (as such term is defined in section 2953(a) of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10613(a))).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BENTZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am the proud sponsor and proud of H.R. 4035. The Real Justice for Our Veterans Act is before the House for consideration, and I ask all my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill today.

I authored the Real Justice for Our Veterans Act to help our Nation's justice-involved veterans to improve the delivery of services in veterans and drug courts. The bill before the House today has three discrete aims.

First, the bill would expand data collection regarding the effectiveness of veterans courts.

Second, it authorizes a pilot program that would investigate and promote promising retention models in veterans and drug courts.

Lastly, and perhaps most critically, it would open up drug treatment courts to veterans in areas where there may not be a veterans court, so very important for those who have interacted with our committee and have made note of the fact that there are many jurisdictions in the United States where there are veterans and no veterans court.

Each of these critical changes would promote higher participation and higher rehabilitation of veterans who have mental health and substance abuse issues.

The need for this legislation is painfully clear. Generations of veterans have served abroad in recent decades, and we must redouble our efforts to support veterans and expand the services they need to thrive.

The rapid expansion of veterans treatment courts speaks not only to the need for such courts but, more importantly, to the benefit of the specialized approach to rehabilitation and treatment the courts offer.

The holistic treatment model, which includes input from the prosecutor, defense counsel, and the court, centers on the supervised comprehensive treatment provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs or community organizations.

Because each veterans court offers different management services, we need to do more to identify which treatment options are successful so that these promising models can be expanded. That is why the elements of the Real Justice for Our Veterans Act are so important.

The bill also calls for additional data on the demographics of who is referred to veterans treatment courts and asks for information on completion rates. This information will be critical to advancing our understanding of how the programs are used.

Additionally, the legislation authorizes a new pilot program that will allow DOJ to test promising retention programs that promote greater enrollment and participation by veterans through the duration of their treatment program.

□ 1245

Legislative efforts to strengthen veterans treatment courts have yielded bipartisan support in the past, and the same is true today.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD), for cosponsoring the bill and working with me in this effort.

I urge my colleagues to take a look at their congressional districts. You will probably find places of refuge for our veterans; some may be homeless. I have several facilities in my congressional district that deal with the housing of homeless veterans, or deal with services for homeless veterans, or deal with services, period, for veterans.

I can assure you that a comforting judicial system on veterans who, because of combat injuries, PTSD, and