

there is an individual bill so it will not die as part of some other legislation. The people of this country cannot understand how we can be so bureaucratic. It is time for a change. The Corrections Day Calendar is a good calendar, and I would certainly encourage people of get behind this bill. Let us show the American people we do care about what they are concerned about, that we do care and that we can make government effective, efficient, and responsible.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I want to express my strong support for two bills we are considering today, both of which were introduced by my good friend and colleague Representative HUTCHINSON.

H.R. 1384 makes an important contribution to veterans health care by helping ensure that the VA health care system can retain the best health personnel. Unfortunately, existing VA regulations actually create a disincentive for many health care professionals to work in the VA health care system.

By restricting nurses, physician assistants, and dental auxiliaries from obtaining additional work outside the VA, we are forcing these personnel to make a choice between remaining in the VA, or leaving the system altogether. Many of these employees feel that they must obtain income from secondary sources in order to support their families and make ends meet. They should be allowed to do so, while still serving the VA. We should not risk losing talented people in the VA health care system simply because of an outdated regulation that no longer serves a useful purpose.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1536, which will extend the VA's authority to use local salary data to determine the salary levels of nurse anesthetists. This provision is necessary to ensure that nurse anesthetists are fairly compensated for their services, in the same manner that compensation for regular nurses is determined through the Veterans Affairs Nurse Pay Act of 1990.

As a member of the Veterans' Subcommittee on Hospitals and Health Care, I was pleased to support both of these bills at both the subcommittee and the full committee level. I want to thank Chairman HUTCHINSON for his diligent work on these legislative initiatives, and urge all my colleagues to give their full support to these two measures.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. BURR].

The amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and (three-fifths having voted in favor thereof) the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to include extraneous material in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

AUTHORIZING THE CLERK TO MAKE CORRECTIONS IN EN-GROSSMENT OF H.R. 436, EDIBLE OIL REGULATORY REFORM ACT

Mr. BURR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Clerk may be authorized to make technical and conforming changes to H.R. 436, the bill just passed.

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

There was no objection.

EXEMPTING CERTAIN FULL-TIME HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FROM RESTRICTIONS ON REMUNERATED OUTSIDE PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1384), to amend title 38, United States Code, to exempt certain full-time health care professionals of the Department of Veterans Affairs from restrictions on remunerated outside professional activities, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1384

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

SECTION 1. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION.

(a) EXEMPTION OF CERTAIN HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONALS FROM RESTRICTIONS ON REMUNERATED OUTSIDE PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES.—Section 7423 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by striking out paragraph (1) and redesignating paragraphs (2), (3), (4), (5), and (6) as paragraphs (1), (2), (3), (4), and (5), respectively;

(2) by redesignating subsections (c), (d), (e), and (f) as subsections (d), (e), (f), and (g), respectively; and

(3) by inserting after subsection (b) the following new subsection (c):

“(c)(1) An employee of the Veterans Health Administration who is covered by subsection (a) (other than a registered nurse, a physician's assistant, or an expanded-duty dental auxiliary) may not assume responsibility for the medical care of any patient other than a patient admitted for treatment at a Department facility.

“(2) The limitation in paragraph (1) shall not apply in a case in which the employee, upon request and with the approval of the Under Secretary for Health, assumes such responsibilities to assist communities or medical practice groups to meet medical needs which would not otherwise be available. The

approval of the Under Secretary may not be for a period in excess of 180 days, which may be extended by the Under Secretary for additional periods of not to exceed 180 days.”.

(b) CROSS REFERENCE AMENDMENTS.—Subsection (d) of such section, as redesignated by subsection (a)(2), is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking out “subsection (b)(6)” and inserting in lieu thereof “subsection (b)(5)”; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking out “paragraph (1)(B)” and inserting in lieu thereof “section 7421(b) of this title”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP] and the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY] each will be recognized for 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP].

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1384.

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

There was no objection.

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

(Mr. STUMP asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1384 would exempt VA professional nurses, physicians' assistants, and expanded-duty dental auxiliaries from restrictions regarding outside professional activities for remuneration.

Mr. Speaker, the CBO has stated H.R. 1384 would have no significant impact on the Federal budget. I would like to express my appreciation to the gentleman from Mississippi, SONNY MONTGOMERY, ranking member of the full committee, the gentleman from Arizona, TIM HUTCHINSON, chairman of the Subcommittee on Hospitals and Health Care, as well as the gentleman from Texas, CHET EDWARDS, who is the ranking member of the subcommittee, for their support of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to thanking the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY] for his work on this bill, I would like to be one of the first Members on this floor today to say how much I regret his decision to retire from the House at the end of this term. The gentleman from Mississippi has been a great friend for many years, and we have worked on many issues over those years. I just want him to know that I will miss both his friendship and his counsel. There will, of course, be many occasions over the next 14 months to more properly express our appreciation for his outstanding service in this House, but I would like him to know that I both regret his decision, but also wish him the very best in his future endeavors.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. HUTCHINSON], chairman of the Subcommittee on Hospitals and

Health Care of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be the second person to publicly express my sadness at the decision of the ranking member, the gentleman from Mississippi, SONNY MONTGOMERY, longtime chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, not to seek reelection. There surely will be no Member more missed around this place than SONNY MONTGOMERY, a great champion of veterans and a great patriot.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support H.R. 1384. I commend the chairman, the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP], for bringing this bill to the floor this morning. I also want to thank the ranking member on our subcommittee, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. EDWARDS], for his assistance.

Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation which I introduced to exempt certain VA health care professionals from restrictions on remunerated outside professional activities, and urge its immediate passage.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation would lift the moonlighting ban on professional registered nurses, physicians' assistants, and dental auxiliaries. This outdated law, enacted in 1946, nearly 50 years ago, was written at a time when nurses were expected to be on call 24 hours a day. The role of nurses has changed from one of physician's handmaiden to that of independent practitioner, necessitating a changed work schedule for nurses by removal of the expectation of 24-hour-a-day availability.

Additionally, physicians' assistants and dental auxiliaries work at a set schedule and are not required to be available 24 hours a day. The law maintains the restrictions on VA health care professionals, such as physicians, who continue to be on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, the pay structure for nurses has changed through the years. No longer are nurses paid with the expectation of nonstop availability for duty. Instead, they are compensated at an hourly rate with a possibility of overtime pay. Thus, nurse staffing problems caused by moonlighting have become virtually nonexistent.

Economic realities are the driving force behind the need to find outside employment. Quite simply, many families need to moonlight in order to make ends meet, and will make an employment decision based on the ability to work two jobs. The removal of this ban can only help in the recruitment and retention of qualified personnel.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is strongly supported by the Department, professional organizations representing the affected groups, and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Both the Subcommittee on Hospitals and Health Care, of which I am the chairman, and the full committee unanimously re-

ported out this measure. Once again, I am in strong support of this legislation and urge its immediate passage.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such times as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP], chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. We work well together. I was chairman for 13 years, and now BOB is the chairman, and we will continue to work together. I appreciate what the gentleman has said. There comes a time that you have to move on. I think this is my time.

To the gentleman from Arizona, TIM HUTCHINSON, the chairman of the subcommittee, I thank him and I offer him congratulations. He has handled this big subcommittee very, very well. It is very important to veterans to have health care and medical care, and this is part of the bills we have up today to help those veterans.

Incidentally, Mr. Speaker, I think this is a proper time today to point out that tomorrow at 9 o'clock, World War II veterans will be honored in this Chamber at a joint committee of both the House and the Senate. I would certainly encourage the Members to be here, and the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP], and I had the privilege of leading House delegations both to Europe and to Honolulu, to Pearl Harbor, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the ending of World War II, but we think it will be a nice celebration, and I hope that the Members would attend.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1384, as amended. This bill would lift the current ban on outside work by full-time VA nurses and certain other employees. The rule abandoning outside work was intended to help VA hospitals meet their staffing needs. Today that ban is too broad, so the old rule is not only unnecessary, it is unfair. I urge Members to support this measure.

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

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. SENSENBRENNER].

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP] and the gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. HUTCHINSON] for expediting this bill, as well as to also pay tribute to the distinguished service that the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY] has given to the people of the United States, as well as to the veterans of this country.

Mr. Speaker, when the Veterans' Administration's Department of Medicine and Surgery was created in 1946, there was a drastic need for health care professionals to provide care for our Nation's wounded World War II veterans. At that time, it was necessary to place restrictions on the outside employment for certain Veterans' Administration health care personnel in order to provide adequate care for our country's wounded heroes. However, outside employment no longer interferes with cur-

rent Veterans' Administration health care staffing needs, and the moonlighting restrictions are no longer necessary to maintain adequate patient care. In addition, these restrictions have caused unnecessary burdens on the Veterans' Administration's ability to hire and retain quality health care professionals.

I first became aware of the need for this legislation at one of my many townhall meetings when Mrs. Mary Flaherty, a registered nurse at the Zablocki Veterans' Administration Health Center in Milwaukee, pointed out the adverse economic impact this restriction had on her and the 311 other full-time registered nurses at the Zablocki Center. H.R. 1384 amends title 38 of the United States Code to exempt professional nurses, physicians assistants, and expanded duty dental auxiliaries employed by the Veterans' Administration from restrictions on outside employment. H.R. 1384 removes current restrictions that limit the earning ability of thousands of Veterans' Administration employees by allowing them to seek supplemental employment without giving up their full-time employment with the Veterans' Administration.

Mr. Speaker, it is refreshing when Congress acts swiftly to negate outdated and burdensome laws and regulations that affect hard-working taxpayers' ability to provide for their families.

Mr. Speaker, I hope this bill is speedily enacted into law.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. EDWARDS], a ranking member on the Subcommittee on Hospitals and Health Care of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, there are not going to be any press people in the gallery this afternoon watching the discussion on this bill. There will not be any headlines in tomorrow's newspapers around the country.

This bill will not be on the evening news broadcast nationally this evening because there is no conflict on it, because the Congress has done its business the way it should do its business, on a bipartisan basis, putting the interest of medical care for veterans first, as it should be the priority of this House when we deal with veterans' legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP], the chairman of the committee, and the gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. HUTCHINSON], for their leadership on this bill. I want to commend the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY], along with the gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. HUTCHINSON], for continuing not only their commitment to veterans, but their efforts to see that the House on veterans' issues does its business as it should on a non-partisan basis.

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The end result of this legislation is going to be to improve the quality of health care for hundreds of thousands of veterans all across America. It will help our VA hospitals and medical centers retain the finest quality in nurses and physician assistants and dental hygienists. This is significant legislation, because it will significantly help those Americans who have been willing to put their lives on the line for our country.

So while there is no great conflict, there will be no headlines in the newspapers. I want to thank the gentleman from Arizona and the gentleman from Arkansas and the gentleman from Mississippi for carrying on the business of Congress in such an efficient and professional manner.

Mr. Speaker, I must add a personal editorial note, that it is a shame that the American people do not see the Congress operating as it has operated on this legislation, in a very positive way, a very amicable way, a very non-partisan way. If the American people were to see Congress working on this as the leaders have worked on both sides of the aisle on this legislation, I think perhaps people would have a better and fairer sense of the way Congress operates on much of our business.

So this legislation is good legislation. It is going to help our Nation's veterans, and I want to urge passage of it today.

Mr. Speaker, let me finalize my comments by saying I would be remiss if I were not to pay tribute to the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY]. I came here as a young man straight out of Texas A&M University in 1974 to work for the then chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, Olin E. "Tiger" Teague, a gentleman that was known at the time as Mr. Veteran of the Congress. Mr. Teague told me about another gentleman who at the time was taking a real leadership position for our veterans, and particularly fighting for the interests of our POW's and MIA's. He told me that Mr. MONTGOMERY would be known as the next Mr. Veteran of the U.S. Congress, and that is in fact what has happened for so many years of great and unselfish service.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know of any Member of Congress who has served with greater distinction, with greater class, with greater humility, with greater kindness, or greater commitment, genuine commitment, to helping those men and women who are willing to fight for our country. This is the first piece of legislation that Mr. MONTGOMERY has helped bring to the floor since his announcement that he is going to retire.

Mr. Speaker, I simply want to say on behalf of all of my colleagues in Congress and all of the veterans of America that we will miss dearly, we will miss greatly, the gentleman from Mississippi who has set a standard of gentlemanness, a standard of profes-

sionalism that we younger Members of Congress for many years to come would be well advised to follow. If we were to do so, and this Congress were to act in its business always as Mr. MONTGOMERY has always acted on his congressional business, the institution of Congress would be held in high esteem by all Americans.

So to the general from Mississippi, to the gentleman from Mississippi, I say it is an honor to serve with the gentleman. This is not a goodbye today because we are fortunate to have the services of the gentleman for many months to come until the next election, but thank you for your leadership.

I thank the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP] and the gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. HUTCHINSON] for their fine work on this piece of legislation.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Texas [Mr. EDWARDS]. I first met the gentleman many years ago, the gentleman from Waco, and we met those great World War II Texas Division people that were in Italy and fought so well. The gentleman from Texas [Mr. EDWARDS] has a wonderful veterans district with several hospitals there, and I appreciate the kind words he said. I still will be around for 14 months, I hope.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DE LA GARZA].

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I echo the words of my colleague from Texas, Mr. EDWARDS, not only on this bill, but in relation to our good friend, General MONTGOMERY. I rise in support of the legislation and I commend both sides for what they have done for the veterans.

Let me say that General MONTGOMERY and I came here at the same time, and for us, from Texas, it was certainly an easy transition from Olin "Tiger" Teague who was Mr. Veteran to Mr. Veteran General MONTGOMERY.

I take great pride in mentioning the Montgomery bill of rights. Recently when both gentlemen, the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP] and the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY] were in Hawaii for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, and I was privileged to accompany them, I told one of the young men who was about to be made sergeant the next day and he was already talking about when he might return home, and I said, "Well, you can get an education", and he says, "Oh, yes, the Montgomery bill of rights." And I pointed to the gentleman from Mississippi, and I said, "That is the Montgomery bill of rights right there." And with great awe and admiration he rushed over to thank Mr. MONTGOMERY, and that is his legacy.

Mr. Speaker, I know later we will have other comments, but in associa-

tion with what we do today, the gentleman from Mississippi will have left a legacy as a friend of the veteran, and all of us who are veterans thank him.

This legislation is good. We still have a long ways to go in regards to taking care of the problems of veterans, but I feel very comfortable with the two gentlemen managing the bill here that we will address those issues, and I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want also to thank the gentleman from Texas for his very kind remarks. I enjoyed very much having his wife and himself on our trip. He is a World War II veteran.

To the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DE LA GARZA], there is a seat right there in front for you tomorrow and I hope you will be right there. Mr. DE LA GARZA was in two services, I believe. He was in the Army and also in the Navy, and that is rather unusual. So I thank the gentleman again for his kindness.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank both the gentlemen from Texas for their remarks about this bill, and I would especially like to thank Mr. EDWARDS for his kind remarks about the operation of his committee and mine, and I want the gentleman to know that he is one of the reasons why we operate in a bipartisan manner.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EVERETT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1384, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXTENDING THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AUTHORITY TO USE NURSE ANESTHETIST CONTRACT SALARY DATA IN ESTABLISHING PAY RATES FOR VA-EMPLOYED NURSE ANESTHETISTS

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1536) to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend for 2 years an expiring authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with respect to determination of locality salaries for certain nurse anesthetist positions in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Clerk read as follows: