

Care and Benefits Act (Public Law 106-117; 113 Stat. 1568) is amended by striking “subsection (c)(1)” and inserting “subsection (c)(3)”.

(2) Effective November 21, 1977, and as if included therein as originally enacted, section 402(e) of the Veterans' Benefits Act of 1997 (Public Law 105-114; 111 Stat. 2294) is amended by striking “second sentence” and inserting “third sentence”.

In lieu of the House amendment to the title of the bill, amend the title so as to read: “An Act to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the rates of educational assistance under the Montgomery GI Bill, to improve procedures for the adjustment of rates of pay for nurses employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, to make other improvements in veterans educational assistance, health care, and benefits programs, and for other purposes.”.

#### VETERANS BENEFITS ACT OF 2000

##### SPECTER (AND ROCKEFELLER) AMENDMENTS NOS. 4315-4316

Mr. MURKOWSKI (for Mr. SPECTER and Mr. ROCKEFELLER) proposed two amendments to the bill (H.R. 4850) to provide a cost-of-living adjustment in rates of compensation paid to veterans with service-connected disabilities, to enhance programs providing compensation and life insurance benefits for veterans, and for other purposes; as follows:

##### AMENDMENT No. 4315

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

##### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2000”.

##### SEC. 2. INCREASE IN RATES OF DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION.

(a) RATE ADJUSTMENT.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, effective on December 1, 2000, increase the dollar amounts in effect for the payment of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation by the Secretary, as specified in subsection (b).

(b) AMOUNTS TO BE INCREASED.—The dollar amounts to be increased pursuant to subsection (a) are the following:

(1) COMPENSATION.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under section 1114 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR DEPENDENTS.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under sections 1115(1) of such title.

(3) CLOTHING ALLOWANCE.—The dollar amount in effect under section 1162 of such title.

(4) NEW DIC RATES.—The dollar amounts in effect under paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 1311(a) of such title.

(5) OLD DIC RATES.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under section 1311(a)(3) of such title.

(6) ADDITIONAL DIC FOR SURVIVING SPOUSES WITH MINOR CHILDREN.—The dollar amount in effect under section 1311(b) of such title.

(7) ADDITIONAL DIC FOR DISABILITY.—The dollar amounts in effect under sections 1311(c) and 1311(d) of such title.

(8) DIC FOR DEPENDENT CHILDREN.—The dollar amounts in effect under sections 1313(a) and 1314 of such title.

(c) DETERMINATION OF INCREASE.—(1) The increase under subsection (a) shall be made in the dollar amounts specified in subsection (b) as in effect on November 30, 2000.

(2) Except as provided in paragraph (3), each such amount shall be increased by the same percentage as the percentage by which benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) are increased effective December 1, 2000, as a result of a determination under section 215(i) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)).

(3) Each dollar amount increased pursuant to paragraph (2) shall, if not a whole dollar amount, be rounded down to the next lower whole dollar amount.

(d) SPECIAL RULE.—The Secretary may adjust administratively, consistent with the increases made under subsection (a), the rates of disability compensation payable to persons within the purview of section 10 of Public Law 85-857 (72 Stat. 1263) who are not in receipt of compensation payable pursuant to chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code.

##### SEC. 3. PUBLICATION OF ADJUSTED RATES.

At the same time as the matters specified in section 215(i)(2)(D) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)(2)(D)) are required to be published by reason of a determination made under section 215(i) of such Act during fiscal year 2001, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish in the Federal Register the amounts specified in subsection (b) of section 2, as increased pursuant to that section.

##### AMENDMENT No. 4316

Amend the title so as to read: “An Act to increase, effective as of December 1, 2000, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans.”.

#### PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Alex Mitrakos, a detailee to the VA-HUD subcommittee be granted the privilege of the floor during consideration of H.R. 4635, the VA-HUD appropriations bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask consent that Peter Washburn, a fellow in the Environment Committee, be granted the privilege of the floor during consideration of H.R. 4635.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WARNER. I ask unanimous consent that Patricia Lewis of the Senate Armed Services Committee be granted privileges of the floor during consideration of the conference report accompanying H.R. 4205.

Mr. CLELAND. I ask unanimous consent that Tricia Heller and Geoff Gauger be granted the privilege of the floor during consideration of the Department of Defense authorization conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. INHOFE. I ask unanimous consent that Kyndra Jordan, who is a correspondent in my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the debate on the Defense authorization bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### HIGH STEENS AREA OF SOUTHEASTERN OREGON

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I will not speak but a minute, along with my colleague, Senator WYDEN. He and I come to the floor to celebrate what Senator CRAIG will do later this evening by unanimous consent, and that is passage of H.R. 4828. It has to do with the high Steens area of southeastern Oregon. It is a beautiful and pristine area.

What we have done is truly bipartisan and truly historic in that the Sierra Club and the Oregon Cattlemen's Association enthusiastically support it. They support it because this has been a product of dialog and not Executive dictate. This has come about because people of good will have said: How can we protect the environment and protect the people as well? We have accomplished that in this bill. We are creating 170,000 acres of wilderness and providing other places for people to pursue their ranching lifestyles, and we are preserving the economy of Harney County.

I thank all of my colleagues—my colleague in the Senate, Senator WYDEN; Congressman WALDEN; all of the Oregon Congressmen, Republicans and Democrats alike; and the Governor of Oregon as well; and Secretary Bruce Babbitt who worked with us in good faith to make this possible. I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, my friend and colleague, Senator SMITH, has said it extremely well, and I know our colleague Senator REED is waiting to speak, so I, too, will be very brief.

My view is that this Steens legislation is a monumental wilderness triumph. This legislation creates for the first time in statute cow-free wilderness. In the past, wilderness designations allowed the continuation of historic grazing practices, but because the ranchers in the Steens recognize the delicate nature of this ecosystem and because they were willing to work with Democrats and Republicans in our congressional delegation, Congressman GREG WALDEN, Congressman PETER DEFazio, and so many of our colleagues, we were able to build a coalition for a truly historic approach to protecting our wilderness.

We were able to find acceptable alternative grazing sites. Almost 100,000 acres of the total wilderness designation is now going to be by law cow free. In my view, this is just an example, a precedent of how communities can work together to protect our treasures.

All across this country when there are debates about national monuments, the sides go into opposing and what amounts to warring camps, the decibel level gets very high, and there is an awful lot of finger pointing and accusations.

In Oregon, we did it differently. We came up with an Oregon solution. Like Senator SMITH, I am very proud of