

feasts by which Your people are freed and purified, renewed and given a sense of direction. Be with the 107th Congress in this same spirit.

We see the medallion of Moses high above this Chamber and thank You, Lord God, for the Torah given to Moses on Mount Sinai. May the guidance of this law and the spirit of the Upper Room be fulfilled in all the actions of the House of Representatives.

Your word revealed to Your chosen ones long ago accompanies us on our journey now and directs us in making decisions for our day. May Your Spirit empower us always so that with loving trust we may turn to You in all our troubles and give You thanks in all our accomplishments and in all our joys.

To You be the glory now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

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 each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record votes on postponed questions will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules, but not before 6:30 p.m. today.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND BIOTERRORISM PREVENTION ACT OF 2002

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3253) to amend

title 38, United States Code, to provide for the establishment of emergency medical preparedness centers in the Department of Veterans Affairs, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3253

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 "Department of Veterans Affairs Emergency Preparedness Research, Education, and Bio-Terrorism Prevention Act of 2002".

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL PREPAREDNESS CENTERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 73 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§ 7325. Medical emergency preparedness centers

"(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTERS.—(1) The Secretary shall establish at least four medical emergency preparedness centers in accordance with this section. Each such center shall be established at a Department medical center and shall be staffed by Department employees.

"(2) The Under Secretary for Health shall be responsible for supervising the operation of the centers established pursuant to this section. The Under Secretary shall provide for ongoing evaluation of the centers and their compliance with the requirements of this section.

"(3) The Under Secretary shall carry out the Under Secretary's functions under paragraph (2) in consultation with the Assistant Secretary for Veterans Affairs with responsibility for operations, preparedness, and security.

"(b) MISSION.—The mission of the centers shall be—

"(1) to carry out research on and develop methods of detection, diagnosis, vaccination, protection, and treatment for chemical, biological, and radiological threats to the public health and safety;

"(2) to provide education, training, and advice to health-care professionals, including health-care professionals outside the Veterans Health Administration; and

"(3) to provide contingent rapid response laboratory assistance and other assistance to local health care authorities in the event of a national emergency.

"(c) CENTER DIRECTORS.—Each center shall have a Director with (1) expertise in managing organizations that deal with threats referred to in subsection (b), (2) expertise in providing care to populations exposed to toxic substances, or (3) significant research experience in those fields.

"(d) SELECTION OF CENTERS.—(1) The Secretary shall select the sites for the centers on the basis of a competitive selection process and a finding under paragraph (2). The centers selected shall be located in different regions of the Nation, and any such center may be a consortium of efforts of more than one medical center. At least one of the centers shall be established to concentrate on chemical threats, at least one shall be established to concentrate on biological threats, and at least one shall be established to concentrate on radiological threats.

"(2) The finding referred to in paragraph (1) with respect to a proposal for designation of a site as a location of a center under this section is a finding by the Secretary, upon the recommendations of the Under Secretary for Health and the Assistant Secretary with responsibility for operations, preparedness, and security, that the facility or facilities

submitting the proposal have developed (or may reasonably be anticipated to develop) each of the following:

"(A) An arrangement with a qualifying medical school and a qualifying school of public health (or a consortium of such schools) under which physicians and other persons in the health field receive education and training through the participating Department medical centers so as to provide those persons with training in the diagnosis and treatment of illnesses induced by exposures to toxins, including chemical and biological substances and nuclear ionizing radiation.

"(B) An arrangement with an accredited graduate program of epidemiology under which students receive education and training in epidemiology through the participating Department facilities so as to provide such students with training in the epidemiology of contagious and infectious diseases and chemical and radiation poisoning in an exposed population.

"(C) An arrangement under which nursing, social work, counseling, or allied health personnel and students receive training and education in recognizing and caring for conditions associated with exposures to toxins through the participating Department facilities.

"(D) The ability to attract scientists who have made significant contributions to the development of innovative approaches to the detection, diagnosis, vaccination, protection, or treatment of persons exposed to chemical, biological, or radiological substances.

"(3) For purposes of paragraph (2)(A)—

"(A) a qualifying medical school is an accredited medical school that provides education and training in toxicology and environmental health hazards and with which one or more of the participating Department medical centers is affiliated; and

"(B) a qualifying school of public health is an accredited school of public health that provides education and training in toxicology and environmental health hazards and with which one or more of the participating Department medical centers is affiliated.

"(e) FUNDING.—(1) Amounts appropriated for the activities of the centers shall be appropriated separately from amounts appropriated for the Department for medical care.

"(2) There are authorized to be appropriated for the centers under this section \$20,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2003 through 2007.

"(3) In addition to funds appropriated for a fiscal year pursuant to the authorization of appropriations in paragraph (2), the Under Secretary for Health shall allocate to such centers from other funds appropriated for that fiscal year generally for the Department of Veterans Affairs medical care account and the Department of Veterans Affairs medical and prosthetics research account such amounts as the Under Secretary for Health determines appropriate to carry out the purposes of this section. Any determination by the Under Secretary under the preceding sentence shall be made in consultation with the Assistant Secretary with responsibility for operations, preparedness, and security.

"(f) RESEARCH ACTIVITIES.—Each center shall conduct research on improved medical preparedness to protect the Nation from threats in the area of that center's expertise. Each center may seek research funds from public and private sources for such purpose.

"(g) PEER REVIEW PANEL.—(1) In order to provide advice to assist the Secretary and the Under Secretary for Health to carry out their responsibilities under this section, the Under Secretary shall establish a peer review panel to assess the scientific and clinical