

FUTURE OF THE VA

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the future of the Department of Veterans Affairs, focusing on examining the Commission on Care report and the VA's response, after receiving testimony from Robert A. McDonald, Secretary of Veterans Affairs; Nancy M. Schlichting, Chairperson, and Thomas E. Harvey, Member, both of the Commission on Care; and Jeff Steele, The American Legion, Joy J. Ilem, Disabled American Veterans, Lauren Augustine, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Commander Rene A. Campos, USN (Ret.), Military Officers Association of America, Carlos Fuentes, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the

United States, and Rick Weidman, Vietnam Veterans of America, all of Washington, D.C.

SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

Special Committee on Aging: Committee concluded a hearing to examine maximizing Social Security benefits, after receiving testimony from Charles Jeszeck, Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security Division, Government Accountability Office; Virginia Reno, Deputy Commissioner for Retirement and Disability Policy, Social Security Administration; Bill Meyer, Social Security Solutions, Inc., Leawood, Kansas; and Sita Nataraj Slavov, American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D.C.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 15 public bills, H.R. 6020–6034 and 3 resolutions, H. Res. 867–869 were introduced. **Pages H5500–01**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H5501–02**

Reports Filed: There were no reports filed today.

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Collins (GA) to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H5439**

Recess: The House recessed at 11:27 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H5448**

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Reverend Dr. Phillip L. Pointer, Sr., St. Mark Baptist Church, Little Rock, AR. **Page H5448**

Journal: The House agreed to the Speaker's approval of the Journal by a recorded vote of 252 ayes to 145 noes with two answering "present", Roll No. 507. **Pages H5461–62**

Recess: The House recessed at 2:21 p.m. and reconvened at 3 p.m. **Page H5463**

Regulatory Integrity Act of 2016: The House passed H.R. 5226, to amend chapter 3 of title 5, United States Code, to require the publication of information relating to pending agency regulatory actions, by a recorded vote of 250 ayes to 171 noes, Roll No. 510. **Pages H5470–79**

Rejected the Kildee motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform with instructions to report the same back to

the House forthwith with an amendment, by a recorded vote of 185 ayes to 238 noes, Roll No. 509.

Pages H5476–78

Pursuant to the Rule, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 114–63 shall be considered as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule. **Pages H5473–74**

Agreed to:

Fleming amendment (No. 2 printed in part B of H. Rept. 114–744) that adds a requirement that proposed regulations that duplicate or overlap with other existing regulations must be disclosed;

Pages H5474–75

McKinley amendment (No. 3 printed in part B of H. Rept. 114–744) that restricts employees or officers of an Executive Agency from using private email accounts when discussing a pending agency regulatory action with the public; and **Pages H5475–76**

Boustany amendment (No. 1 printed in part B of H. Rept. 114–744) that requires the results of a Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA) or a similar cost-benefit analysis, as well as the formula and data for the analysis to be included in the details disclosed by the agency on either regulations.gov or on the executive agency's website (by a recorded vote of 241 ayes to 154 noes, Roll No. 508). **Pages H5474, H5476**

H. Res. 863, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 5351) and (H.R. 5226) was agreed to by a recorded vote of 238 ayes to 171 noes, Roll No. 506, after the previous question was ordered by a recorded vote of 232 ayes to 172 noes, Roll No. 505. **Pages H5453–61**

VA Accountability First and Appeals Modernization Act of 2016: The House passed H.R. 5620, to

amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the removal or demotion of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs based on performance or misconduct, by a yea-and-nay vote of 310 yeas to 116 nays, Roll No. 519. Consideration began yesterday, September 13th. **Pages H5463–70, H5479–86**

Rejected the Titus motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with an amendment, by a recorded vote of 185 yeas to 239 noes, Roll No. 518. **Pages H5484–85**

Agreed to:

Ben Ray Luján (NM) amendment (No. 14 printed in H. Rept. 114–742) that directs the VA to produce a report on the number of part-time active duty military physicians in VA health facilities, the hiring process for part-time active duty military physicians, the hiring process for part-time civilian physicians in, and the steps the VA is taking to recruit active duty military physicians for part-time employment in VA health facilities; **Pages H5463–64**

O'Rourke amendment (No. 16 printed in H. Rept. 114–742) that provides the VA with the authority to offer physicians conditional job offers two years earlier and increases the VA's recruiting outreach efforts to academic affiliate institutions; **Pages H5464–65**

O'Rourke amendment (No. 17 printed in H. Rept. 114–742) that provides the VA with the authority to share a patient's electronic health record with VA community-based providers, while maintaining HIPPA protections; **Page H5465**

O'Rourke amendment (No. 18 printed in H. Rept. 114–742) that directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct annual surveys of veterans on experiences obtaining hospital care and medical services from medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs; **Pages H5465–66**

Miller (FL) amendment (No. 22 printed in H. Rept. 114–742) that inserts the legislative text of H.R. 658 which requires a V.A. Regional Office carry out claim adjudication within 125 days with 98% accuracy; Regional Offices must submit a three step report every time it fails to meet its 125 day goal with explanation, reasoning and solutions for improvement. It will also contain a description of additional resources necessary for the office to reach its goals, from staffing to policy changes, and an action plan to enable the office to meet its goal; **Pages H5469–70**

Takano amendment (No. 15 printed in H. Rept. 114–742) that extends the Department of Veterans Affairs authority for the performance of medical disability evaluations by contract physicians by one year (by a recorded vote of 426 yeas with none voting "no", Roll No. 514); **Pages H5464, H5481–82**

Takano amendment (No. 19 printed in H. Rept. 114–742) that enables any person who is entitled to retired pay for nonregular (reserve) service or who, but for age, would be so entitled to be honored as a veteran; a person shall not be entitled to any benefit by reason of such recognition (by a recorded vote of 421 yeas to 1 no, Roll No. 515); **Pages H5466–67, H5482**

Takano amendment (No. 20 printed in H. Rept. 114–742) that allows the Secretary of the VA to furnish rehabilitative equipment to Veterans entitled to prosthetic appliances, and modify non-rehabilitative equipment owned by the Veteran to meet that purpose, if the Veteran elects. Rehabilitative equipment includes recreational sports equipment that provides an adaptation or accommodation for the Veteran (by a recorded vote of 421 yeas with none voting "no", Roll No. 516); and **Pages H5467, H5482–83**

Duffy amendment (No. 21 printed in H. Rept. 114–742) that allows the VA to also use hearing aid specialists, who are more available, and are qualified to fit, program, adjust, and repair hearing aids (by a recorded vote of 423 yeas to 1 no, Roll No. 517). **Pages H5467–69, H5483–84**

Rejected:

Walz amendment (No. 2 printed in H. Rept. 114–742) that was debated on September 13th that sought to strike sections 2 through 8 and section 10 (by a recorded vote of 173 yeas to 250 noes, Roll No. 511); **Pages H5479–80**

Takano amendment (No. 3 printed in H. Rept. 114–742) that was debated on September 13th that sought to replace Section 3 with a new provision allowing the Secretary to suspend without pay any VA employee whose performance or misconduct threatens public health or safety, including the health and safety of veterans; and may remove a suspended employee after such investigation and review as the Secretary considers necessary, if the Secretary determines removal is in the interests of public health and safety (by a recorded vote of 184 yeas to 240 noes, Roll No. 512); and **Page H5480**

Kuster amendment (No. 5 printed in H. Rept. 114–742) that was debated on September 13th that sought to replace Section 7 with S. 2921 Section 113, which contains an improved process to expedite the removal or demotion of a member of the Senior Executive Service (by a recorded vote 183 yeas to 236 noes, Roll No. 513). **Pages H5480–81**

H. Res. 859, the rule providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5620) was agreed to yesterday, September 13th.

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow, September 15th. **Page H5486**

Presidential Messages: Read a message from the President wherein he notified Congress that he had issued an Executive Order that terminates the national emergency with respect to Côte d'Ivoire declared in Executive Order 13396 of February 7, 2006, and revokes that Executive Order—referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 114–163). **Page H5462**

Read a message from the President wherein he notified Congress of the suspension of preferential treatment for Burma as a beneficiary developing country under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program, and designated Burma as a least-developed beneficiary developing country for purposes of the GSP program—referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 114–164). **Page H5463**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on page H5453.

Quorum Calls—Votes: One yea-and-nay vote and fourteen recorded votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H5460–61, H5461, H5462, H5476, H5478, H5478–79, H5479–80, H5480, H5480–81, H5481–82, H5482, H5482–83, H5483–84, H5485, and H5485–86. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Committee Meetings

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES; AMERICAN AGRICULTURAL TRADE WITH CUBA

Committee on Agriculture: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 470, the “Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest Land Adjustment Act of 2015”; H.R. 845, the “National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act”; and H.R. 5883, the “Technical and Clarifying Amendments to the Packers and Stockyards Act of 2016”; and a hearing entitled “American Agricultural Trade with Cuba”. The following bills were ordered reported, as amended: H.R. 845 and H.R. 5883. H.R. 470 was ordered reported, without amendment. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

NEXT GENERATION AIR SPACE CONTROL—ENSURING AIR FORCE COMPLIANCE BY JANUARY 1, 2020

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces held a hearing entitled “Next Generation Air Space Control—Ensuring Air Force Compliance by January 1, 2020”. Testimony was heard from Major General Michael E.

Fortney, Vice Commander, Air Force Global Strike Command; Major General Timothy Fay, USAF, Director of Strategic Plans, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Plans and Requirements; Brigadier General Jon Thomas, USAF, Director of Strategic Plans, Requirements and Programs, Headquarters Air Mobility Command; and Brigadier General David Nahom, USAF, Deputy Director, Plans and Programs, Headquarters Air Combat Command.

GROWING RISKS TO THE BUDGET AND THE ECONOMY

Committee on the Budget: Full Committee held a hearing entitled “Growing Risks to the Budget and the Economy”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 5963, the “Supporting Youth Opportunity and Preventing Delinquency Act of 2016”. H.R. 5963 was ordered reported, as amended.

THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT ON SHAKY GROUND: OUTLOOK AND OVERSIGHT

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Health; and Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, held a joint hearing entitled “The Affordable Care Act on Shaky Ground: Outlook and Oversight”. Testimony was heard from Seto J. Bagdoyan, Director, Forensic Audits and Investigative Service, Government Accountability Office; Gloria L. Jarmon, Deputy Inspector General for Audit Services, Office of Audit Services, Office of Inspector General, Department of Health and Human Services; and Andy Slavitt, Acting Administrator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

DISRUPTER SERIES: ADVANCED ROBOTICS

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade held a hearing entitled “Disrupter Series: Advanced Robotics”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 5931, the “Prohibiting Future Ransom Payments to Iran Act”. H.R. 5931 was ordered reported, as amended.

ERITREA: A NEGLECTED REGIONAL THREAT

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations held a hearing entitled “Eritrea: A Neglected Regional Threat”. Testimony was