

recent President, and a public opinion poll showed the media's credibility at a record low.

The American people deserve better than a biased media. For the sake of our country, let's hope they will drop their abusive language.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE
CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 15, 2017.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. 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 June 15, 2017, at 9:13 a.m.:

That the Senate concurs in House amendment to the bill S. 1083.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION
OF H.R. 2372, VETERANS EQUAL
TREATMENT ENSURES RELIEF
AND ACCESS NOW ACT, AND
PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION
OF H.R. 2579, BROADER OPTIONS
FOR AMERICANS ACT

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 379 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 379

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 2372) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify the rules relating to veteran health insurance and eligibility for the premium tax credit. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means now printed in the bill shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 2579) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow the premium tax credit with respect to unsubsidized COBRA continuation coverage. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means now printed in the bill shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended,

shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

□ 1215

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the honorable gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, the day before yesterday, the Rules Committee met and reported a rule for consideration for two very important measures. First, the resolution provides for the consideration of H.R. 2372, the VETERAN Act. This rule provides for 1 hour of debate, equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking member of the Ways and Means Committee.

In addition, the resolution provides for consideration of H.R. 2579, the Broader Options for Americans Act. This rule provides for 1 hour of debate, equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. Speaker, both of these bills are a part of the House of Representatives' commitment to repair damage done by the Affordable Care Act. These bills seek to amend key parts of the American Health Care Act, which the House passed on May 4 of 2017.

The American Health Care Act expands health coverage options for Americans by allowing them to use advanceable, refundable tax credits to purchase State-approved plans in the individual market. The two bills will ensure the tax credits that Americans will use to purchase health insurance policies will be available to all who qualify.

When the House passed the American Health Care Act, the bill included individual, advanceable, flexible, refundable tax credits that individuals can use to purchase health insurance policies on the individual market. When the bill passed, however, procedural reasons prevented the House from including two key groups of Americans: veterans who are eligible for coverage

through the VA and individuals who need to get continuation of coverage through an employer's COBRA-sponsored plan. The two bills covered under this rule will remedy that same problem.

In recent years, the Internal Revenue Service has adopted a practice of providing eligible veterans the choice to get financial support for a private plan in lieu of enrolling in healthcare provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

H.R. 2372, the VETERAN Act, will codify this and continue that practice retroactively for both the Affordable Care Act's Premium Tax Credit and the new tax credit created in the American Health Care Act. Veterans will continue to be able to get premium support when they opt out to purchase a private health plan instead of enrolling in the healthcare provided by the VA.

Similarly, H.R. 2579 will expand access to the new American Health Care Act tax credit to COBRA, in the continuation of that coverage. Under COBRA, group plans allow beneficiaries to keep their existing employer-sponsored coverage if they are laid off, work fewer hours, or lose insurance due to a change in family circumstances.

Often, those who need to use the COBRA coverage are those most in need, such as individuals who are in the middle of a treatment course and want to preserve their network of providers. COBRA coverage is frequently very expensive, since the individual policyholder must now pay all the premium for their policy.

H.R. 2579 will extend the new tax credits to include people receiving COBRA coverage and enable people who need it to continue taking advantage of their employer-sponsored healthcare coverage, even after a triggering event.

Mr. Speaker, the bills the House will consider under this rule will help fulfill the promise Republicans made to the American people. We made repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act with something that works the highest priority. Six weeks ago, we took the first step in fulfilling that promise with the passage of the American Health Care Act, and today we will take another step forward creating a healthcare system that works for all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for the rule, I urge support for the underlying legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding me the customary 30 minutes; and I want to begin by expressing my appreciation to both the Speaker of the House and the minority leader for their presentations before the full House yesterday in the aftermath of this terrible tragedy, which has wounded our colleague, STEVE SCALISE, and two Capitol Police officers, and two staffers.

We were all horrified by what happened, but I thought both the Speaker and the minority leader came to the floor and set the right tone, not only for this Congress, but for the Nation. And Speaker RYAN, yesterday, I thought, truly was the Speaker of the entire House of Representatives because when he said that an attack against one of us is an attack against all of us, I think everyone feels that way.

I thought it was also important that both Speaker RYAN and Minority Leader PELOSI reminded us that we are all part of one family. Sometimes we might be a little bit dysfunctional, but the bottom line is we are all part of one family. And like all families, we have our disagreements, we have our points of view, and we fight for what we believe in, and there is nothing wrong with that. In fact, that is what is right about this country.

But, clearly, our politics in this country have gotten coarse and, in many cases, ugly, and what happened yesterday is something that I think that all of us are deeply shocked by. And so we pray for our colleague, STEVE SCALISE, we pray for Matt Mika, Zachary Barth, and the two Capitol Police officers, David Bailey and Crystal Griner. We pray for their speedy recovery.

I, too, want to echo the sentiments that were stated yesterday by our leadership, both in the Republican and the Democratic Parties, that we honor our Capitol Hill police officers. I mean, they protect us each and every day. They put their lives on the line for us. And if they weren't there, the situation could have been much, much worse, and so I thank God that they were there.

As far as the rule goes, the gentleman from Texas knows how I feel about closed rules. I voice my opinion on that often, and I will continue to voice my opinion on that. But I don't think today is the time for me to prolong this debate, and I think we should move on, and that is what I intend to do.

Just one final thing, Mr. Speaker, on a personal note. This is the last rule that David Vince will work on here in the Rules Committee. He has been a fixture over the past several years, both in committee meetings and here on the House floor. He has worked on everything from healthcare to national security and on complex legislation impacting the financial industry.

When David started working here in 2011, he went by his full name, David M. Cooper-Vince. But since he married his wife, Jessica, he now insists we simply call him David Vince, so we are all still adjusting to the change.

But there is good news. While David Vince is leaving the House, he is not going far. He will attend graduate school at Georgetown University here in Washington to study business. We all wish David and his wife, Jessica, well, and we hope to welcome him back to government service again someday.

So, David, thank you very much for your incredible service to this House.

Again, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

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

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

Let me just say that I do agree with the honorable gentleman from Massachusetts. Yesterday, I think Speaker RYAN gave one of the finest speeches that I have heard on the floor of this House.

I also agree that there will be ample time for debate on all of the issues that are encompassed in today's rule, and I look forward to that spirited debate, as I always have in the past. But I also agree with the gentleman, that some of that debate may be best left for another day.

I also want to acknowledge the gentleman from Massachusetts and his comments about David Vince. Any time one of our staffers departs from either the minority or the majority side, it is obviously a time of gratitude for their service, and we look forward to what is next in their lives.

But I want to join with the gentleman from Massachusetts that we appreciate the service of David Vince to the minority and to the members of the Rules Committee in general.

So thank you for your service to the House, David.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud my colleagues for all of their work on the rules and the underlying bills.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1230

VETERANS EQUAL TREATMENT
ENSURES RELIEF AND ACCESS
NOW ACT

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 379, I call up the bill (H.R. 2372) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify the rules relating to veteran health insurance and eligibility for the premium tax credit, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania). Pursuant to House Resolution 379, the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means, printed in the bill, is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 2372

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 "Veterans Equal Treatment Ensures Relief and Access Now Act" or the "VETERAN Act".

SEC. 2. CLARIFICATION RELATING TO VETERAN HEALTH INSURANCE AND ELIGIBILITY FOR PREMIUM TAX CREDIT.

(a) AMENDMENT OF PRE-2020 CREDIT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 36B(c)(2)(B)(i) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, prior to any amendment by section 214 of the American Health Care Act of 2017, is amended by adding at the end the following: "For purposes of the preceding sentence, an individual shall not be treated as eligible for coverage described in section 5000A(f)(1)(A)(v) unless such individual is enrolled in such coverage."

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this subsection shall apply to taxable years ending after December 31, 2013.

(b) AMENDMENT OF POST-2019 CREDIT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 36B(d) of such Code, as amended by section 214 of the American Health Care Act of 2017 and in effect for months beginning after December 31, 2019, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"For purposes of paragraph (2)(B), an individual shall not be treated as eligible for coverage described in section 5000A(f)(1)(A)(v) unless such individual is enrolled in such coverage."

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this subsection is contingent upon the enactment of the American Health Care Act of 2017 and shall apply (if at all) to months beginning after December 31, 2019, in taxable years ending after such date.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. MARCHANT) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include in the RECORD any extraneous material on the bill currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

I would first like to thank Chairman BRADY for his strong support of this bill, the Veterans Equal Treatment Ensures Relief and Access Now Act, the VETERAN Act. This important legislation, which was reported out of the Ways and Means Committee on a bipartisan basis, will ensure all eligible veterans have access to quality, affordable private health insurance.

Mr. Speaker, this Chamber cannot underscore enough the sacrifices of our veterans and the sacrifices they have made to protect the freedom and individual liberty of each American. In return for their faithful service, these brave men and women are promised that, when they return home, they will have access to affordable healthcare through the Veterans Administration.

However, some veterans decide to forego their VA benefits and, instead,