

TAKANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3304, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. ROY. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

## FOOD SECURITY FOR ALL VETERANS ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 8888) to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs an Office of Food Security, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

*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 “Food Security for All Veterans Act”.

### SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE OF FOOD SECURITY.

Chapter 3 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section (and conforming the table of sections at the beginning of such chapter accordingly):

#### “§ 325. Office of Food Security

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is in the Department an office to be known as the ‘Office of Food Security’. There is at the head of the Office a Director, which shall be a career position.

“(b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—(1) The Director of the Office of Food Security shall carry out the following responsibilities:

“(A) To provide information to veterans concerning the availability of, and eligibility requirements for Federal nutrition assistance programs.

“(B) To collaborate with other program offices of the Department, including the Homeless Programs Office and the Office of Tribal Government Relations, to develop and implement policies and procedures to identify and treat veterans at-risk or experiencing food insecurity.

“(C) To collaborate with the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Defense on food insecurity among veterans, including by collaborating with the Secretaries to develop materials related to food insecurity for the Transition Assistance Program curriculum and other transition-related resources.

“(D) To develop and provide training, including training that may count towards continuing education or licensure requirements, for social workers, dietitians, chaplains, and other clinicians on how to assist veterans with enrollment in Federal nutrition assistance programs, including the supplemental nutrition assistance program and the special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children established by section 17 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786).

“(E) To issue guidance to Department medical centers on how to collaborate with their State and local offices administering the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

“(2) In carrying out the responsibilities under paragraph (1), the Director shall consult with and provide technical assistance to the heads of other Federal departments and agencies, including the Department of Agriculture, Department of Defense, Department of Interior, and Department of Labor.

“(c) ANNUAL REPORT ON FOOD INSECURITY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture, shall submit to the Committees on Veterans Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives an annual report on veteran food insecurity. Each such report shall include data on the following:

“(1) The socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial characteristics of veterans experiencing food insecurity, disaggregated by State in which the veteran is located.

“(2) Native American veterans experiencing food insecurity.

“(3) Specific interventions for veterans who screen positive for food insecurity.

“(4) Eligibility screenings for participation in the supplemental nutrition assistance program completed by personnel of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“(5) The number of applications for participation in the supplemental nutrition assistance program completed with assistance from personnel of the Department.

“(6) Changes, as a result of participation in the supplemental nutrition assistance program, in the number of food insecure veteran households.

“(7) Coordination efforts between State agencies and Department facilities located in that State regarding outreach to veterans to participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

“(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The terms ‘Native American’ and ‘Native American veteran’ have the meanings given those terms in section 3765 of this title.

“(2) The terms ‘State agency’ and ‘supplemental nutrition assistance program’ have the meanings given those terms in section 3 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2012).”.

### SEC. 3. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H.R. 8888, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 8888, as amended, the Food Security for All Veterans Act.

This bill establishes an office dedicated to ending veteran hunger at the VA that will collaborate with internal and external groups to develop and implement policies and procedures to identify and treat veterans at risk of or experiencing hunger.

Food insecurity can create or exacerbate other health maladies and is one of many contributing factors that has led to increased suicide rates, diabetes, heart disease, and depression. Addressing veteran hunger is critical to this committee’s suicide prevention efforts.

Madam Speaker, I thank our newest Member from Alaska, Congresswoman PELTOLA, for taking up this important issue and prioritizing veterans.

The VA has made tremendous strides in its work to end veteran hunger. The VA leads an interagency working group and regularly collaborates with its Federal counterparts on this issue. The VA also instituted a clinical reminder that screens every veteran who receives their care at VA for food insecurity and connects those in need with resources.

However, until recently, these tasks were carried out by VA employees as ancillary duties. There was no staff dedicated solely to addressing veteran hunger. The VA has started the process of building a team that works exclusively on this issue, and Congresswoman PELTOLA’s bill gives the VA the infrastructure and resources to ensure those efforts continue for years to come.

Before the pandemic and still now, Black, Latino, Native American, and Alaska Native veteran families experienced disproportionately high rates of hunger. This bill requires the VA to coordinate with the VA Office of Tribal Government Relations and the Department of the Interior to focus on these communities.

A critical issue this bill intends to affect is the disparity between the VA and USDA data on veteran hunger. The USDA reports about an 11 percent rate of food insecurity among veterans versus the VA, which reports a roughly 2 percent rate among veterans using VA healthcare.

The bill requires VA, in consultation with the USDA, to issue an annual report to Congress on the prevalence of veteran hunger. It also requires the VA to track its progress and success in connecting more veterans with resources like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP.

Importantly, the Food Security for All Veterans Act mandates the VA collaborates with the Departments of Agriculture and Defense to develop materials for the Transition Assistance Program to help increase access to food resources for families in need as they navigate the military-to-civilian transition.

September is Hunger Action Month, and today, the White House hosted the Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health that will catalyze the public and private sectors around a coordinated strategy to accelerate progress

and drive transformative change in our country to end hunger.

This legislation is endorsed by numerous veterans service organizations and hunger advocacy organizations, including Student Veterans of America, MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, Food Research & Action Center, Disabled American Veterans, American Federation of Government Employees, National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, and Blue Star Families.

Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following letters from MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger and the Food Research & Action Center.

[MAZON, Sept. 23, 2022]

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD IN SUPPORT OF  
H.R. 8888 SUBMITTED BY MAZON: A JEWISH  
RESPONSE TO HUNGER

A Jewish Response to Hunger is pleased to share this statement for the record in support of H.R. 8888, the Food Security for All Veterans Act. This bill, which would establish an Office of Food Security at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, represents a helpful step forward in the effort to achieve a more comprehensive and lasting solution to the preventable problem of veteran food insecurity.

Inspired by Jewish values and ideals, MAZON takes to heart our collective responsibility to care for the vulnerable in our midst, without judgement or precondition. In the United States, this responsibility to prevent and respond to hunger lies centrally with our federal government. The charitable food sector is in no way equipped to respond to the scope of food insecurity in America—all of the charitable and faith-based organizations in this country combined contribute less than ten percent of all food assistance in this country and have extremely limited capacity to respond to more than emergency needs. The food insecurity crisis in our country is the purview of the federal government and it is impractical, inefficient, and immoral to abdicate this responsibility and attempt to outsource the response to a charitable sector that is already overburdened.

For over 37 years, MAZON has been fighting to end hunger among all people of all faiths and backgrounds, and for nearly ten years, we have prioritized addressing the long-overlooked issue of food insecurity among veterans and military families. Jewish text and tradition compel us to honor the dignity of every person, especially those who are struggling. No matter a person's circumstance, no one deserves to be hungry. Those who have bravely served to defend our country especially should never have to be subjected to the cruel and painful experience of hunger.

The establishment of the Office of Food Security at the Department of Veterans Affairs that is empowered to coordinate efforts among VA program offices, provide information about and help connect veterans to available nutrition assistance benefits and resources, collaborate with USDA, Department of Defense, and other federal agencies, and develop and provide training for professionals who work with veterans, would be an extremely helpful step forward in the national effort to address the crisis of veteran food insecurity.

MAZON has testified before Congress and shared our insights and recommendations about food insecurity among veteran households numerous times over the years. Unfortunately, too little progress has been made

during the intervening time. There have been some positive steps, both programmatically and through policy change, that have helped; most notably, the recent adoption of the Hunger Vital Signs screening tool at all VA outpatient facilities (MAZON has long advocated for mandatory food insecurity screenings and SNAP eligibility screening, and application assistance across the VA system; much more still remains to be done on this front to connect food insecure veterans with SNAP) and increases to SNAP benefits through the temporary boost included through COVID-19-relief legislation and the recent update to the Thrifty Food Plan by USDA.

It should be noted that, while the temporary boost to SNAP benefits and other COVID-19 assistance provided by the federal government helped to alleviate some material hardship and prevented food insecurity and poverty rates from dramatically spiking due to the pandemic and associated economic downturn, the American population—including veterans—experienced exacerbated challenges that compounded food insecurity rates and more severe impacts.

These challenges include elevated rates of unemployment (particularly within the service sector and disproportionately impacting female employees and people of color), widespread school closures and the loss of subsidized school meals, medical emergencies and the associated financial costs for treatment and lost income from time out of work), and mental health distress.

We are particularly concerned about the impacts of racial inequities on veterans and the ongoing tragedy of heightened suicide rates among veterans. While there is growing public awareness and concern about both issues, there remains a need for viable policy proposals to address them. The disproportionate impact of food insecurity on households of veterans of color highlight racial inequities that are perpetuated through public policies and program implementation. Closing the SNAP participation gap for veterans and improving the program to better reach and serve food insecure veterans of color will not only signal a commitment to meaningful efforts to address racial justice—it will concretely contribute to those efforts to achieve greater racial equity in federal policy.

As noted by Dr. Thomas O'Toole during his testimony before the House Veterans Affairs Committee on January 9, 2020, a growing body of research sheds light on the relationship between food insecurity and risk factors for poor mental health and suicide. A new study on "Association between Food Insecurity, Mental Health, and Intentions to Leave the U.S. Army in a Cross-Sectional Sample of U.S. Soldiers" by researchers at the USDA Economic Research Service and the U.S. Army Public Health Center offers additional insight about linkages between food insecurity, mental health, and military service. Contributing to the VA's stated top clinical priority to end veteran suicide and implement a comprehensive public health approach to reach all veterans, the VA must step up to provide leadership around a robust effort to address veteran food insecurity by proactive SNAP outreach to veterans both within and outside of the VA system.

A recommendation made by Dr. Colleen Heflin during her testimony at the May 27, 2021 House Rules Committee roundtable examination of the hunger crisis among veterans and military families holds great promise to decrease the risk of food insecurity during the transition from military service to civilian life, when many households are more likely at risk of food insecurity. MAZON urges Congress to explore this suggestion for the federal government to provide a targeted transitional benefit to all

families leaving military service below a certain rank. Such a benefit would act as a stabilizing mechanism and provide much-needed additional assistance to veterans and their families during a time when they may experience a greater level of financial need. Such a transitional benefit, especially one that utilizes innovative new technologies for benefit delivery and personalized communications, opens up opportunities to proactively assess and respond to the whole-person needs of veterans by building trust and facilitating connections to other available resources and comprehensive services. In addition, MAZON supports the distinct, yet often related, recommendations by Dr. Heflin to better protect veterans with disabilities from food insecurity.

MAZON was proud to recently sign a Memorandum of Agreement with the Veterans Health Administration to work collaboratively to address veteran food insecurity. While MAZON is excited about this opportunity to provide input, contribute resources, and collaborate on innovative program ideas and solutions, the limited commitments to date by the VA and slow pace of response to a preventable crisis with multiple negative consequences is deeply distressing. Additionally, the sporadic oversight by Congress and the lack of urgency that has been demonstrated in holding federal agencies accountable to a proactive, robust, and measurable solution to ending veteran food insecurity must be rectified. There is great bipartisan concern in Congress about veteran food insecurity, but the commitment to mandate and provide funding for proven solutions has unfortunately not matched the lofty rhetoric.

It is time to recenter the VA's goals and priorities in the effort to provide a comprehensive response to veteran food insecurity. The implicit abdication of responsibility by the federal government to the charitable sector is unsustainable and dangerous as it shifts attention away from the need to strengthen and improve access to SNAP and other federal programs that serve as the frontline response to veteran food insecurity.

Success should be measured not by how many food pantries open at VA centers, but rather by how many food pantries become unnecessary due to veteran households receiving the support they need and are entitled to through programs like SNAP. MAZON urges Congress to step up its leadership as a vital part of this effort by prioritizing the protection and improvement of SNAP, supporting innovative and effective ways to better connect food insecure veterans with federal nutrition assistance programs (including mandating that VA facilities conduct on-site SNAP eligibility screenings and application assistance in addition to the food insecurity screenings currently conducted), bolstering nutrition assistance support during transition from active duty to veteran status, strengthening the supports and removing barriers for food insecure veterans with disabilities, and centering the experiences and perspectives of veterans with lived experiences with food insecurity.

The establishment of the Office of Food Security at the VA as proposed in H.R. 8888 promises to make a substantial contribution to coordinating and improving agency efforts and deepening the impact of the federal response to veteran food insecurity. This progress is long overdue and should represent just the next step forward among additional commitments to come.

Veteran food insecurity—indeed, all food insecurity—is a solvable problem, and the solution lies in mustering the political will to prioritize and address it. MAZON welcomes the opportunity to continue to work with

Congress, with all relevant federal agencies, and with VSOs and other community partners, to build this political will and do right by those who have bravely served our country. No veteran should ever have to worry about being able to feed themselves or those in their family. We owe them much more than the half-measures and broken promises of our policies and programs to date.

Hungry veterans cannot eat another report or hearing transcript. MAZON urges Congress to enact the recommendations included in H.R. 8888 and identify additional concrete steps that Congress and the Administration can take now to end the crisis of veteran food insecurity. We stand ready with suggestions and with resolve to work in partnership.

[From Food Research & Action Center, May 18, 2022]

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS, SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE OF FOOD SECURITY

The Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) supports the "Discussion Draft, to amend Title 38, United States Code, to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs an Office of Food Insecurity, and for other purposes" set for hearing on May 18, 2022, before the House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity. This critical legislation will amplify the Department of Veterans Affairs efforts to address food insecurity among veterans and their families.

FRAC works to improve the nutrition, health, and well-being of tens of millions of people struggling against poverty-related hunger in the United States through advocacy, partnerships, and by advancing bold and equitable policy solutions. FRAC has championed work to address food insecurity among veterans and participates in the Military Family Advisory Network and Veterans Health Administration (VHA) efforts to screen and intervene to address food insecurity among patients.

Food insecurity, even marginal food insecurity (a less severe form), is detrimental to the health, development, and well-being of people and is associated with some of the most common and costly health problems in the U.S. A 2021 Economic Research Service Report, *Food Insecurity Among Working-Age Veterans*, found that 11.1 percent of veterans between the ages of 18 to 64 lived in households reporting food insecurity, while 5.3 lived in households experiencing very low food security. After controlling for demographic characteristics that normally predict food insecurity, such as age, educational attainment, and income, the risk of food insecurity is 7.4 percent higher among veterans than nonveterans ages 18-64.

By creating an Office of Food Security, this legislation represents a critical step to prioritize, accelerate, and sustain the Department of Veterans Affairs' work to address food insecurity among those who have sacrificed so much for our nation. Of note, the Veterans Health Administration has screened millions of patients for food insecurity and connected veterans and their families to crucial federal nutrition programs, like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), school meals, child care meals, summer meals, and emergency food sites, such as food banks and pantries. By providing funding to build out these efforts to screen and intervene veterans at risk for

food insecurity, this legislation will enshrine the importance of this work, identify gaps in services, and connect veterans to available federal nutrition programs and other resources.

This legislation recognizes the critical role the federal nutrition plays in addressing food insecurity among veterans and their families. The federal nutrition programs are among our nation's most important, proven, and cost-effective public interventions to not only address food insecurity but also to improve health, nutrition, and well-being. A growing body of research links these programs to a wide range of positive outcomes for families and the nation. Federal nutrition programs improve dietary intake and nutrition quality; support healthy growth of children; boost learning and academic achievement; reduce poverty and increase family economic security; and lower health care spending.

Ensuring access to SNAP, in particular, is a critical step in supporting food security among veterans. Nationwide, according to the USDA, 1,174,027 veterans (6.6 percent of all veterans) received SNAP benefits, improving veterans' purchasing power necessary to buy food in a dignified way at military commissaries and other food retail outlets that accept SNAP. A recent survey estimated that only 59 percent of eligible veterans were enrolled in SNAP. The USDA has identified veterans as a priority population for state SNAP outreach plans, including partnership with local VHA facilities. Accessing SNAP not only helps veterans everywhere put food on the table, it reduces poverty, supports economic stability, and improves health outcomes.

FRAC looks forward to supporting the Department of Veterans Affairs work to address food insecurity. Alongside increasing veteran participation in SNAP and other federal nutrition programs, eradicating food insecurity and hunger among veterans and their families will require a national response that addresses underlying causes (e.g., a lack of well-paying jobs and a lack of affordable housing). This draft legislation is an important step in the right direction.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I urge the rest of my colleagues to support this legislation and ensure no veteran goes hungry, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I reluctantly support this bill.

Food insecurity is an issue that impacts thousands of veterans every year. Veterans continue to suffer from skyrocketing food prices caused by the economic mistakes of the Biden administration.

While I support bringing more attention to veteran hunger, I am skeptical that this bill is the correct solution. The bill before us today would try to address these issues by creating a new office of food security at the VA. The VA has also already told us that they were working to set up an office at the VHA dedicated to food insecurity.

I look forward to working with our colleagues in the Senate to modify the language in this bill to match the Department's efforts.

That said, I am pleased by the changes that were made today to improve on the text. All considered, I reluctantly urge all of my colleagues to support the bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Alaska (Mrs. PELTOLA), my new friend who is a newly elected Member of Congress. I think this is her first piece of legislation to be brought to the floor, and we are proud it is coming out of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

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Mrs. PELTOLA. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman for providing consideration of my legislation today. I particularly want to share my appreciation with committee Chair TAKANO and Ranking Member BOST on the Veterans' Affairs Committee for moving quickly on this important issue for the 18 million veterans in our country.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on a topic of vital importance to my State where veterans comprise about 10 percent of the population, and I know many veterans who face food insecurity.

This is my first bill as a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives, which is appropriate. There is nothing more important than ensuring our veterans and their families can enjoy a safe and healthy life after their service for our country.

This bill would create an Office of Food Security within the Department of Veterans Affairs. The office would be charged with providing information to veterans on the availability and eligibility requirements for Federal nutrition assistance programs. The office would work with other government agencies to implement policies to help veterans at risk or experiencing food insecurity.

A report just 4 months ago from the Center for Strategic and International Studies was clear, "Food insecurity among U.S. veterans and military families is a national security concern: it multiplies stress on Active Duty personnel, diminishes well-being among servicemembers and their children—who are more likely to serve in the military as adults—and may hinder recruitment for the armed services."

Madam Speaker, I know this bill will not solve the problem entirely, but I believe it can help in Alaska and throughout the country. I ask my colleagues to support H.R. 8888.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 8888, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 8888, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROY. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### EXPANDING HOME LOANS FOR GUARD AND RESERVISTS ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 8875) to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility of members of the National Guard for housing loans guaranteed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 8875

*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 “Expanding Home Loans for Guard and Reservists Act”.

#### SEC. 2. EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY OF MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD FOR HOUSING LOANS GUARANTEED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

Section 3701(b)(7) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “full-time National Guard duty” and inserting “active service”.

#### SEC. 3. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 8875, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 8875, as amended, the Expanding Home Loans for Guard and Reservists Act.

One of the most valuable benefits veterans earn is the VA home loan benefit, which can provide them a head start in their transition to civilian life.

That is why 2 years ago we passed into law an expansion to grant Na-

tional Guard members credit for the days they serve on Active Duty. However, through oversight and case work we have learned how some veterans are missing out on this benefit.

This legislation makes a technical fix, which updates the law to define eligibility by counting Active Duty for training when guard and reservists are training for things like Special Forces, Aviation, or Linguistics.

These servicemembers deserve eligibility because they are going through the same courses and training as their Active Duty counterparts, taking the same risks, and passing the very same requirements.

Guard and reservists are at a greater disadvantage because they are removed from the civilian workforce for extended periods of time. After their training is complete, they transition back to civilian life, move back home from the base where they were training, find employment, and find a place to live.

This technical fix makes sure that guard and reservists don't miss out on using a great benefit from the VA home loan guarantee service.

I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. RYAN), our newest Member, for taking up this issue and making veterans a priority. As an added bonus, this fix actually saves the Federal Government money by bringing more borrowers into the attractive low rates of the VA home loan program.

Madam Speaker, I wholeheartedly support this bill, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in reluctant support of the Expanding Home Loans for Guard and Reservists Act. Last Congress, my bill, H.R. 7445, proposed expanding VA home loan benefits to members of the National Guard who have served on Active Duty or full-time guard duty.

Congressman RYAN's bill would expand the home loan benefit to members of the National Guard that are on Federal Active Duty orders for training. Unfortunately, this policy is being rushed in an election year gimmick.

Unlike other bills we are considering today, this bill has not had the benefit of legislative hearings, and I would have liked to have heard the views of the VA and other stakeholders. A hearing would have allowed us to understand the impact this legislation could have on the mortgage markets. It would also have provided insight on the effect this bill could have on recruitment of National Guard Active Forces.

That said, I do not want to stand in the way of legislation that can help members of the National Guard, and I reluctantly urge all my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, again, I ask all my colleagues to join

me in passing H.R. 8875, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 8875, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROY. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### AMENDING TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE, TO ENSURE THAT THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS REPAYS MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES FOR CERTAIN CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY SUCH MEMBERS TOWARDS POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5918) to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs repays members of the Armed Forces for certain contributions made by such members towards Post-9/11 Educational Assistance, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5918

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

#### SECTION 1. REPAYMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARD POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3327(f)(3) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “together” and all that follows through “(as applicable)”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2023.

#### SEC. 2. MODIFICATION OF CERTAIN HOUSING LOAN FEES.

The loan fee table in section 3729(b)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “January 14, 2031” each place it appears and inserting “January 28, 2031”.

#### SEC. 3. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.