

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 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.

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.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H.R. 5918, 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. 5918, as amended, legislation to ensure veterans can recoup the money they paid into the Montgomery GI Bill.

Under current law, veterans who do not fully access their Montgomery GI Bill can lose out on the payments they made into the program, in some cases totaling up to \$1,200.

The Montgomery GI Bill is in the process of being phased out for the more generous Forever GI Bill. Many veterans may not remember the \$1,200 they paid into the program in the early days of their service or even be aware that they are entitled to a refund of the unused funds.

The process to reclaim that \$1,200 can be difficult, and there are times when the veteran can simply lose out on the money because they waited too long. This legislation eliminates that cumbersome process by making it so the veteran is repaid, no questions asked.

The bill is fully offset and supported by the veterans service organization community, including by Student Veterans of America.

Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BANKS) for his work on this legislation and the VSO community for bringing this issue to our committee. I urge the rest of my colleagues to support this legislation to ensure no veteran loses out on what is owed to them.

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 support of H.R. 5918, as amended. This bill would close a financial loophole affecting many servicemembers.

Last Congress, I was proud to support General Bergman's efforts to responsibly sunset the Montgomery GI Bill, and today I am pleased to support Congressman BANKS' bill to ensure that those servicemembers who paid into the program are repaid.

Under current law, servicemembers who switch from Montgomery to the Post-9/11 GI Bill would lose about \$1,200 they paid into the program, if they exhausted their benefits while still on Active Duty. Veterans who exhaust their benefits already receive the \$1,200 back. This bill would fix this loophole and treat servicemembers and veterans equally.

Servicemembers earned the benefits and should not be shortchanged just

because they are still on Active Duty. This bill would include a short-term extension of the VA home loan funding fees to fully offset the cost of this bill.

Madam Speaker, I thank the American Legion for bringing this problem to our attention, and I also thank Congressman BANKS for introducing this important bill.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the 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. 5918, 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. 5918, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill 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, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REDUCE AND ELIMINATE MENTAL HEALTH OUTPATIENT VETERAN COPAYS ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7589) to amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit the imposition or collection of copayments for certain mental health outpatient care visits of veterans, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7589

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 "Reduce and Eliminate Mental Health Outpatient Veteran Copays Act" or the "REMOVE Copays Act".

SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON COLLECTION OF COPAYMENTS FOR FIRST THREE MENTAL HEALTH CARE OUTPATIENT VISITS OF VETERANS.

(a) PROHIBITION ON COLLECTION.—Chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 1722B the following new section (and conforming the table of sections at the beginning of such chapter accordingly):

"§ 1722C. Copayments: prohibition on collection of copayments for first three mental health care outpatient visits of veterans

"(a) PROHIBITION.—Except as provided in subsection (b), notwithstanding section 1710(g) of this title or any other provision of law, the Secretary may not impose or collect a copayment for the first three mental health care outpatient visits of a veteran in a calendar year for which the veteran would otherwise be required to pay a copayment

under the laws administered by the Secretary.

"(b) COPAYMENT FOR MEDICATIONS.—The prohibition under subsection (a) shall not apply with respect to the imposition or collection of copayments for medications pursuant to section 1722A of this title.

"(c) MENTAL HEALTH CARE OUTPATIENT VISIT DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'mental health care outpatient visit' means an outpatient visit with a qualified mental health professional for the primary purpose of seeking mental health care or treatment for substance abuse disorder."

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to mental health care outpatient visits occurring on or after the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

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. 7589, 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, as we all know, September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. I hope everyone has the new crisis hotline number, 988, saved on their phones. If you or a veteran you care about is in crisis, please dial 988, and press 1 to reach trained responders at the Veterans Crisis Line. Again, let me repeat the number. Dial 988 and press 1 to reach trained responders at the Veterans Crisis Line.

One component of a public health approach to veteran suicide prevention is ensuring that all of our Nation's heroes have access to timely, high-quality, effective mental health care.

Madam Speaker, I am so pleased to bring up my bill, H.R. 7589, as amended, the Reduce and Eliminate Mental Health Outpatient Veteran Copays or REMOVE Copays Act. We reported this bill favorably out of the Veterans' Affairs Committee last week on a bipartisan voice vote. I thank Ranking Member BOST for his support of this bill.

H.R. 7589 turns a legislative proposal from the Department of Veterans Affairs into a law that will make every enrolled veteran's first three outpatient mental health appointment at VA free every year. We know that what may seem like low copays can, in fact, be significant financial barriers for many veterans. Our goal is to knock down all barriers for veterans seeking and accessing mental health care at the VA.

□ 2015

VA strongly supports this bill, as do veterans service organizations and