

member of the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee.

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. TAKANO for yielding and for his leadership, along with Chairman BOST, in getting this legislation to floor.

I thank Representatives MCMORRIS RODGERS and BERGMAN for cosponsoring this bill, which covers an important issue, emergency care coverage for veterans under the Community Care program.

This would close a glaring gap in emergency care for veterans who are transitioning from DOD to VA care. Right now, VA's failure to cover emergency care during this transitional period can result in a crippling amount of debt for veterans who need this kind of care.

These coverage gaps are all too common for our veterans. I have heard about it from my own constituents. In my first month in office, I was contacted by a veteran in Danville, New Hampshire, who put off seeking care for a medical emergency because he was unsure that VA would cover this care.

No veteran should ever think twice about seeking care during a medical emergency or be faced with exorbitant medical bills as a result of this care, so let's eliminate this gap for veterans who are recently enrolled in VA care. This is an important step forward represented by this legislation. There is certainly more work to do, but I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation today.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN), my good friend.

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, as a veteran and member of both the Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs Committees, assisting those in uniform as they transition from military service into civilian life and VA care is one of my top priorities.

Too often we see veterans get lost in the cracks of bureaucracy, and they fail to receive the healthcare they deserve through the VA or are facing unfair penalties while attempting to navigate life after their military service.

While we have made tremendous strides to improve veteran access to healthcare through the VA Community Care program, significant coverage gaps remain, and more improvements must be made by Congress.

Under current law, a veteran must have received health services at a VA facility within the past 2 years to be approved for retroactive coverage for emergency treatment through the Community Care program. This ignores the reality that it often takes more than a month for veterans to complete their first appointment at a VA facility following their enrollment in VA health.

This creates a gap in coverage that can force crippling debt onto a recently separated servicemember who is seeking emergency care. No veteran should

have to second-guess whether they should go to the emergency room due to bureaucratic mismanagement of their care coverage.

The bipartisan RELIEVE Act would address this gap in coverage by giving veterans a 60-day grace period after they are enrolled in VA health to complete their first doctor's appointment. During those 60 days, veterans will still be covered for emergency care at non-VA facilities, eliminating the gap, and ensuring veterans can receive the care they need without the worry of surprise bills.

I am proud to join Representatives MCMORRIS RODGERS and PAPPAS in introducing this important and common-sense legislation again this Congress. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of its passage.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. In closing, let me just say, it was a delight to join my colleague from Michigan at the Joni Mitchell concert and stand up and participate in "Big Yellow Taxi," which is his favorite song.

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

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, once again, I encourage all Members to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 815, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WOUNDED WARRIOR ACCESS ACT

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1226) to amend title 38, United States Code, to allow for the electronic request of certain records, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1226

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 "Wounded Warrior Access Act".

SEC. 2. ELECTRONIC REQUEST OF CERTAIN RECORDS MAINTAINED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) ELECTRONIC RECORD REQUESTS.—Section 5702 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (b) as subsection (c); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (a) the following:

"(b)(1) The Secretary shall establish and maintain a secure website or online tool for a claimant or a duly recognized agent or representative of that claimant to submit an electronic request for such records.

"(2) The Secretary, upon receipt of a valid request made through the website or online

tool established under paragraph (1), shall provide to the requestor—

"(A) not later than 10 days after receipt, confirmation of such receipt; and

"(B) not later than 120 days after receipt, such records requested in the form selected by the requestor."

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 5702(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking "in writing" and inserting "in writing, including an electronic request submitted through the website or online tool established under subsection (b).";

(2) in paragraph (1), by striking "and" at the end;

(3) in paragraph (2), by striking the period at the end and inserting "; and"; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

"(3) the format in which such copy is desired, including whether in printed form or by downloadable file."

(c) DEADLINE; ESTABLISHMENT OF WEBSITE OR ONLINE TOOL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish the website or online tool required under section 5702(b)(1) of title 38, United States Code, as added by this Act, and, to the extent practicable, the Secretary shall utilize existing online resources of the Department of Veterans Affairs for the purposes of such establishment.

SEC. 3. WARNINGS TO CLAIMANTS UNDER LAWS ADMINISTERED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS REGARDING UNRECOGNIZED REPRESENTATIVES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 5901 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting "(a) IN GENERAL.—" before "Except";

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(b) WARNINGS ABOUT POTENTIAL PREDATORY PRACTICES.—(1) The Secretary shall ensure that, each time a claimant under a law administered by the Secretary logs in to a website or online tool of the Department, such website or online tool issues to the claimant, in plain language—

"(A) a warning about individuals who seek to act in violation of this chapter;

"(B) a link to an online tool of the Department through which the claimant may report such an individual;

"(C) a link to an online tool of the Department through which the claimant may search for a recognized agent, attorney, or other entity recognized by the Secretary for the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of any claim under laws administered by the Secretary; and

"(D) a link to a website or an online tool of the Department providing final decisions on discipline of agents, attorneys, and entities, described in subparagraph (C), by the Secretary for violations of this chapter.

"(2) The Secretary shall provide all information under paragraph (1) in the following languages:

"(A) English.

"(B) Spanish.

"(C) Tagalog.

"(D) The seven other languages most commonly spoken in the United States."

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out subsection (b) of such section, as added by subsection (a) of this section—

(1) after consulting with stakeholders (including veterans service organizations recognized under section 5902 of such title) regarding the wording of the warning under such subsection; and

(2) not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 4. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.

No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the requirements of this Act.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 1226, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1730

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1226, as amended.

This bill will require VA to establish a secure online tool which veterans can use to request a copy of their VA claims file or C-file.

Veterans may want to see their records to ensure the VA received all the evidence they submitted. They may also use this information to decide whether to appeal VA's decision.

Currently, veterans must travel to the regional office to view their records, which is inconvenient, or they can request a copy by mail, which can take weeks or even months.

I support this bill because it would make it easier for veterans to get their VA records in a timely manner.

Furthermore, I have heard increasing concerns from veterans about bad actors attempting to con them out of their benefits. This is unacceptable.

H.R. 1226, as amended, would require VA to educate veterans about predatory actors when they log into the VA website. These warnings will prevent veterans from being taken advantage of.

I appreciate Representative AGUILAR's leadership on this issue. I urge all of my colleagues to join me in support of this bill today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1226, as amended, the Wounded Warrior Access Act introduced by my good friend, neighbor, and chair of the House Democratic Caucus, Representative PETE AGUILAR.

This bill would require VA to establish and maintain a secure internet-based portal to establish a claimant or their representative to make records requests related to VA claims and benefits.

Additionally, this bill contains a provision requiring VA to warn claimants about benefit scammers, provide a way to report potentially fraudulent activ-

ity, and provide a tool for claimants to search for accredited representation.

Currently, to make records requests related to VA claims and benefits, veterans or designated representatives must submit a Freedom of Information Act, otherwise known as a FOIA, or Privacy Act request.

Submitting this form, followed by waiting for it to upload into an individual's electronic claims file, and then awaiting action on the request can be time consuming and can negatively impact a claimant's ability to understand what records VA is evaluating and what information could better assist in a claim's positive adjudication.

Establishing and maintaining a secure, internet-based portal to enable a claimant or their representative to make records requests related to VA claims and benefits would modernize this essential process and assist in more timely, positive claim outcomes.

This bill would also add another tool in the toolbox for veterans when navigating the complexities of the claims process and will help veterans gain a little more autonomy over their claim.

It is my hope that my colleagues will join me in supporting this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. AGUILAR), my good friend who serves on the House Appropriations Committee.

Mr. AGUILAR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for his leadership, and I thank the chairman for his important work in this Congress and in this committee.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1226, the Wounded Warrior Access Act, for the same reasons my colleagues had mentioned.

When a veteran files their claim for benefits, they are given the C-file. For a veteran to view this C-file, they must either make an appointment at their local VA office, travel there to view it in person, submit a form through the mail or fax with no confirmation that it was ever received, or submit a Freedom of Information Act request for their file.

Throughout my time in Congress—I know I am not the only Member who has heard from a number of veterans who have had trouble accessing their C-files from the VA.

Just to put this in context, Mr. Speaker, our veterans need these files to access the benefits that they have earned or appeal the VA's decisions about their claim. That is why, Mr. Speaker, this is so important.

Veterans in the Inland Empire and across this country need an easy way to access this information without jumping through bureaucratic hoops.

This bipartisan bill is a commonsense solution that cuts this red tape and will help American veterans.

I again thank Chairman BOST, Ranking Member TAKANO, and members of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee for their leadership in bringing this bill to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1226.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I again ask all my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 1226, as amended, the Wounded Warrior Access Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I also encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1226, 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. BOST. Mr. 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.

UNDERSTANDING CYBERSECURITY OF MOBILE NETWORKS ACT

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1123) to direct the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to submit to Congress a report examining the cybersecurity of mobile service networks, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1123

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 "Understanding Cybersecurity of Mobile Networks Act".

SEC. 2. REPORT ON CYBERSECURITY OF MOBILE SERVICE NETWORKS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary, in consultation with the Department of Homeland Security, shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report examining the cybersecurity of mobile service networks and the vulnerability of such networks and mobile devices to cyberattacks and surveillance conducted by adversaries.

(b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) An assessment of the degree to which providers of mobile service have addressed, are addressing, or have not addressed cybersecurity vulnerabilities (including vulnerabilities the exploitation of which could lead to surveillance conducted by adversaries) identified by academic and independent researchers, multistakeholder