

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY).

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of the China Financial Threat Mitigation Act, or H.R. 1156.

Certainly, I agree with my colleague and friends across the aisle that we need to dig deeper. We understand that, yes, China is trying to weaken our country. Because of its size and deep connection to the global economy, the People's Republic of China represents a potential threat to our economy and our financial system.

We must have a clear picture of the systemic risks we face so we can respond appropriately to safeguard our economic interests and mitigate these threats.

Mr. Speaker, this bipartisan bill will require the Treasury Department to study and issue a report that analyzes risks to the United States' financial stability and the global economy stemming from China.

I thank my colleague, the vice chair of this subcommittee, for participating today, along with our Republican colleagues.

As the ranking member of the Financial Services Subcommittee on National Security, Illicit Finance, and International Financial Institutions, I am very happy to work across the aisle to address the issues of competitiveness with China.

Mr. Speaker, this is the right thing to do, and I urge all Members to support this bipartisan bill.

Mr. Speaker, lastly, I don't think I need to remind my colleagues that this legislation was brought three times in the last Congress. I certainly thank then-Congressman Gonzalez from Ohio, who sponsored this legislation.

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

□ 1630

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I commend Representative SPANBERGER for her leadership on these important issues and her work in drafting this bipartisan bill.

I also thank Chair MCHENRY and Representative WILLIAMS of Texas on the other side of the aisle for working with us Democrats on this important legislation.

This bipartisan work resulted in a vote of 40-0 on this bill during a Financial Services Committee markup earlier this year.

I, again, urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I thank the sponsors of the bill, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mrs. BEATTY, and Ms. SPANBERGER for their hard work on this good piece of legislation. I think it is something that is very important.

They have already expressed the need for it.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. LUETKEMEYER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1156, 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. LUETKEMEYER. 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.

KOREAN AMERICAN VIETNAM ALLIES LONG OVERDUE FOR RELIEF ACT

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 366) to amend title 38, United States Code, to treat certain individuals who served in Vietnam as a member of the armed forces of the Republic of Korea as a veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States for purposes of the provision of health care by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 366

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 "Korean American Vietnam Allies Long Overdue for Relief Act" or the "Korean American VALOR Act".

SEC. 2. PROVISION OF CERTAIN BENEFITS TO INDIVIDUALS WHO SERVED IN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA.

Section 109 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(d)(1) Any person described in paragraph (2) is eligible for the benefits specified in subsection (a) to the same extent and under the same conditions (including with respect to applicable reciprocity requirements) as a discharged member of the armed forces of a government specified in such subsection who is eligible for such benefits under such subsection.

"(2) A person described in this paragraph is a person whom the Secretary determines served in Vietnam as a member of the armed forces of the Republic of Korea at any time during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, or such other period as determined appropriate by the Secretary for purposes of this subsection."

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. 366.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Ranking Member TAKANO's bill, H.R. 366, the Korean American VALOR Act.

This bill would allow Korean veterans who served during the Vietnam war and later became American citizens to be eligible for VA healthcare. VA has been providing healthcare services to ally veterans through government agreements since World War I. These Korean-American veterans deserve the same opportunity.

Korean-American veterans share similar needs with the veterans they served alongside with in Vietnam. They suffer from PTSD and Agent Orange exposure, among other injuries and illnesses. These veterans have earned access to proper care through the VA. Ranking Member TAKANO's bill will do exactly that.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, this year marks the 70th anniversary of the vitally important alliance between the U.S. and the Republic of Korea. As such, this bill is a fitting tribute to thank the Korean-American veterans for their service. I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 366.

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 my bill, H.R. 366, the Korean American VALOR Act. I am proud to have sponsored this legislation which will provide eligibility for VA healthcare to veterans who served in the armed forces of the Republic of Korea, as allies of the United States during the Vietnam war, who have since become naturalized American citizens.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Korean-American alliance. Last month, during his visit to Washington, D.C., President Yoon Suk Yeol addressed a joint session of Congress and reflected on how our alliance has served to safeguard freedom and democracy throughout the world.

Following the Korean war, the United States and the Republic of Korea signed a Mutual Defense Treaty on October 1, 1953. It has been called an "alliance forged in blood." In part, out of gratitude for the service and sacrifices made by Americans during the Korean war, the Republic of Korea has aided the United States in every war since the Vietnam war.

Between 1965 and 1973, South Korea sent more than 320,000 troops to fight alongside U.S. servicemembers in Vietnam, the largest contingent of any U.S. ally. More than 5,000 South Korean troops died in the Vietnam war, and at least 11,000 were injured.

An estimated 2,800 veterans who served in the armed forces of the Republic of Korea during the Vietnam

war and later became U.S. citizens are living today. My legislation would provide some measure of long-overdue parity for Korean-American Vietnam war veterans who, up to this point, have never been eligible for VA healthcare services.

Under this bill, the United States and the Republic of Korea will establish a reciprocal agreement. Korea will reimburse the United States for healthcare services VA furnishes to these Korean-American veterans. In exchange, the United States will reimburse Korea for healthcare it provides to veterans of the United States Armed Forces residing in Korea.

Such an arrangement is not new. Since 1958, through its Allied Beneficiary Program, VA has had the authority to treat veterans who have served in the armed forces of nations that were allied with the United States during World War I and World War II. These veterans did not need to be United States citizens, and VA has the authority to treat veterans of any combat era.

Now, VA furnishes this care through reciprocal agreements which have been established with the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and South Africa. In 1976, VA's Allied Beneficiary Program was extended to certain veterans who had served in the armed forces of Czechoslovakia or Poland during World War I or World War II who subsequently became U.S. citizens.

We recently observed the 50th anniversary of the date the last combat troops left Vietnam. It is far past time for our Nation to properly honor the service and sacrifice of South Koreans who served side by side with United States troops during the Vietnam war and have since become naturalized U.S. citizens. We must ensure they finally receive the same respect and consideration their counterparts from other allied nations have received for generations.

The needs of Korean-American veterans of the Vietnam war are no different from those of U.S.-born veterans. From Agent Orange exposure, to coping with complex injuries and mental illnesses, these veterans deserve the specialized care and services that only VA can provide. Many of them are entering their final years and should not have to wait any longer for this care.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 366, the Korean American VALOR Act.

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

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. KIM).

Mrs. KIM of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman BOST for yielding.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 366, the Korean American VALOR Act. I thank Ranking Member TAKANO for his leadership on this very important issue.

During his joint address to Congress, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol

highlighted that during the Korean war, "Korean and American soldiers stood shoulder to shoulder and fought bravely."

However, the Korean war was not the last time Korean soldiers fought alongside American troops. They fought side by side in the Vietnam war, sharing the same physical and mental scars from that conflict.

Many of these Korean troops eventually immigrated to the United States and became proud naturalized American citizens. I personally know several of these individuals, and I am eternally grateful for their service.

Unfortunately, because the United States does not currently have a reciprocal veterans' healthcare agreement with the Republic of Korea, these Korean Americans cannot access veterans' healthcare benefits. The Korean American VALOR Act will create a pathway for an agreement to be reached and for these veterans to receive access to VA healthcare. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from my home State of California. I am very confident this bill will become law, but we will need to make sure that we work together in a bipartisan way to make sure the reciprocal agreement finally gets put into effect.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE), my good friend, who holds a seat on the House Budget Committee, Homeland Security Committee, and the House Judiciary Committee. She is indeed a staunch advocate for all our military servicemembers and veterans.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman as well, Mr. TAKANO, for his vision and leadership and the years of service that he has given to the Veterans' Affairs Committee. We could not have a more stalwart champion for the veterans of America.

I thank my friends on the other side of the aisle and certainly, our colleague from California, who made a very important point. For this to work it has to be bipartisan. I hope we all will lean into the bipartisan efforts that need to be done to ensure not only its passage but its implementation.

As the ranking member indicated, I am on the Homeland Security Committee and the Budget Committee. Many times in those committees we see the concerns of domestic security. We also see the concerns of effectively utilizing all of our tools to ensure the proper budget for the people of the United States of America.

I cannot think, as we approach Memorial Day, and as we commemorate the accomplishments of Asian Americans in this great month of May, interacting with all of our community, that we would not find an appropriate time to honor those Korean-American soldiers who fought alongside of our fellow Vietnam soldiers in a battle that

was for democracy and protecting, if you will, the sense of equality, protecting the people of that era and of that war.

These soldiers bled. They rescued. They stood in front of our soldiers in terms of being comrades and fighting alongside. They saved lives. They lost lives.

I think that it is important to take note of those who served, who were members of the armed forces of the Republic of Korea and are considered veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States, for purposes of the provision of healthcare by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

For so long, I would listen to my Vietnam vets before we really answered their call on Agent Orange and saw them get very sick, saw many of them pass away, talking about Agent Orange over and over again, and it just seemed that it was not being heard.

Thank goodness we have done so many different things, such as the PACT Act, Agent Orange Act, all during my tenure as a Member of the United States Congress. We finally understood the truth of what the veterans were saying, and every time they speak, we should listen.

I was with veterans over the weekend, and I thank them everywhere I go. Every speech I make in my community, I ask veterans to rise, and I say thank you.

In this instance, title 38 is a special pay authority used to recruit and retain employees in certain healthcare occupations. It allows NIH to be competitive with other healthcare facilities.

However, this would expand the eligibility of these benefits, this Korean American VALOR Act, to veterans who served in the armed forces of the Republic of Korea during the Vietnam war and have since become naturalized citizens, almost 300,000, and how many others served.

So this legislation is clearly evidence of our relationship between the Republic of Korea and the friendship that we have established.

□ 1645

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. As we heard from the South Korean President who spoke to a joint session just a few weeks ago, he talked about patriotism, democracy, and the unity of our nations. It is absolutely imperative that we support these Korean war vets who stood alongside of us and acknowledge that they served in Vietnam. They are now naturalized citizens, and they, in fact, have the evidence of the illness. It is so important to call them Korean American Vietnam veterans, naturalized citizens. We want them to get the honor of the Korean American VALOR Act. I ask my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 366 the Korean American Vietnam Allies Long Overdue for Relief (VALOR) Act.

H.R. 366 would amend title 38, United States Code, to treat certain individuals who served in Vietnam as a member of the armed forces of the Republic of Korea as a veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States for purposes of the provision of health care by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Title 38 is a special pay authority used to recruit and retain employees in certain health care occupations. It allows NIH to be competitive with other health care facilities in the area.

The Korean American VALOR Act would expand the eligibility of these benefits to veterans who served in the armed forces of the Republic of Korea during the Vietnam War and have since become naturalized U.S. citizens.

This bipartisan legislation, when enacted into law, will provide veterans who served between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, and became U.S. citizens during or after such service, access to hospital and domiciliary care and medical services through the VA.

Approximately 3,000 Korean American Vietnam veterans are naturalized citizens—and the number of surviving veterans continues to dwindle.

As a result of their time in Vietnam, these veterans are falling ill from the diseases caused by exposure to Agent Orange and other toxins and are not receiving adequate care.

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) fully supports the passage of the Korean American VALOR Act H.R. 366.

The Korean American VALOR Act will protect our veterans that served in Vietnam by providing them with the healthcare relief they deserve.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, we do need to remember that this is a perfect week to do this when Memorial Day is coming up, and we are honored to make sure that these veterans are recognized in the way they should be and that they do receive healthcare.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers.

Again, I ask all my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 366, the Korean American VALOR Act. Might I just add to the chairman's assertion that this is the perfect week to pass this bill. I have already mentioned the 70th anniversary of our historic alliance, but now as we in the Indo-Pacific must strengthen our alliance, I also want to add my congratulations to both the nations of Japan and the Republic of Korea for making great strides to improve their relationships and to afford us the opportunity in the trilateral alliance among the United States, Japan, and South Korea to become stronger allies.

This legislation, I believe, is part of the entire effort to become stronger allies with greater cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.

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

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Members to support this legislation.

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. 366.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VET-TEC AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2023

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1669) to amend title 38, United States Code, to make permanent the high technology pilot program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1669

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 "VET-TEC Authorization Act of 2023".

SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HIGH TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM.

(a) *HIGH TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM.—*

(1) *IN GENERAL.—*Chapter 36 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§ 3699C. High technology program

"(a) *ESTABLISHMENT.—*(1) *The Secretary shall carry out a program under which the Secretary provides covered individuals with the opportunity to enroll in high technology programs of education that the Secretary determines provide training or skills sought by employers in a relevant field or industry.*

"(2) *Not more than 6,000 covered individuals may participate in the program under this section in any fiscal year.*

"(b) *AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE.—*(1) *The Secretary shall provide, to each covered individual who pursues a high technology program of education under this section, educational assistance in amounts equal to the amounts provided under section 3313(c)(1) of this title, including with respect to the housing stipend described in that section and in accordance with the treatment of programs that are distance learning and programs that are less than half-time.*

"(2) *Under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall provide such amounts of educational assistance to a covered individual for each of the following:*

"(A) *A high technology program of education.*

"(B) *A second such program if—*

"(i) *the second such program begins at least 18 months after the covered individual graduates from the first such program; and*

"(ii) *the covered individual uses educational assistance under chapter 33 of this title to pursue the second such program.*

"(c) *CONTRACTS.—*(1) *For purposes of carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall seek to enter into contracts with any number of qualified providers of high technology programs of education for the provision of such programs to covered individuals. Each such contract shall provide for the conditions under which the Secretary may terminate the contract with the provider and the procedures for providing for the graduation of students who were enrolled in a program provided by such provider in the case of such a termination.*

"(2) *A contract under this subsection shall provide that the Secretary shall pay to a provider—*

"(A) *upon the enrollment of a covered individual in the program, 25 percent of the cost of the tuition and other fees for the program of education for the individual;*

"(B) *upon graduation of the individual from the program, 25 percent of such cost; and*

"(C) *50 percent of such cost upon—*

"(i) *the successful employment of the covered individual for a period—*

"(I) *of 180 days in the field of study of the program; and*

"(II) *that begins not later than 180 days following graduation of the covered individual from the program;*

"(ii) *the employment of the individual by the provider for a period of one year; or*

"(iii) *the enrollment of the individual in a program of education to continue education in such field of study.*

"(3) *For purposes of this section, a provider of a high technology program of education is qualified if—*

"(A) *the provider employs instructors whom the Secretary determines are experts in their respective fields in accordance with paragraph (5);*

"(B) *the provider has successfully provided the high technology program for at least one year;*

"(C) *the provider does not charge tuition and fees to a covered individual who receives assistance under this section to pursue such program that are higher than the tuition and fees charged by such provider to another individual; and*

"(D) *the provider meets the approval criteria developed by the Secretary under paragraph (4).*

"(4)(A) *The Secretary shall prescribe criteria for approving providers of a high technology program of education under this section.*

"(B) *In developing such criteria, the Secretary may consult with State approving agencies.*

"(C) *Such criteria are not required to meet the requirements of section 3672 of this title.*

"(D) *Such criteria shall include the job placement rate, in the field of study of a program of education, of covered individuals who complete such program of education.*

"(5) *The Secretary shall determine whether instructors are experts under paragraph (3)(A) based on evidence furnished to the Secretary by the provider regarding the ability of the instructors to—*

"(A) *identify professions in need of new employees to hire, tailor the programs to meet market needs, and identify the employers likely to hire graduates;*

"(B) *effectively teach the skills offered to covered individuals;*

"(C) *provide relevant industry experience in the fields of programs offered to incoming covered individuals; and*

"(D) *demonstrate relevant industry experience in such fields of programs.*

"(6) *In entering into contracts under this subsection, the Secretary shall give preference to a provider of a high technology program of education—*

"(A) *from which at least 70 percent of graduates find full-time employment in the field of study of the program during the 180-day period beginning on the date the student graduates from the program; or*

"(B) *that offers tuition reimbursement for any student who graduates from such a program and does not find employment described in subparagraph (A).*

"(d) *EFFECT ON OTHER ENTITLEMENT.—*(1) *If a covered individual enrolled in a high technology program of education under this section has remaining entitlement to educational assistance under chapter 30, 32, 33, 34, or 35 of this title, entitlement of the individual to educational assistance under this section shall be charged at the rate of one month of such remaining entitlement for each such month of educational assistance under this section.*