

teaches them how to best transfer these skills into the private sector.

I again urge my colleagues to support this legislation, which provides counseling and resources our veterans need to begin their journey in starting their own small business.

Mr. Speaker, you and I both know that we have lost friends in combat. We lost them 16, 20 years ago. We are losing them today, too. We are losing them at a rate that is unsustainable, 22 a day.

Until the DOD and the VA transition to where they hand off one well-trained soldier, sailor, airman, or marine into a well-trained civilian, we must always do more. This is a good start.

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

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, let me first thank all of our veterans who have dedicated their lives to service. Their dedication to our country and commitment to preserving our freedoms is greatly appreciated.

As our Nation's servicemembers complete their final tour and begin their transition back to civilian life, it is important that we provide opportunities for them to pursue the American Dream. Owning and running a successful small business is the epitome of that dream.

Codifying the Boots to Business Program would allow thousands of servicemembers, their spouses, and veterans to receive vital training on how to build a successful small business.

I thank Mr. SCHNEIDER, Chairman WILLIAMS, Mr. MCGARVEY, and Mr. ELLZEY for their bipartisan work on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the Veterans Entrepreneurship Training Act, as amended, and I urge my colleagues to vote "yes."

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1606, the Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Act.

This bipartisan legislation provides statutory authority for the Boots to Business Program, which provides entrepreneurship training to individuals including veterans and active members of the Armed Forces, to be administered by the Small Business Administration.

The Boots to Business program provides entrepreneurship education and training, offering a general understanding of entrepreneurship and relevant business ownership principles.

Through this program, veterans learn about the abilities, information, and tools required to start a business, such as how to create a business plan and the resources offered by the Small Business Administration.

Active-Duty Service members, including National Guard and Reserves, Veterans, and their spouses are eligible to participate in the program.

Our veterans dedicated their lives to protecting the freedom of all Americans and it is critical that they are armed with the tools, resources, and training to be successful as they return to civilian life.

This bill plays an important role in smoothing that transition and constitutes an important

step in preparing veterans to thrive in the private sector.

Notably, many of the same skills that are fundamental in entrepreneurship and business ownership have already been developed in veterans through their time in the military, including leadership, problem solving, and discipline.

This program will help veterans leverage those skill sets towards career success in civilian life.

I am proud to say that Houston is home to over 280,000 veterans and is ranked 10th nationally for the newest businesses per capita.

This bill will help connect Houston's veterans with the wealth of opportunities for small business entrepreneurship across the city.

Further, this bill will help address the ongoing crisis of homelessness among America's veterans on a national scale.

Today, more than 1 in 10 people experiencing homelessness are veterans who fearlessly and selflessly served our Nation.

They have kept their promise to serve our Nation; they have willingly risked their lives to protect the country we all love.

We must now ensure that we keep our promises to our veterans and provide them with the support they deserve as they pursue success in civilian life.

This bill is an important part of that effort.

By providing entrepreneurship training and support, we can help give veterans the tools they need to get back on their feet and achieve greater financial security.

Our Nation has a proud legacy of appreciation and commitment to the men and women who have worn the uniform in defense of this country.

We must be united in seeing that every soldier, sailor, airman, and marine is welcomed back with all the care and compassion this grateful Nation can bestow.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1606 and in equipping our veterans with the tools, resources, and training for their long-term success.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ELLZEY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1606, 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. ELLZEY. 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.

FISCAL YEAR 2023 VETERANS AFFAIRS MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 30) to authorize major medical facility projects for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 30

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 "Fiscal Year 2023 Veterans Affairs Major Medical Facility Authorization Act".

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY PROJECTS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out the following major medical facility projects in fiscal year 2023 at the locations specified and in an amount for each project not to exceed the amount specified for such location:

(1) Construction of a community-based outpatient clinic and national cemetery in Alameda, California, in an amount not to exceed \$395,000,000.

(2) Construction of a community living center and renovation of domiciliary and outpatient facilities in Canandaigua, New York, in an amount not to exceed \$506,400,000.

(3) Construction of a new health care center in El Paso, Texas, in an amount not to exceed \$700,000,000.

(4) Seismic upgrade and specialty care improvements in Fort Harrison, Montana, in an amount not to exceed \$88,600,000.

(5) Realignment and closure of the Livermore campus in Livermore, California, in an amount not to exceed \$490,000,000.

(6) Construction of a new medical facility in Louisville, Kentucky, in an amount not to exceed \$1,013,000,000.

(7) Seismic retrofit and renovation, roadway and site improvements, construction of a new specialty care facility, demolition, and expansion of parking facilities in Portland, Oregon, in an amount not to exceed \$523,000,000.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2023 or the year in which funds are appropriated for the Construction, Major Projects account, \$3,716,000,000 for the projects authorized in subsection (a).

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 may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 30.

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 in support of S. 30. This bill would authorize VA major medical facility construction projects in California, New York, Texas, Montana, Kentucky, and Oregon.

As chairman, I have committed time and time again to provide the necessary funding that ensures our Nation's veterans receive the quality care they deserve.

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It is well known that the VA healthcare system has serious infrastructure issues and needs critical renovations. Authorizing these projects will help the thousands of veterans who live in these six States have better access to care in modern settings.

I appreciate Senator TESTER and Senator MORAN for their work introducing this important bill. I also thank Representative CHAVEZ-DEREMER for introducing a similar bill in the House. It has my full support 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 to express my support for S. 30, the Fiscal Year 2023 Veterans Affairs Major Medical Facility Authorization Act.

I thank the chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, Senator TESTER, and Ranking Member MORAN for introducing this important legislation.

Every year, the Department of Veterans Affairs submits an annual budget request to Congress. Our job is to authorize and appropriate the funding VA needs to care for America's veterans and their families.

More than 9 million veterans are enrolled in VA's healthcare system, utilizing roughly 1,300 healthcare facilities across the system. Within VA's budget request are funds to replace and modernize these medical facilities.

This year's major construction request totals just over \$3.7 billion and will build a new healthcare center in El Paso, Texas; construct an outpatient clinic and a national cemetery in Alameda, California; erect a new medical facility in Louisville, Kentucky; and allow for seismic upgrades and specialty care improvements in Fort Harrison, Montana, among other things.

Mr. Speaker, funding VA infrastructure remains an important and critical issue. In recent years, the committee has highlighted VA's aging infrastructure and the critical need to address that issue. Delivering 21st century healthcare using outdated facilities is far from ideal and certainly not what our veterans deserve. If the VA is to be inclusive and treat all veterans who have served, we should not delay retrofitting facilities as we strive to meet the growing and ever-changing needs of our diverse veteran community.

Last year, we passed my Honoring our PACT Act, which will significantly expand eligibility and, consequently, utilization of VA healthcare in the coming years.

Just last week, NPR published a story highlighting, once again, a Medicare survey showing VA hospitals are outperforming private hospitals in all categories of patient satisfaction. Despite outdated, antiquated facilities, VA still provides exceptional care. Imagine the levels of care VA could achieve if it had all the needed resources.

In order to serve our veterans and provide them with the care they deserve and need, we must start making serious investments in our outdated infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in passing S. 30, the Fiscal Year 2023 Veterans Affairs Major Medical Facility Authorization Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support for S. 30, Fiscal Year 2023 Veterans Affairs Major Medical Facility Authorization Act.

It is always my honor to address issues related to the wellbeing of the women and men who served and continue to serve our country.

As noted by the Congressional Budget Office, this bill authorizes the appropriation of \$3.7 billion for fiscal year 2023 for the construction and renovation of seven major VA medical facilities for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

With approximately 360,000 employees, roughly 1,600 health care facilities, 144 medical centers, and 1,232 outpatient sites, the Department of Veterans Affairs remains one of the largest and most complex agencies in the U.S. Government.

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) provides health care to approximately 9 million veterans annually.

Over the past ten years, more than 60,000 veterans have died by suicide, and 20 veterans die by suicide each day.

Between 2005 and 2017, nearly 79,000 veterans killed themselves, more than the total number of troops who have died in the wars in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan combined (roughly 65,000).

There has never been a more urgent time than this that requires the urgent need for rebuilding the department's flailing infrastructure and resolving staffing shortage in VA medical facilities.

It is equally important to keep the focus on efforts to reduce wait times and availability by specialty, adequately address the veteran suicide rate, and find lasting solutions to the overall healthcare needs of our veterans.

It is therefore appropriate for this House to vote for this bill to ensure that the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) major medical facilities receive the needed attention that they deserve to meet the health needs of our veterans.

This bill does not only help with furnishing inpatient and outpatient care and treatment of veterans and their dependents, but also supports the care and treatment in non-VA facilities; community-based outpatient clinics, medical supplies, and equipment.

This bill will benefit the operations of VA medical centers (VAMCs) and other medical facilities, such as community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs), Vet Centers, and other veteran-related community care programs.

It will also benefit many VA medical facility services like the Community Care Program (VCCP), the Camp Lejeune Family Member Program (CLFMP), CHAMPVA, the Foreign Medical Program (FMP), the Children of Women Vietnam Veterans Health Care Benefits Program (CWWV), and the Indian Health

Service (IHS)/Tribal Health Programs (THP) Reimbursement Agreements Program.

I applaud President Biden's administration for keeping its promise to adopt a comprehensive public health and crisis sector approach to address suicide among veterans, service members, and their families within his first 200 days in office.

Since taking office, the Biden administration has made commendable progress in filling the department's 50,000 empty positions especially in ways that reflect the diversity that exists within the active-duty and veteran community.

This bill helps to build on that progress by addressing the department's aging infrastructure, which has been in place for roughly 58 years.

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, S. 30.

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.

PFC. JUSTIN T. PATON DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CLINIC

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3672) to designate the clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Indian River, Michigan, as the "Pfc. Justin T. Paton Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3672

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

SECTION 1. DESIGNATION OF PFC. JUSTIN T. PATON DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CLINIC.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs located at 5739 Hwy M-68, Indian River, Michigan, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the "Pfc. Justin T. Paton Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic".

(b) REFERENCE.—Any reference in any law, regulation, map, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the clinic referred to in subsection (a) shall be considered to be a reference to the "Pfc. Justin T. Paton Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic".

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 may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 3672.

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