

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3571.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3571 makes technical corrections to statutory references to title 2, title 50, and title 52 of the United States Code.

These titles are where laws relating to Congress, war and national defense, and voting and elections are classified.

This bill was submitted to the Judiciary Committee by the Office of Law Revision Counsel.

These titles have been editorially reorganized to make them more clear and accessible.

When titles of the Code are reorganized, statutory references may no longer be accurate.

This bill does not substantively change any law on the books. It simply updates statutory references in the Code to ensure that they are correct.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3571, which makes a number of technical amendments to various provisions of the U.S. Code, while making no substantive changes.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Ms. DEAN) for introducing the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the 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 Virginia (Mr. CLINE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3571.

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.

ADDITIONAL PLACES FOR HOLDING COURT

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 786) to amend title 28, United States Code, to provide an additional place for holding court for the Pecos Division of the Western District of Texas, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 786

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

SECTION 1. ADDITIONAL PLACES FOR HOLDING COURT.

(a) PECOS DIVISION OF THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS.—Section 124(d)(6) of title 28, United States Code, is amended, in the matter preceding paragraph (7), by inserting “and Alpine” after “Pecos”.

(b) WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON.—Section 128(b) of title 28, United States Code, is amended by inserting “Mount Vernon,” after “Tacoma,”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CLINE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 786.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, our courts and judicial system are the envy of the world.

Americans rely on the Federal courts every day to protect their rights and obtain relief when those rights are violated.

They also are the means by which we adjudicate claims that someone has violated our criminal laws.

That is why improving and ensuring accessibility to the courts for our citizens is so important.

This important bill adds just four words to the United States Code to save thousands of Americans in Texas and Washington lengthy and burdensome trips just to reach the nearest Federal courthouse.

This bill authorizes the Federal courts in the Western District of Texas and the Western District of Washington to hold court in Alpine, Texas, and Mount Vernon, Washington, respectively.

Both locations already have existing facilities necessary to hold court, so the cost of this bill is minimal.

By authorizing these courts to utilize these locations, Congress will reduce administrative burdens on the court system and logistical burdens on those with business before these courts.

For example, the Judicial Conference of the United States has noted that Americans in the Western District of Texas must drive as far as 100 miles to reach the courthouse in Pecos, Texas.

The Judicial Conference has identified similar hardships for Americans in the Western District of Washington.

Mr. Speaker, I support this commonsense, bipartisan bill, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do the same.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 786.

This legislation would amend title 28 of the United States Code to provide an additional place for holding court in the Western District of Texas and in the Western District of Washington. These additional courthouses are needed to better serve the 12.2 million people who call these two districts home.

Both of these districts are comprised of wide areas of land. The Western District of Washington takes up half of Washington State. The Western District of Texas covers the western 68 counties of the State. Citizens of these two districts often need to travel for hours to access the courthouse doors.

On paper, our basic rights do not change depending on where we live. In practice, that is exactly what is happening. It makes no sense that just because someone lives in a more rural, broader district, they should incur dramatically increased travel time and administrative costs to seek justice. Adding courthouses is a small step in the right direction toward making the courthouse doors accessible to all Americans no matter where they live.

The Judicial Conference has recommended the addition of these two courthouses, a recommendation that grew even more urgent after the Western District of Washington's Bellingham facility had part of its roof collapse.

This country cannot have a flourishing justice system when its buildings are falling apart, its staff are underpaid, and there is a perpetual shortage of judges to fairly administer the laws.

This bill will not fix all of these problems, but it will take a small step to help millions of Americans gain equal access to justice. I think it is a step worth taking.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representatives TONY GONZALES, RICK LARSEN, and SUZAN DELBENE in the House, and Senators CORNYN, MURRAY, CRUZ, and CANTWELL in the Senate for working on a bipartisan basis to introduce this legislation to improve the lives of the residents of Texas and Washington.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation makes a modest but important change to help improve access to justice for millions of Americans. I thank the sponsors, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the 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 Virginia (Mr. CLINE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 786.

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.

ENCOURAGING THE CONNECTING OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES IN THE UNITED STATES TO SUPPORT STRUCTURES NECESSARY TO TRANSITION FROM THE BATTLEFIELD

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 848) encouraging the connecting of members of the Armed Forces in the United States to support structures necessary to transition from the battlefield.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 848

Whereas the number of suicides of members of the Armed Forces serving on active duty increased to 377 in 2020, an increase from 348 in 2019;

Whereas the suicide rate for veterans has steadily increased since 2006, with 6,261 veterans taking their own lives in 2019;

Whereas, after adjusting for sex and age, the rate of veteran suicide in 2018 was 27.5 per 100,000 individuals, higher than the rate among all United States adults, which was 18.3 per 100,000 individuals;

Whereas more veterans have died by suicide in the last 10 years than members of the Armed Forces who died from combat in Vietnam;

Whereas many of the veterans who take their own lives have had no contact with the Department of Veterans Affairs;

Whereas the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic can lead to increased isolation and disconnection, further exacerbating mental and physical ailments such as post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury;

Whereas the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention note that law enforcement officers and firefighters are more likely to die by suicide than in the line of duty, and emergency medical services providers are 1.39 times more likely to die by suicide than members of the general public;

Whereas invisible wounds linked to an underlying and undiagnosed traumatic brain injury can mirror many mental health conditions, a problem that can be addressed through appropriate medical treatment; and

Whereas additional research is needed to highlight the connection between traumatic brain injury as a root cause of invisible wounds and suicide by members of the Armed Forces and veterans: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) encourages all individuals in the United States, especially members of the Armed Forces serving on active duty and veterans, to call a warrior, have an honest conversation, and connect them with support, understanding that making a warrior call could save a life; and

(2) implores all individuals in the United States to commit themselves to engaging with members of the Armed Forces and veterans to promote solutions and treatment for the invisible scars that members of the Armed Forces carry.

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.

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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. Res. 848.

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 H. Res. 848, and I thank my fellow veteran, Representative VAN ORDEN, for his leadership on this resolution.

As the chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I believe that we should celebrate the service of our veterans every day, not just like we did this weekend for Veterans Day. Every day, I am grateful to our veterans for their service to our country.

That is why this resolution is so important. Too many of our veterans are suffering in silence. Too many of our veterans are struggling to find their way. We owe it to them to do our part and reach out to let them know they are not alone.

This resolution encourages all Americans to connect with the persons in their lives who have served and offer a listening ear. Representative VAN ORDEN's resolution implores all Americans to help servicemembers and veterans find solutions and treatment for the wounds of battle that may not be visible. This resolution also highlights the importance of taking care of our brothers and sisters in arms before, during, and after their service.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to my colleague for introducing it, and I urge all Members to support it.

To any veteran who may be watching, please reach out to talk. Hope and help are available by dialing 988 and pressing 1. We need you, and we want to help you.

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 H. Res. 848, encouraging the connecting of members of the Armed Forces in the United States to support structures necessary to transition from the battlefield.

While I support this resolution and urge my colleagues to vote in support of it, I must register my disappointment that this is one of only two veteran- or servicemember-related measures that House leadership has chosen to work on this week, the week following Veterans Day.

The resolution asks members of the public to join Congress in thanking and supporting servicemembers in their transition out of the military into civilian life. That is worthwhile, but it does not come with any concrete action.

Our committee has favorably reported several bills to help our most vulnerable veterans. Those bills are waiting for action and have been for

months now. If we really wanted to honor servicemembers and veterans, we would be voting on those bills this week.

Mr. Speaker, we know that homeless veterans are eight times more likely to die by suicide, so we urgently need to get homeless veterans housed before the coldest and cruelest months of the year come upon us. Every day we fail to act, more disabled and elderly veterans are forced into the care of nursing homes and other institutional long-term care settings, even though they would prefer to be taken care of at home surrounded by their loved ones.

Let me also point out that while I find it telling that while jurisdiction over this resolution about servicemember transition lies primarily with the House Armed Services Committee, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs is here managing floor time. I am glad for this because our committee has been pushing to take primary oversight responsibility for the administration of the TAP program for years.

We hear from countless veterans that the administration of TAP by DOD falls flat. DOD is focused on readiness and making sure that servicemembers are focused on their mission of protecting our country, as they should be. Nevertheless, the bookend to that mission is helping servicemembers find success as civilians.

Because DOD has not focused on that transition, too many servicemembers separate from the military without a full picture of the earned benefits available to them as veterans, and it leaves them more vulnerable at an already stressful time.

I believe that it would make more sense for us to have primary jurisdiction over the TAP program to make sure the transition from the military to civilian life is as smooth as possible. We work with VA on healthcare and benefits delivery every single day, and we are better positioned than the Armed Services Committee to ensure veterans understand what life will look like out of the military.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see House leadership acknowledging our leadership role in the transition of servicemembers. I will continue to advocate that TAP be included as primarily within the Veterans' Affairs Committee's jurisdiction in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative VAN ORDEN for introducing this resolution, and I hope we can continue working together on continued improvements to the TAP program.

I urge this House to bring up additional veterans bills. We should not only thank veterans and servicemembers for their service. We should be backing up those thank-yous with action.

As we face yet another threat of a shutdown, I hope this Congress can stop operating from the brink and begin to do the work that is demanded of us. It is what we owe to veterans, and we should not abide by renegeing on our promises.