

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

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, this bill helps give Customs and Border Protection the certainty to know that they can enforce U.S. trade laws without fear of their authority being challenged in court.

Allowing our Customs agents the authority to go out 24 miles off the coast is consistent with what both Republican and Democratic Presidents have supported. This bill helps CBP protect the livelihoods of American workers. When foreigners cheat our U.S. trade system and avoid paying the rightful duties they owe, it is American workers and small businesses that suffer.

□ 1930

Improved trade enforcement not only helps our economy, but it will also help save American lives. Too many families know the pain of losing a loved one from a drug like fentanyl that should have never come into our country.

Customs and Border Protection needs the certainty and operational flexibility to catch smugglers before their deadly drugs reach our shore. We need to end the current inconsistency by which Congress has fully authorized the Coast Guard to pursue and board suspicious vessels up to 24 miles off of our coast but has not done the same for CBP.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to vote "yes" on this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 1137, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on additional motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

DANIEL J. HARVEY, JR. AND ADAM LAMBERT IMPROVING SERVICEMEMBER TRANSITION TO REDUCE VETERAN SUICIDE ACT

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3722) to require a pilot program on activities under the pre-separation transition process of members of the Armed Forces for a reduction in suicide among 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. 3722

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 "Daniel J. Harvey, Jr. and Adam Lambert Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act".

SEC. 2. ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN THE TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND THE SOLID START PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.—Section 1142(b) of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (5), by inserting "(11)," before "and (16)"; and

(2) by striking paragraph (11) and inserting the following:

"(11) Information concerning mental health, including—

"(A) the availability of mental health services furnished by the Secretary concerned, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or a non-profit entity;

"(B) the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, anxiety disorders, depression, chronic pain, sleep disorders, suicidal ideation, or other mental health conditions associated with service in the armed forces;

"(C) the risk of suicide, including signs, symptoms, and risk factors (including adverse childhood experiences, depression, bipolar disorder, homelessness, unemployment, and relationship strain);

"(D) the availability of treatment options and resources to address substance abuse, including alcohol, prescription drug, and opioid abuse;

"(E) the potential effects of the loss of community and support systems experienced by a member separating from the armed forces;

"(F) isolation from family, friends, or society; and

"(G) the potential stressors associated with separation from the armed forces.".

(b) SOLID START PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—Section 6320(b)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraphs (G) and (H) as subparagraphs (I) and (J), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subparagraph (F) the following new subparagraphs:

"(G) assisting eligible veterans who elect to enroll in the system of patient enrollment under section 1705(a) of this title;

"(H) educating veterans about mental health and counseling services available through the Veterans Health Administration;".

(c) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the

Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall jointly submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the information and materials developed pursuant to the amendments made by this Act.

(d) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(1) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. KIGGANS) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. 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 the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3722, the Daniel J. Harvey, Jr. and Adam Lambert Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act.

I commend the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUNN) for introducing this legislation and for his leadership on this important issue.

H.R. 3722 seeks to improve the Transition Assistance Program run by the Department of Defense and the Solid Start program run by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Both programs provide critical assistance to the over 200,000 warfighters who transition to civilian life each year.

Every departing servicemember is required to complete the TAP program before leaving the service. The program provides valuable information, education, and training on veteran benefits, financial planning, how to find a job and start a business, as well as mental health resources available to servicemembers and their families.

Departing military service can be a very stressful time for servicemembers and their families. Servicemembers often experience feelings of isolation and loss of community that can exacerbate other mental health conditions. H.R. 3722 seeks to ensure that all departing servicemembers receive information on how to recognize and cope with these stressors, as well as help them identify risk factors for suicide.

On behalf of the Armed Services Committee, we look forward to working with the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUNN) as this bill moves forward to address some issues that may hinder its proper execution by the DOD.

It is important that we regularly review transition programs like TAP and Solid Start and make sure they are meeting the needs of our departing servicemembers and their families.

The men and women of our Armed Forces sacrifice tremendously when they agree to serve our Nation. When that service is complete, the least we can do is ensure they have an opportunity for a healthy and successful civilian life. That is the goal of H.R. 3722.

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

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I join my colleague, Representative KIGGANS of Virginia, and rise in support of H.R. 3722, the Daniel J. Harvey, Jr. and Adam Lambert Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act.

As a proud United States Air Force veteran and voice for over 46,000 veterans in North Carolina's First Congressional District, I was proud to join my friend and colleague, Representative ZACH NUNN, in introducing this bipartisan bill last year ahead of Memorial Day weekend.

The suicide rate in our military ranks and among our veterans is unacceptable. We must not have servicemembers put themselves in harm's way fighting for our country only to return home to take their own lives.

By requiring the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to jointly pursue a 5-year pilot program, H.R. 3722 will help assess the feasibility of providing specified counseling and services as part of the Transition Assistance Program.

This bill will close the information gap and ensure veterans can access the services they need when and where they need them.

When our Active-Duty personnel take off their uniforms and begin to transition to civilian life, we must ensure they have the mental health resources and support they need not only to survive but thrive.

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

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUNN).

Mr. NUNN of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the story of Adam Lambert, a proud marine from Adel, Iowa.

Adam brought joy and laughter to his mother, Jill, and his father, Dean. He was a protective brother to his sisters, McKenzie and Anna.

Adam put himself before his country, his friends, his family, and his service.

During boot camp, Adam met a fellow marine named Daniel Harvey from Rhode Island. Together, these two became friends and stayed connected through their deployments and return to civilian life.

At 22 years old, sadly, Daniel died by suicide just a year after he left the Ma-

rines, and tragically, as was noted, Adam followed him less than a month later.

Unfortunately, Adam and Daniel's story all too often is becoming more common among our veterans. Veteran suicide is a casualty of war, one that demands immediate attention and action by this Congress.

The truth is that when our men and women in uniform leave the service, that transition to civilian life can be extremely difficult and often leaves servicemembers feeling very much left alone.

This is something I have witnessed firsthand as a 20-year combat veteran—as others have highlighted here from their military service—and as a squadron commander in the Air Force. You saw airmen struggle with the realities of life when they transitioned from service in defense of this Nation.

The pressure of employment, lack of fellowship, substance abuse, and finding a purpose weigh on all of our veterans as they return to civilian life, and many of our brothers and sisters sadly do not make it.

We need to do more to ensure that veterans are aware of the resources available to them as they leave the Armed Forces.

In honor of Adam and Daniel, as well as countless other servicemembers, I introduced the Daniel J. Harvey, Jr. and Adam Lambert Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act.

This bipartisan legislation led by veterans makes critical improvements to the Transition Assistance Program to provide servicemembers who are returning home with access to mental health resources, more frequent VA check-ins, and clear communication about available assistance programs as they navigate their return from the battlefield and before it is too late.

I thank all who have served our Nation for their service, and I strongly encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support and pass this critical legislation.

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative NUNN for bringing this bill forward, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS).

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chair KIGGANS for the opportunity to speak.

I stand before you today in support of H.R. 3722, the Daniel J. Harvey, Jr. and Adam Lambert Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act, which is co-led by my colleague from Iowa, Representative ZACH NUNN.

Our brave men and women in uniform have sacrificed immeasurably to defend our Nation and uphold our freedoms, and as a 24-year veteran, I know only too well that when they return home, many face significant challenges

transitioning back to civilian life. Too often, these challenges lead to tragic outcomes, including the heartbreaking reality of veteran suicide.

This bipartisan bill presents an opportunity for us to take meaningful action to address this crisis. By implementing a pilot program to enhance the pre-separation transition process for our servicemembers, we can provide them with the necessary support and resources to navigate this challenging period successfully.

The proposed model outlined in this bill offers comprehensive education on the potential risks and challenges facing our transitioning servicemembers, including issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder, substance use disorders, and homelessness.

Additionally, it provides vital information on available resources and treatment options through the Department of Veterans Affairs and other organizations.

Furthermore, by offering individualized services such as assessments of eligibility for VA healthcare and counseling and coordination of healthcare based on individual needs, we can ensure that our veterans receive the support they deserve as they reintegrate back into civilian life.

This is not a partisan issue; it is a moral imperative. We must always stand for our military and honor our veterans. By supporting H.R. 3722, we reaffirm our commitment to fulfilling this sacred duty.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Iowa, Representative NUNN, for introducing this legislation, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in supporting this bill and taking decisive action to reduce veteran suicide rates and ensure that those who have served our country receive the support and care they need and deserve.

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield myself the balance of my time for the purpose of closing.

Mr. Speaker, as we conclude today on this vital legislation, I am compelled to emphasize the significance of the issue at hand.

According to the VA's "2023 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report," 6,392 veterans died by suicide in 2021—114 more than the previous year. This rate is more than double that of the civilian adult population, underscoring a crisis that requires immediate and decisive action.

The stories of Corporal Adam Lambert and Lance Corporal Daniel J. Harvey, Jr., who both tragically lost their lives to suicide shortly after serving our country in Afghanistan, remind us that we must do more.

The enhancement of DOD and VA transition assistance programs in H.R. 3722 will ensure that every servicemember leaving the military is not only aware of but also able to access resources to address mental health conditions, substance use disorders, and

other risk factors associated with suicide.

To honor the legacy of our fallen, we must recommit ourselves to our servicemembers and veterans, our real heroes.

Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support the legislation. Again, I thank the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUNN) for introducing this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1945

Mrs. KIGGANS. Mr. Speaker, in closing, just to reiterate some of the statements and points that have been made by my fellow veteran colleagues, it is hard to transition out of the military.

We wake up every day with a mission, and that is a great mission—to defend our great Nation. We are part of a team, and it gets us out of bed in the morning. There is no better, no higher calling than that.

The day that that stops and the day that you are not a part of that team, and you might not know what is next ahead in life, and there is a lot of transition with a lot unknown, it is hard. We have to do better for our servicemen and -women that are transitioning out.

We are so thankful for the service of the two young Marines that we spoke about today, but even one veteran suicide is too many.

I know that even in my district in Hampton Roads, Virginia, when we take ships out of commission, we put them in the yards, or we put people on medical hold, we have seen suicides there as well.

Again, taking those servicemembers out of their role, their mission of defending the country every day and putting them in a holding pen, is very hard on their mental health. When we transition them out of the service, there is no more challenging time than that.

This is the least we can do. It is a step in the right direction, but education is a powerful tool. It is one of the tools we have here in Congress.

Mandating that this education be given to our servicemen and -women who are often young people transitioning out who have great lives ahead, long lives ahead, and just helping them to know what resources are available to them, especially for mental health, can be such a challenging time.

I urge all of my colleagues here to support this bill. I look forward to supporting it myself, 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 (Mrs. KIGGANS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3722, 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.

VETERANS EDUCATION TRANSPARENCY AND TRAINING ACT

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5914) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the processes to approve programs of education for purposes of the educational assistance programs 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. 5914

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 “Veterans Education Transparency and Training Act” or the “VETT Act”.

SEC. 2. PROCESSES TO APPROVE PROGRAMS OF EDUCATION FOR PURPOSES OF THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) LIMITATION OF DISAPPROVAL OF PROGRAMS OF EDUCATION FOR FAILURE TO PROVIDE CERTAIN FORMS.—Section 3679(f)(5) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking “this paragraph” and inserting “this subparagraph”;

(2) in subparagraph (B), by striking “this paragraph” and inserting “subparagraph (A)”;

and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(C) If an educational institution cannot provide to an individual a form under paragraph (1) that contains all of the information required under subparagraph (A) of such paragraph, the educational institution shall provide to such individual, with the form under such paragraph, a notice—

“(i) that specifies what such information may be inaccurate or incomplete; and

“(ii) that includes, in place of the information that may be inaccurate or incomplete, the best estimate available on the date of such notice.”.

(b) PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION ABOUT TRAINING FOR SCHOOL CERTIFYING OFFICIALS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a website to serve as a central location for the publication of information about the training that the Department of Veterans Affairs provides for school certifying officials and shall update such information on a regular basis.

SEC. 3. MODIFICATION OF RULES FOR APPROVAL OF COMMERCIAL DRIVER EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR PURPOSES OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3680A(e) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (3) as subparagraphs (A) through (C), respectively;

(2) in the matter before subparagraph (A), as redesignated by paragraph (1), by inserting “(1)” before “The Secretary”;

(3) in paragraph (1)(B), as redesignated by paragraph (1), by inserting “except as provided in paragraph (2),” before “the course”; and

(4) by adding at the end the following new paragraph (2):

“(2)(A) Subject to this paragraph, a commercial driver education program is exempt from paragraph (1)(B) for a branch of an educational institution if the commercial driver education program offered at the branch by the educational institution—

“(i) is appropriately licensed; and

“(ii)(I) the branch is located in a State in which the same commercial driver education program is offered by the same educational institution at another branch of that educational institution in the same State that is approved for purposes of this chapter by a State approving agency or the Secretary when acting in the role of a State approving agency; or

“(II)(aa) the branch is located in a State in which the same commercial driver education program is not offered at another branch of the same educational institution in the same State; and

“(bb) the branch has been operating for a period of at least one year using the same curriculum as a commercial driver education program offered by the educational institution at another location that is approved for purposes of this chapter by a State approving agency or the Secretary when acting in the role of a State approving agency.

“(B)(i) In order for a commercial driver education program of an educational institution offered at a branch described in paragraph (1)(B) to be exempt under subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, the educational institution shall submit to the Secretary each year that paragraph (1)(B) would otherwise apply a report that demonstrates that the curriculum at the new branch is the same as the curriculum at the primary location.

“(ii) Reporting under clause (i) shall be submitted in accordance with such requirements as the Secretary shall establish in consultation with the State approving agencies.

“(C)(i) The Secretary may withhold an exemption under subparagraph (A) for any educational institution or branch of an educational institution as the Secretary considers appropriate.

“(ii) In making any determination under clause (i), the Secretary may consult with the Secretary of Transportation on the performance of a provider of a commercial driver program, including the status of the provider within the Training Provider Registry of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration when appropriate.

“(D) The Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a notification not later than 30 days after the Secretary grants an exemption under this paragraph. Such notification shall identify the educational institution and branch of such educational institution granted such exemption.”.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT OF REQUIREMENTS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish requirements under section 3680A(e)(2)(B)(ii) of such title, as added by subsection (a).

(2) RULEMAKING.—In promulgating any rules to carry out paragraph (2) of section 3680A(e) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall consult with State approving agencies.

(3) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply to commercial driver education programs on and after the day that is 180 days after the date on which the Secretary establishes the requirements under paragraph (1) 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 may