

Like I said before, Colonel Mize was a true American hero, and the people of Alabama's Fourth Congressional District are proud to call him our own. We will not forget the legacy he left behind, and neither should any American. That is why renaming the veterans clinic in Guntersville will honor Colonel Mize's service and inspire future generations of Alabamians.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, Chairman BOST and Ranking Member TAKANO, for their work in bringing this legislation to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 5464 to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Guntersville, Alabama, as the Colonel Ola Lee Mize Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic.

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

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of our 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. 5464.

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.

RESTORING BENEFITS TO DEFRAUDED VETERANS ACT

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4190) to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to repay the estates of deceased beneficiaries for certain benefits paid by the Secretary and misused by fiduciaries of such beneficiaries, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4190

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 "Restoring Benefits to Defrauded Veterans Act".

SEC. 2. REISSUANCE BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OF ESTATES OF DECEASED BENEFICIARIES FOR CERTAIN BENEFITS PAID BY THE SECRETARY AND MISUSED BY FIDUCIARIES.

Section 6107 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (c) and (d) as subsections (d) and (e), respectively;

(2) by inserting after subsection (b) the following new subsection (c):

"(c) REISSUANCE OF AMOUNTS IN THE CASE OF A DECEASED BENEFICIARY.—(1) If a beneficiary described in subsection (a) predeceases a payment under subsection (a) or (b), the Secretary shall pay such benefits, subject to paragraph

(2), to an individual or entity in accordance with section 5121 of this title.

"(2) The Secretary may not make a payment under this subsection to a fiduciary who misused benefits of the beneficiary."; and

(3) in subsection (e), as redesignated, by striking "subsection (a) or (b)" and inserting "this section".

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. 4190, as amended.

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. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4190, as amended.

This bill was introduced by Representative TRONE. It ensures that no fiduciary who steals a veteran's earned VA benefits can profit from their misuse if the veteran passes.

Mr. Speaker, I support the bill wholeheartedly, and 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.R. 4190, the Restoring Benefits to Defrauded Veterans Act, as amended.

Mr. Speaker, it is an unfortunate reality that veterans, especially elderly veterans, find themselves as prime targets for fraud. It is even more unfortunate that oftentimes this fraud is perpetuated by those closest to the veteran, sometimes even family and friends who are tasked with assisting that veteran.

Thankfully, VA has a set of policies and procedures for uncovering, investigating, and prosecuting that fraud, which includes making restitution to the veteran.

Earlier this year, we passed H.R. 4016, the Veteran Fraud Reimbursement Act, introduced by Representative GERRY CONNOLLY, to help expedite that process. I urge the Senate to quickly take up that bill, as well.

Sadly, though, it sometimes happens that the veteran who was the victim of this fraud passes away before VA is able to make restitution, but VA is currently barred from making the estate of that beneficiary whole.

H.R. 4190, introduced by Representative DAVID TRONE, seeks to create a set of procedures for VA to follow to restore or reinstate benefits for veterans who were defrauded but unfortunately die before VA can compensate them.

More importantly, for those veterans who may have been defrauded by a family member, it also prevents VA

from repaying benefits to anyone who may have been a party to the fraud, regardless of whether they may have been named in the veteran's will as an heir.

Mr. Speaker, we owe our veterans and their survivors all the protections we can possibly afford them through the law. H.R. 4190 offers one more avenue to ensure veterans are receiving the benefits they have earned in spite of those who seek to defraud them.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this measure, and I encourage the Senate to quickly pass this bill, as well.

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

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. TRONE), my good friend who is the author of H.R. 4190. He currently serves on the House Appropriations Committee and the Budget Committee. He is also a former member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Mr. TRONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge a "yes" vote on my bill, the Restoring Benefits to Defrauded Veterans Act.

Today, we must remember that the courageous men and women who have dedicated their lives to defend our country and our freedoms still need us. My bill addresses this longstanding issue affecting millions of veterans: fraud.

Just last year, the Federal Trade Commission estimated \$477 million was stolen from veterans, military personnel, and their spouses. This is a \$63 million, or 15 percent, increase from the year before.

Under current law, if a veteran passes away before their case is resolved, their family cannot be reimbursed for lost dollars. That is unacceptable.

My bill, the Restoring Benefits to Defrauded Veterans Act, would help the veterans and their families reclaim these defrauded dollars and get them access to the money that they earned. Specifically, the legislation requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to reissue the misused benefits to a beneficiary's estate in cases where the beneficiary passed before the reissuance.

We must ensure that veterans and their families are able to recapture any lost benefits they were scammed out of. It is just the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge a "yes" vote.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 4190, the Restoring Benefits to Defrauded Veterans Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues 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. 4190, 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.

FAIRNESS FOR SERVICEMEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES ACT OF 2024

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2911) to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to periodically review the automatic maximum coverage under the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance program and the Veterans' Group Life Insurance program, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2911

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 "Fairness for Servicemembers and their Families Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. PERIODIC REVIEW OF AUTOMATIC MAXIMUM COVERAGE UNDER SERVICEMEMBERS' GROUP LIFE INSURANCE AND VETERANS' GROUP LIFE INSURANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter III of chapter 19 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§ 1980B. Periodic review of automatic maximum coverage

"(a) IN GENERAL.—On January 1, 2025, and every five years thereafter, the Secretary shall—

"(1) complete a review of how the amount specified in section 1967(a)(3)(A)(i) compares to the amount described in subsection (b); and

"(2) submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate the results of the review.

"(b) AMOUNT DESCRIBED.—The amount described in this subsection is the amount equal to—

"(1) \$500,000; multiplied by

"(2) the average percentage by which the Consumer Price Index changed during the five fiscal years preceding the review under subsection (a).

"(c) CONSUMER PRICE INDEX DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'Consumer Price Index' means the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 19 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1980A the following new item:

"1980B. Periodic review of automatic maximum coverage."

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. 2911, as amended.

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.R. 2911, as amended. This bill was introduced by Representative STRICKLAND and co-led by our colleagues, Representative BACON and Representative TURNER.

H.R. 2911, as amended, would require VA to regularly review and compare the maximum coverage under the VA life insurance programs with average cost-of-living changes across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation, and 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.R. 2911, the Fairness for Servicemembers and their Families Act of 2024, as amended.

Mr. Speaker, last Congress, we passed S. 2794 into law. This bill increased the maximum coverage amount under the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance, or SGLI, program and the Veterans' Group Life Insurance, or VGLI, program from \$400,000 to \$500,000.

Prior to that legislation, however, those maximum coverage amounts had not increased since 2005, clearly failing to keep pace with inflation.

To ensure that we are not waiting another decade or more to improve this benefit for our servicemembers and veterans, my good friend, Representative MARILYN STRICKLAND, has introduced this bill, which requires VA to periodically review coverage amounts every 5 years and to report to Congress what the level of benefits would be if adjusted for inflation over that period.

This will allow Congress to regularly make a more informed decision about whether or not these maximum coverage amounts should be increased.

Mr. Speaker, this is commonsense legislation that allows Congress to better do our part to support servicemembers, veterans, and their families, and I encourage my colleagues to support it.

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

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. STRICKLAND), my good friend who is the author of H.R. 2911. She serves on the Armed Services Committee and the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Ms. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member TAKANO for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 2911, the Fairness for Servicemembers and their Families Act of 2024.

I first thank Chairmen BOST and LUTTRELL and Ranking Members TAKANO and PAPPAS for working with me to get this bill to the floor. I also thank my partners in this effort, Congressman DON BACON and Senator JOHN CORNYN.

The Fairness for Servicemembers and their Families Act would help ensure that life insurance benefits for servicemembers and veterans account for changes in the economy. This legislation would require the Department of Veterans Affairs to periodically review and report on the maximum coverage available under the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance and Veterans' Group Life Insurance. Accurate and reliable data will allow the VA to make necessary policy adjustments to ensure accurate payments.

I have the honor of representing Joint Base Lewis-McChord and tens of thousands of servicemembers and their families who call the South Sound home. Our servicemembers courageously put their lives on the line for their country, and it is our duty to reciprocate and help them. This means ensuring the well-being of their families and loved ones in the event of a tragedy.

Servicemembers' life insurance plans must keep pace with economic demands. A robust life insurance policy can provide a grieving family with the security they need to navigate the loss of their loved ones with dignity.

The brave men and women who sacrifice their lives deserve peace of mind, knowing that their families will be taken care of.

For nearly two decades, the maximum coverage of the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance and Veterans' Group Life Insurance programs have been stagnant, even as the cost of housing, goods, and services rose, as they typically do over time.

This bill would ensure that these programs are reviewed periodically to verify that their value sufficiently reflects the contemporary Consumer Price Index.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their unwavering commitment to supporting veterans and their families and for prioritizing their care.

Finally, I will take a point of privilege to thank my Army fellow who worked in my office last year, Major Felix Gumbiner, for bringing this issue to my attention and for working with the offices of Congressman BACON and Senator CORNYN to develop this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the House passing the Fairness for Servicemembers and their Families Act of 2024 and for it to become the law of the land.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 2911, the Fairness for Servicemembers and their Families Act of 2024, as amended.

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