

remains are unavailable for burial only if they passed away before September 30, 2025. S. 2181, as amended, would extend those date limitations.

As a veteran myself, this is a deeply personal issue to me. We must ensure that veterans and their families have the option of being laid to rest together. Therefore, Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support S. 2181, as amended, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 2181, as amended, the Keeping Military Families Together Act. I thank Senator GARY PETERS for introducing this bill and Representative CHRIS PAPPAS, the ranking member of the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee, for introducing similar legislation in the House.

This bill extends two Department of Veterans Affairs burial benefits provided to spouses and dependent children of veterans or Active Duty servicemembers. Specifically, the bill requires VA to provide memorial headstones or markers for spouses or dependent children of veterans or servicemembers who were serving on Active Duty at the time of the spouse's or child's death.

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Additionally, the bill authorizes burial in any open national cemetery under the control of the National Cemetery Administration for a spouse or dependent child of veterans or servicemembers who were serving on Active Duty at the time of the spouse's or child's death.

Madam Speaker, these burial authorities were set to expire at the end of October, and many families would have been faced with extremely difficult decisions about where to inter their loved ones. Thankfully, we were able to extend these authorities for an additional year in the most recent continuing resolution.

However, families of veterans need more certainty. While I am disappointed that we couldn't extend these authorities permanently, as Senator PETERS and Ranking Member PAPPAS had originally intended, the additional 7 years presented in this bill will still allow for some time for some long-term end-of-life planning for many families.

Madam Speaker, I support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I am ready to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close. I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, I support S. 2181, as amended, the Keeping Military Families Together Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Madam Speaker, once again, I encourage all 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, S. 2181, as amended.

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

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the entitlement to memorial headstones and markers for commemoration of veterans and certain individuals and to extend authority to bury remains of certain spouses and children in national cemeteries, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT READINESS YIELD ACT OF 2024

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7653) to amend title 38, United States Code, to update certain terminology regarding veteran employment.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H. R. 7653

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 Employment Readiness Yield Act of 2024" or the "VERY Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. UPDATE OF CERTAIN TERMINOLOGY REGARDING VETERAN EMPLOYMENT.

Title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking "employment handicap" each place it occurs and inserting "employment barrier"; and

(2) by striking "employment handicaps" each place it occurs and inserting "employment barriers".

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. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 7653.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7653 offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. DAVIS).

Madam Speaker, the VERY Act would strike the term "employment

handicap" from the law that authorizes the Veteran Readiness and Employment program and replace it with the term "employment barrier."

This term is used in the law to describe participants who are eligible and entitled to receive benefits and services. The bill is a simple fix that would remove a negative view of the term "handicap" and replace it with a more positive word.

This Congress, VA has made significant mistakes that have damaged their relationship with veterans, and it is our job as Congress to help VA rebuild trust with our veterans.

While the new Trump administration has many issues to fix that were created by the current administration, this change is a step in the right direction. This Congress, the Republican majority has worked hard to improve the VR&E program.

Now, we have put the VA's feet to the fire to ensure that veterans are put first when using the VR&E program. Representative DAVIS' bill takes a step in the right direction to do exactly that.

We must continue to break down barriers to level the playing field for veterans seeking employment. I thank the VFW and the DAV for supporting this bill. I also recognize the work of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle on this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 7653.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7653, the Veterans Employment Readiness Yield Act of 2024, introduced by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. DAVIS), my good friend.

The Veteran Readiness and Employment, or VR&E, program offers vital services to help veterans and servicemembers with service-connected disabilities and those determined to have an employment handicap prepare for, find, and maintain suitable employment or live more independently.

This bill would replace the terms "employment handicap" and "serious employment handicap" with the terms "employment barrier" and "serious employment barrier."

Historically, the term "handicap" has been associated with disadvantage or burden, which does not accurately reflect our veteran population. By making this change, we acknowledge the challenges that veterans with service-connected disabilities often face in the job market. Eliminating the stigma associated with these disabilities will encourage more veterans to participate in the VR&E program, ultimately assisting them in preparing for and securing meaningful employment.

The Department of Veterans Affairs requested this change, which has bipartisan support and incurs no cost.

I thank the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. DAVIS) for his work on

veterans' issues during his first term in office. I am proud of his work to open doors at VA for more veterans so they may access the benefits they have earned through their service.

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

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. DAVIS), my good friend and also a veteran who is a member of the House Agriculture Committee and House Armed Services Committee.

Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7653, the Veterans Employment Readiness Yield Act. On behalf of North Carolina's First Congressional District's veterans, who I am proud to represent, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this legislation.

I thank the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CISCOMANI), in particular, who coled the bill with me; the House Veterans' Affairs Committee for moving it forward; and, also, the Disabled American Veterans and Paralyzed Veterans of America for endorsing this legislation.

H.R. 7653 amends terminology in the Veteran Readiness and Employment program to replace the term "employment handicap" with "employment barrier" and the term "serious employment handicap" with "serious employment barrier," while leaving the definitions unchanged.

The Veteran Readiness and Employment program helps former servicemembers find jobs and ensure their mental and financial well-being. Updating the terminology will improve efficiency and encourage disabled veterans to use the VR&E program.

No veteran should have any discomfort advocating for themselves and seeking help for their service-connected disabilities. We will not stop fighting until every disabled veteran has what they need to get the assistance that they deserve and have earned.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, in closing, I support H.R. 7653, the Veterans Employment Readiness Yield Act of 2024, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Madam Speaker, once again, I encourage Members to support the 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. 7653.

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.

SENATOR ELIZABETH DOLE 21ST CENTURY VETERANS HEALTHCARE AND BENEFITS IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 8371) to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary 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. 8371

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—HEALTH CARE MATTERS

Subtitle A—Veterans Community Care Program Matters

Sec. 101. Implementation of provision of care under Veterans Community Care Program upon determination of eligibility by veteran and veteran's referring clinician.

Sec. 102. Outreach regarding care and services under Veterans Community Care Program.

Sec. 103. Annual review and report on waivers of certain payment rates under Veterans Community Care Program.

Sec. 104. Modification of requirements for standards for quality of care from Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 105. Pilot program to improve administration of care under Veterans Community Care Program.

Sec. 106. Pilot program on consolidating approval process of Department of Veterans Affairs for covered dental care.

Sec. 107. Strategic plan on value-based health care system for Veterans Health Administration; pilot program.

Sec. 108. Plan on adoption of certain health information standards for Department of Veterans Affairs and certain health care providers.

Sec. 109. Report on use of value-based reimbursement models under Veterans Community Care Program.

Sec. 110. Inspector General assessment of implementation of Veterans Community Care Program.

Sec. 111. Comptroller General report on dentistry under Veterans Community Care Program.

Subtitle B—Matters Relating to Nursing Home and Other Long Term Care and Family Caregivers

Sec. 120. Increase of expenditure cap for non-institutional care alternatives to nursing home care.

Sec. 121. Coordination with Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly.

Sec. 122. Authority for Secretary of Veterans Affairs to award grants or contracts to entities to improve provision of mental health support to family caregivers of veterans.

Sec. 123. Home- and community-based services: programs.

Sec. 124. Coordination with assistance and support services for caregivers.

Sec. 125. Improvements to program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers.

Sec. 126. Improvements relating to Home-maker and Home Health Aide program.

Sec. 127. Pilot program to furnish assisted living services to certain veterans.

Sec. 128. Provision of medicine, equipment, and supplies available to Department of Veterans Affairs to State homes.

Sec. 129. Recognition of organizations and individuals to assist veterans, family members, and caregivers navigating programs and services of Veterans Health Administration.

Sec. 130. Reviews and other improvements relating to home- and community-based services.

Sec. 131. GAO report on mental health support for caregivers.

Sec. 132. Development of centralized website for program information.

Sec. 133. Definitions.

Subtitle C—Medical Treatment and Other Matters

Sec. 140. Quarterly report on referrals for non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care.

Sec. 141. Elimination of certain requirements for certain Department of Veterans Affairs Assistant Under Secretaries.

Sec. 142. Modification of pay limitation for physicians, podiatrists, optometrists, and dentists of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 143. Reimbursement of ambulance cost for care for certain rural veterans.

Sec. 144. Pilot program to furnish dental care from the Department of Veterans Affairs to certain veterans diagnosed with ischemic heart disease.

Sec. 145. Documentation of preferences of veterans for scheduling of appointments for health care under laws administered by Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 146. Staffing model and performance metrics for certain employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 147. Online health education portal for veterans enrolled in patient enrollment system of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 148. Limitation on detail of directors of medical centers of Department of Veterans Affairs to different positions.

Sec. 149. National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report.

Sec. 150. Report on physical infrastructure required by medical facilities of Department of Veterans Affairs to provide dental care services.

Sec. 151. Comptroller General report on certain oral health care programs under laws administered by Secretary of Veterans Affairs.