

Puerto Rico, so for me, this is a double honor to make this happen. Congressman ESPAILLAT and I expect that the Senate can do something about it.

□ 1815

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ESPAILLAT), who is also the sponsor of this bill.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, I thank, of course, the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico, JENNIFFER GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN, for her leadership in getting 296 Members of the House to sponsor this bill. That is way under Roberto Clemente's batting average, but it is still a great number.

Of course, I also thank our ranking member, MAXINE WATERS, and Chairman PATRICK MCHENRY for their collegiality and support of this measure.

Long before the Latinization of baseball, long before we enjoyed seeing players from many Latin-American and Caribbean nations on the diamond play, there was the great number 21, Roberto Clemente, and that is why today I rise in support of H.R. 6751, the Roberto Clemente Commemorative Coin Act.

Roberto Clemente was a baseball icon and trailblazer, breaking barriers as the first Latin American inducted into the Cooperstown National Baseball Hall of Fame as one of the greatest players of all time. We have heard about the 15 All-Star Games, and we have heard of his MVP winning years. He got his 3,000th hit on his last at bat before he unfortunately passed on a mission to Nicaragua.

Clemente was much more than a baseball star. He used his platform to advocate for civil rights and racial equality as he played throughout the Jim Crow South. In fact, Clemente and many other MLB players protested the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., by not playing the first two games of 1968.

He fought for justice not just here in the United States but abroad as well. Clemente's dedication to service extended beyond the baseball diamond. As a proud member of the Marine Corps Reserve, he exemplified discipline, leadership, and pride, earning the rank of Private First Class.

Perhaps most inspiring was his humanitarian work. During his off seasons, Clemente would host free baseball clinics for underprivileged kids, giving aspiring players an opportunity they wouldn't have otherwise. He also delivered aid to numerous Latin American countries, including his hometown in Puerto Rico.

Tragically, he lost his life on New Year's Eve 1972 while on an earthquake relief mission to Nicaragua. It was a selfless act that defined his legacy.

In his honor, Major League Baseball established the Roberto Clemente Award. Given annually, it recognizes a player who best exemplifies baseball's sportsmanship and community involve-

ment. It has been given to many, many baseball greats.

This bill pays tribute to Clemente's unparalleled contributions, making him the first Afro-Latino and Puerto Rican featured on a commemorative coin. Proceeds from the coin will benefit the Roberto Clemente Foundation.

Roberto Clemente was a humanitarian, a civil rights advocate, a baseball legend, a marine. By passing this bill, we honor his life, legacy, and enduring impact on the world.

Let's remember number 21. Let's remember the great one, Roberto Enrique Clemente Walker.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this extraordinary measure.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DELUZIO).

Mr. DELUZIO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6751, the Roberto Clemente Commemorative Coin Act.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent people in western Pennsylvania, and that means representing many Pittsburgh Pirates fans. No man means more to the Pirates than the great Roberto Clemente.

Bucco fans today wear his number with special pride, and we speak his name with reverence. It is joked that he could field the ball in New York and throw a guy out in Pennsylvania. We are serious when we say that Roberto Clemente was one of the greatest to play the game, at bat and in the outfield. He was the best of us, and we will always have a special place for him in our hearts, in the hearts of Pirates fans and so many across our country.

Roberto Clemente's hardworking spirit and care for his neighbors modeled the core values of the good people of western Pennsylvania that became his home.

His tragic death was mourned by so many as he was seeking to serve those in need, but his excellence on and off the field left an impact and a legacy that still continue to this day.

Clemente's record as a humanitarian and activist remains an inspiration to millions across the world. For decades, the Roberto Clemente Foundation has kept his legacy alive through their work to serve kids, veterans, and victims of disasters across the country and around the world.

We can honor his legacy by passing this bill that I am proud to cosponsor.

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FROST).

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, throughout my life, I dealt with a lot of identity issues. I was adopted at birth. My mom came here from Cuba in the late 1960s. My dad was born in Kansas but is a musician deeply rooted in Black and Latino music. My biological mother is Lebanese and Puerto Rican, and my biological father is Haitian, so I have got a lot going on.

I never quite knew who I was in terms of my identity, and I dealt with this throughout my whole life. There were times in my life where I despised my Blackness. There were times in my life where I despised my Latino heritage.

I bring up my own story because there are so many times where I felt lost, but sometimes you have got to see someone who looks like you fly to know that you can, too. One of those people for so many Black Latinos and Afro-Latinos is Roberto Clemente. He wasn't just one of the best ever to play the sport, but he walked in this tradition that is deeply rooted in the Black tradition and the Latino tradition of deep solidarity—not solidarity as an empathy but solidarity as a verb.

"Any time you have an opportunity to make a difference in this world and you don't, then you are wasting your time on Earth." That is a call to action for all of us.

I am proud to support this bill. I am proud to support any time that we can uplift Black Latinos in this country who have done so much for this country and so much for this world.

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I am prepared to close if the gentlewoman is prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time for the purpose of closing.

This bill will direct the U.S. Mint to create a commemorative coin to honor the life and legacy of Roberto Clemente, a baseball player and human rights activist, with proceeds going to the Roberto Clemente Foundation.

He used his platform as a baseball player to push for equal rights in sports and has become a symbol of Afro-Puerto Rican pride. I am proud to cosponsor this bill.

I thank Representative ESPAILLAT for his work on this important bill, and I again urge my colleagues to support this bill. I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6751, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. DE LA CRUZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6751.

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.

DISABLED VETERANS HOUSING SUPPORT ACT

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7480) to amend section 102(a)(20) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 to require the exclusion of service-connected disability compensation when determining whether a person is a person of

low and moderate income, a person of low income, or a person of moderate income, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.
The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7480

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 “Disabled Veterans Housing Support Act”.

SEC. 2. SERVICE CONNECTED DISABILITY COMPENSATION.

Section 102(a)(20) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5302(a)(20)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(C) SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY COMPENSATION.—When determining whether a person is a person of low and moderate income, a person of low income, or a person of moderate income under this paragraph, a State, unit of general local government, or Indian tribe shall exclude any service-connected disability compensation received by such person from the Department of Veterans Affairs.”.

SEC. 3. REPORT.

The Comptroller General of the United States shall, not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, submit to the Congress a report that—

(1) examines how service-connected disability compensation is treated for the purposes of determining eligibility for all programs administered by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development;

(2) identifies any instances where service-connected disability compensation is treated in a manner inconsistent with the amendment made by section 2; and

(3) with respect to each program administered by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in which service-connected disability compensation is treated inconsistently, provides legislative recommendations relating to how such program could better serve veteran populations, and under-served communities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. DE LA CRUZ) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. 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 this bill.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong support of my bill, H.R. 7480, the Disabled Veterans Housing Support Act, and urge my colleagues to join me in passing this critical legislation.

Our Nation's disabled veterans have made extraordinary sacrifices in service to our great country. It is our duty to ensure they receive the respect and support they have earned, especially when it comes to housing.

This bipartisan bill addresses a glaring oversight. HUD currently allows

multiple different definitions of income to determine eligibility for community development block grant assistance. This inconsistency means a veteran could be disqualified simply because their service-connected disability compensation is counted as income in one definition but excluded in another. This is not just a bureaucratic glitch. It denies veterans vital assistance.

H.R. 7480 fixes this by requiring VA service-connected disability be excluded from income eligibility calculations. It ensures no veteran is penalized for benefits they earned.

This is a commonsense, bipartisan solution. Let us act today to remove these obstacles and honor our veterans with the dignity they deserve.

I thank the bipartisan cosponsors of this legislation, including Congressman BRAD SHERMAN and the multiple veterans associations that have offered their support, including The American Legion.

Again, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 7480, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

At a time when our Nation faces an unprecedented affordable housing and homelessness crisis, which House Republicans have done nothing to address over the last 2 years, it is unthinkable to consider reducing support for the very individuals who have risked their lives to defend our freedom.

When this bill came before our committee, we understood that this bill perhaps will lessen the kind of support that very, very poor veterans get. We know that, in fact, those veterans with disabilities, for example, are being penalized in ways because that disability check that they are getting does not fully support them. Any money that they get for their disability should not be taken into consideration for whether or not they are eligible, and so in trying to balance what we do for disability and for the poor veterans, we thought perhaps this wasn't the right way to do it.

□ 1830

Mr. Speaker, do you know what? Given the housing crisis and the needs that veterans have, we certainly have changed our opinion on the thought that perhaps the bill was not the right one. We support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I want you to know that the incoming Trump administration has endorsed basically what I just described as doing nothing to address the housing and homeless crisis over the last 2 years.

Today's bipartisan bill, the Disabled Veterans Housing Support Act, represents an important stance by the House of Representatives to oppose efforts to slash housing programs like the Community Development Block Grant program and benefits for U.S. veterans generally.

It has to be very clear that we support the Community Development

Block Grant program, period. We also support the idea that disabled veterans should not be penalized because they are getting disability benefits and that it would be considered having too much money in order to qualify for some housing programs. We join with our friends from across the aisle in support of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I want you to know that we are thinking very, very hard about some of the coming actions that will be taken by this new administration as it relates to veterans.

When we see and understand how best to help veterans—those who are getting disability benefits and those who are poor, who are standing in line, who are waiting to get benefits—we don't want the new administration to take any action against our veterans, against our disabled veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I am really worried about co-president Musk and what he said in an op-ed. He said he plans to slash nearly \$500 billion in government spending where congressional authorization has expired. That figure includes nearly \$120 billion in funding for veterans, including money for VA hospitals, doctors, nurses, medications, and procedures.

Notably, the program we are amending today, the Community Development Block Grant program, also has elapsed authorization. That means it will also be on the chopping block. I hope my Republican colleagues are paying attention. We are paying attention. Passage of this bill would only help veterans if Republicans also block co-president Musk's efforts to eliminate CDBG entirely.

I strongly oppose co-president Elon Musk's efforts to harm veterans, to strip affordable housing from families, and to take away Federal grants used to educate our children.

Instead, we should look to see how mega-billionaires like co-president Musk and others pay their fair share in taxes. They profit handsomely, often at the expense of Americans, and they should have to pay a larger portion.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill. I want both sides of the aisle to look closely at everything that has been said about our veterans and any attempts to undermine their ability to have a decent quality of life and to get the support that they expect.

If you look closely, no matter what is being said, let's join together on both sides of the aisle and support our veterans, no matter what. Let's tell co-president Elon Musk that, no, he will not, shall not, and must not do anything to harm our veterans when talking about getting rid of all unauthorized programs. We have seen the light, and we hope he will see the light.

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

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN), who is also the

ranking member of the Subcommittee on Capital Markets.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, Congress over the years has created Federal programs that help the housing insecure, particularly veterans. Of course, to qualify for these programs, you need to have income under a certain threshold.

However, we have to focus on how to calculate that income level. Particularly, do you include disability benefits in the income of those seeking this housing? It is usually homeless people seeking the housing. I think that you should not, especially when the effect of considering that disability payment is to deny housing to a homeless disabled veteran.

Our Internal Revenue Code already recognizes that disability benefits paid to veterans are not to be considered income. At our urging, the Department of Housing and Urban Development has reached the same conclusion, at least for now.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for us to have statutory provisions that make it clear that disability benefits paid by the VA should not be included in calculating eligibility for veterans housing.

The reason for that is that we cannot assume that two people with equivalent incomes are living at the same level because someone who is disabled has additional challenges. That is why they are receiving the disability benefits.

Being disabled is expensive. It requires aides. It means that you can't get across town or go even a few miles to take advantage of a store that is offering goods at a lower price. Disability benefits partially compensate for the disability. They should not have the effect of keeping a homeless person or a person close to homelessness out of housing.

That is why our committee passed two bills to deal with this issue. Today, we deal with Congresswoman DE LA CRUZ's bill, which I strongly support and which I hope will pass unanimously here today. I am the chief Democratic cosponsor on that bill. That bill excludes veterans' service-connected disability payments from eligibility under the HUD Community Development Block Grant program.

There is another program that is dealt with by separate legislation, for which Congresswoman DE LA CRUZ serves as the chief cosponsor. That bill, H.R. 8340, is the Housing Unhoused Disabled Veterans Act. That bill, which I am proud to have authored, passed our committee, the Financial Services Committee, unanimously 49-0 and has over 101 cosponsors.

Mr. Speaker, I urge everyone here today to vote for the bill that is before us today. I will point out that both that bill and the other bill that I mentioned have a zero score.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from California.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I believe both bills I mentioned here have a zero score. Both are overwhelmingly supported by our veterans service organizations, including the VFW, Vietnam Veterans of America, The American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, U.S. VETS, and Black Veterans Empowerment Council.

We have two bills. Let's pass one today. Let's persuade leadership to give us a few more minutes of floor time so we can pass the other bill next week. We will get them both over to the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to calling Senator SCOTT and Senator BROWN to say these bills deserve to be fast-tracked and passed through the Senate right away.

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, I have no more speakers and am prepared to close.

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

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Today, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant program helps local communities fund housing and economic development projects that primarily serve low-income and moderate-income households, including many veterans.

Like many civilians, countless veterans are struggling to make ends meet while housing costs continue to rise. It is thanks to Federal housing programs under the Biden-Harris administration that Democrats have successfully reduced homelessness among veterans to its lowest level ever. It is thanks to Federal investments in the housing supply that the Biden-Harris administration has helped build more homes and slowed the rate of housing inflation compared to the previous administration.

Last Congress, Democrats successfully passed four housing bills into law. Meanwhile, as of today, Republicans have passed zero housing bills into law and have passed just one housing bill on the House floor before today, which would hike up mortgage rates and make homeownership more expensive.

Today, the Disabled Veterans Housing Support Act finally represents a bipartisan commitment to the Federal Government's role in housing and supporting our Nation's veterans. Indeed, it is because of our duty to secure the well-being and dignity of those who have served that no one in this Chamber can rest easy if they care about veterans.

Co-president Elon Musk is already eyeing massive cuts to veteran benefits, up to \$120 billion. I hope we will similarly see strong bipartisanship as we oppose those efforts next Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. DE LA CRUZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I would like to take a moment to say what a proud moment this is. In the

crazy Halls of Congress, we can actually get some commonsense legislation passed off the House floor. I am confident that the Senate will see how important this small change can be in making a big difference specifically with our veterans.

Our veterans give so much to this great country, and I am so proud that we came together. I thank my colleague, Congressman SHERMAN, for working in a bipartisan manner to get this bill done. I know how important his bill is, as well. Ultimately, it is about our veterans and making sure that our veterans are not homeless.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 7480, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. DE LA CRUZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7480, 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.

CONGRATULATING NWSL CHAMPIONS ORLANDO PRIDE

(Mr. FROST asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the recent victory of the 2024 National Women's Soccer League champions, the Orlando Pride.

This incredible team not only secured the NWSL championship but also claimed the NWSL Shield, the first time since 2019 a team has completed both accomplishments.

They are the first professional sports team from Orlando to win a major league trophy, making history for my hometown and my district.

This victory is more than just a trophy. It represents the talent, grit, and passion of this diverse team of amazing women who have brought our central Florida community together in celebration.

Thanks to the Orlando Pride's success, Orlando's reputation as a top sports destination grows even stronger.

I congratulate the team. They have always been the Pride of Orlando. They are now the champions of the Nation.

WORK STILL TO BE DONE IN THE 118TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. MOORE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in