

should be doing: listening to our constituents and acting on their needs.

I am honored to represent the brave men and women serving at Fort McCoy and Volk Field, whose daily sacrifices safeguard our Nation and its values. My legislation will help veterans utilizing the Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserves by including them in the in-State tuition waiver that all other beneficiaries currently receive.

These reservists face the same dangers and make identical sacrifices as our Active-Duty counterparts when deployed. Their courage and dedication deserve equal recognition.

Mr. Speaker, of the last eight servicemembers killed in the line of duty, six of them were reservists, the two remaining being my fellow Navy SEALs, who were lost in the Red Sea. Their loss underscores the serious consequences of the decisions made by the previous administration.

Mr. Speaker, I would remind everyone that the enemy does not care if you are a National Guardsman or woman. They don't care if you are a selected reservist or Active Duty. They are simply aiming at the American flag on your shoulder.

By passing this bill, we are going to ensure parity between the reservists and Active-Duty servicemembers. It is long due for a change, and I extend my personal gratitude to Mr. Tremelling for bringing this critical matter to my attention, and I thank Chairman Bost for his steadfast leadership and support.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 983.

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

Mr. Speaker, while the House debates various veterans-related legislation today, none are more urgent than the legislation I am introducing to stop thousands of veterans from losing their homes.

Last Thursday, Secretary Doug Collins and President Trump announced the abrupt termination of the Veterans Affairs Servicing Purchase program, known as VASP.

This program was designed to prevent foreclosures for veterans with VA home loans who had exhausted every other option. With no notice, no replacement, and no plan, the Trump administration decided that these veterans are on their own.

The decision came down just hours after the new Trump tariffs sent our economy reeling, plunging the stock market, increasing job insecurity, and deepening financial strain on working families, including veterans.

It is hard to imagine a starker representation of their values. At the very moment veterans are needing stability, the administration chose to take it away. They did it while Republicans in Congress are pushing massive tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires.

The Republicans are pushing for massive tax cuts for billionaires while forcing veterans into foreclosures. Vet-

erans who served this Nation are now calling our offices, panicked and unsure if they will lose their homes. They don't know what is next, and the truth is neither does VA.

Secretary Collins has provided no answers and no alternatives to VASP. Ending this critical support without a clear plan is not just reckless, but it is cruel. That is why I am introducing the Foreclosure Assistance Immediately Reinstated, or FAIR Act, to reinstate the VASP program and make it clear that VA's job is to help veterans stay in their homes, not push them into homelessness.

The VA Home Loan Program has been a pillar of the American middle class since the original GI Bill. It helped returning World War II veterans achieve economic security through homeownership. Yet, today's veterans, facing high costs, low wages, and an unstable economy, need that same promise fulfilled.

Let me be very clear. This is not a handout. These are earned benefits. Veterans stepped up to defend our country, our Nation, and they deserve more than empty slogans and broken promises in return.

VA had the tools, and has the responsibility, to intervene when veterans faced foreclosure. VASP was working. It had already helped over 15,000 veterans keep their homes with tens of thousands more eligible.

Ending it based on the false narrative that veterans would game the system is an insult to their service and sacrifices. This decision abandons our values. It punishes the very people who kept their promise to America.

Mr. Speaker, it is our turn to keep our promise to them. I urge my colleagues to support the FAIR Act and send a clear message: We don't let veterans fall through the cracks. Not on our watch.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 983, the Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserves Tuition Fairness Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, once again, we are seeing fear-mongering from the other side of the aisle.

VA's decision to phase out the Veterans Affairs Servicing Purchase program, or VASP program, is an important step by the Trump administration.

Last Congress, the Biden-Harris administration, during an election year, created VASP instead of implementing a partial-claim program. This decision added billions of dollars to the VA budget without any assurance to the taxpayer that this was a good decision.

The average amount that a veteran had to pay back in their mortgage was less than \$25,000. Instead of solving the problem, VA chose to purchase the entire loan, which, on average, was about \$321,000. In no way does this make

sense to solve a \$25,000 problem with a \$320,000 solution. Therein lies the problem with our colleagues across the aisle.

Rather than being wise and trying to fix it for the veterans and for the veterans in the future, Democrats instead do a political thing during an election year that ends up costing the taxpayers. I will say it again that veterans are taxpayers.

This is why, under my leadership, House Republicans have a solution, the alarm on the Biden administration program and the risk it could bring to VA home loans.

This is also why House Republicans have a solution in this problem, H.R. 1815, introduced by my friend, Representative VAN ORDEN.

Mr. Speaker, if the ranking member is so concerned about the veterans, I ask him and his side of the aisle why my Democratic colleagues haven't introduced a solution to aid veterans and still make sure that it actually deals with the veterans' problems, not just all of a sudden spends not only more money than they have to fix their problem, but creating a problem for other veterans because Democrats are going to drain this system.

□ 1630

Now, I welcome the ranking member and other colleagues on the other side of the aisle to cosponsor Mr. VAN ORDEN's legislation and get it out of the House to the Senate. Instead of complaining, the ranking member should join us in this legislation. I, once again, encourage people to get back to the issue at hand and support the bill that we were debating before.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of our colleagues to vote for that 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 Illinois (Mr. BOST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 983.

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.

PRIORITIZING VETERANS' SURVIVORS ACT

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1228) to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the organization of the Office of Survivors Assistance of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1228

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 "Prioritizing Veterans' Survivors Act".

SEC. 2. CLARIFICATION OF ORGANIZATION OF THE OFFICE OF SURVIVORS ASSISTANCE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

Section 321(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “in the Department” and inserting “in the Office of the Secretary”.

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. 1228.

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. 1228, offered by my friend and colleague Representative CISCOMANI of Arizona.

This bill would ensure that VA prioritizes its care, services, and benefits for surviving family members of veterans as much as VA does for veterans.

This bill would do so by requiring that the VA Office of Survivors Assistance conducts its mission within the Office of the VA Secretary.

In 2008, Congress created the Office of Survivors Assistance to serve as the Secretary's principal adviser and resource on all VA benefits and services for veterans' surviving loved ones.

However, the Biden-Harris administration moved this office from the Secretary's office to the Veterans Benefits Administration Pension and Fiduciary Service.

This decision to hide the Office of Survivors Assistance near the bottom of the VA organizational chart reflected the Biden-Harris administration's lack of commitment to the surviving loved ones of our veterans.

During the Biden-Harris administration, the Office of Survivors Assistance did not have a direct line to the Secretary on the care, services, and benefits offered by the VA offices, including those outside the VBA's Pension and Fiduciary Services that they did in the original bill of 2008.

Mr. CISCOMANI's bill will correct the Biden-Harris administration's disservice to survivors and would ensure survivors have a seat at the table again.

The current administration supports this bill and is therefore as committed as I am to ensuring that the needs of the veterans' surviving families are prioritized by the VA.

Now, I am proud to co-lead this bill with Representative CISCOMANI on behalf of the surviving families of our Nation's heroes, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1228.

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.R. 1228, the Prioritizing Veterans' Survivors Act.

The bill requires the VA to move the Office of Survivors Assistance, or OSA, to a position directly reporting to the Office of the VA Secretary.

The Office of Survivors Assistance was established by statute in 2008 to serve as a resource regarding all benefits and services furnished by the Department to survivors and dependents of deceased veterans and members of the Armed Forces.

OSA also serves as a principal adviser to the Secretary and promotes the use of VA benefits, programs, and services to survivors. VA moved the supervision of OSA from the Office of Outreach, Transition and Economic Development to VBA's Pension and Fiduciary Service.

The VA made this move with the idea that it would increase emphasis on the office and oversight of OSA as VBA has more capacity to properly oversee the function.

However, the survivors' community has been critical of this move, characterizing it as a downgrade of the function and a diminishing of the importance of survivors in the VA's mission. H.R. 1228 is responsive to those concerns.

Now, historically, there has been a lack of resources dedicated to the mission of serving survivors. For example, there are only four employees in the Office of Survivors Assistance to serve over 450,000 potentially eligible beneficiaries. By the way, Secretary Collins actually fired one of those four people.

We also see a lack of awareness of who is part of the survivors' community, where the community is, and a lack of direct and targeted outreach. That is why I am deeply concerned by all of the DOGE cuts to the VA's outreach efforts.

Overall, we have seen an underutilization of survivors' benefits, so we must do whatever we can to remedy that situation. This bill is a small but important step in that process.

I would be remiss, however, if I didn't also point to other legislation that we can and should be taking up to improve benefits for survivors. I have introduced H.R. 2278, the Survivor Benefits Delivery Improvement Act, a bill that puts new tools in the VA's hands to aid in reaching survivors where they are and better inform them of the benefits they have earned.

We have Members, like Representative JULIA BROWNLEY, who have introduced legislation to extend CHAMPVA eligibility. Representative JAHANA HAYES has introduced legislation to raise the levels of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation benefits to be on par with other Federal survivors' programs.

We have Republican Members like RICHARD HUDSON, who has introduced

the Love Lives On Act, with Veterans' Affairs Committee member Representative KELLY MORRISON, that would repeal the ridiculous penalties survivors face when they choose to remarry.

My hope is that we can consider those bills soon.

In the meantime, however, I do support this bill, and I encourage my colleagues to support it, as well.

I extend a special thanks to the survivors who may be listening today and those who are with us only in spirit. Your stories demonstrate bravery and courage, and you deserve every ounce of our effort in creating a VA that is welcoming and accessible, and every dollar of benefits we can muster on your behalf.

Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation, and I ask my colleagues to do the same.

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

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. CISCOMANI).

Mr. CISCOMANI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman BOST for yielding me time today to speak in support of my bill, H.R. 1228, the Prioritizing Veterans' Survivors Act.

Since being elected, I have heard from military servicemembers and surviving family members about their struggles accessing VA benefits.

In my district, I started a Veterans Advisory Council, and we often discuss this very topic to find ways to better this situation. I am always looking to ensure that Department of Veterans Affairs leaders hear the concerns of veterans' loved ones.

From its creation, the Office of Survivors Assistance, OSA, was meant to serve as the principal adviser to the VA Secretary on all survivors' benefits and services, as well, including medical care and burial benefits.

When the VA placed OSA within the Veterans Benefits Administration, they deprioritized survivors' policies and skirted Congress' intent when it created this office.

My bill would fix this by requiring OSA to operate within the Secretary's office, thereby prioritizing advocacy and services for servicemembers' and veterans' surviving spouses and families, as well.

I will highlight the comment of a member of my Veterans Advisory Council, Ms. Jane Strain, a surviving spouse and an Army veteran herself. She said: Surviving spouses and families who cared for children, moved many times during a military career, compromised their own careers, and maintained their homelife while the servicemember was deployed have earned and deserve attention when the spouse has passed. Placing the OSA directly under the Secretary will help to recognize the importance of this population.

Mr. Speaker, I was proud to work alongside Chairman BOST on this to ensure survivors have a seat at the table.

I urge my colleagues to support and pass this commonsense legislation again in the 119th Congress as it did without objection last Congress.

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

Mr. Speaker, I will return back to the issue of VASP and read aloud a letter that I am circulating to my colleagues for a signature to the Secretary, and it begins with:

“Dear Secretary Collins: On April 3, 2025, you abruptly announced the closure of the Veterans Affairs Servicing Purchase program (VASP), leaving tens of thousands of veterans at risk of foreclosure. These actions were taken unilaterally, leaving veterans, veterans service organizations, and mortgage services unsure how the closure would be administered, and what would happen to veterans that are already reeling from this administration’s assault on veterans and our economy. We write today to urge you to immediately reverse this decision, and avoid foreclosing on veterans who simply wish to keep paying their mortgage and keep their home.

“Since the inception of the Veterans Affairs Servicing Purchase program (VASP) in May 2024, over 17,000 veterans have been able to avoid foreclosure and remain in their homes.”

This represents 0.46 percent of the 3.7 million total loans under the VA home loan program.

“VASP was established as a last resort option within VA’s Home Retention Waterfall to help veterans impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. During this emergency, Congress and the VA rightfully allowed borrowers to request forbearance and allowed missed payments to be added to the end of the loan term.

“Upon expiration of this pandemic program, VA used this authority to end borrowers’ ability to push missed payments to the end of the loan term and created VASP to help up to 80,000 veterans at risk of foreclosure. Now VA is taking a misstep that will push thousands of veterans into foreclosure. This is cruel, wrong, and runs counter to the benefits earned by the veterans as led by the VA Loan Guaranty Office, which always seeks to use foreclosures as an absolute last resort.

“Furthermore, with the rising costs of housing and overall inflation, VA must ask itself: Is it more cost effective to allow veterans to lose their homes or help them? VA leaders, veterans service organizations, and housing organizations have all recently shared with Congress their concerns about ending VASP too soon. All have testified that VASP is the only program of its kind that currently exists as the last resort for veterans facing foreclosure.

“Critics of VASP, who believe the program will incentivize veterans to purposely default on their loans to get a lower mortgage rate, grossly misunderstand and mischaracterize the sacrifices veterans and their loved ones

have made in service to our Nation. The VA should learn from its past, when in the 1990s, GAO found that VA-insured homes foreclosed upon was the most expensive option, costing VA an average of \$25,387, which is the equivalent of \$65,038 today. While past policies have assumed that veterans have been financially irresponsible for assuming mortgages they can’t afford, today’s financial and housing market puts veterans at risk of losing their homes in a much more vulnerable situation.

“Even a straightforward solution, such as forcing veterans to sell their homes to cover their arrears, would not leave the veteran better off precisely because the cost of housing has increased dramatically in the past 5 years. Until better policy solutions are in place that provide for stronger underwriting, ending the VASP program abruptly will only harm veterans and their families.

“Congress, VA, and other stakeholders must work together to offer practical, cost-effective solutions that better serve veterans. Our veterans earned their home loan guarantee benefit, and they deserve a viable option to get back on track with payments and keep their homes.

“Secretary Collins, you have repeatedly stated that the mission of VA is to serve veterans and that no benefits would be cut. We call on you now to follow your words.”

□ 1645

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 1228, the Prioritizing Veterans’ Survivors Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, very clearly, I say to our veterans and the taxpayers that a partial claim bill would cure the problems that veterans are having with their home loans. If the ranking member and the other side of the aisle will work together with us, with the partial claim program, we can actually do that.

By going down the path that he has just said—he says he is for the veterans. Apparently, he is only for the veterans today because the veterans of tomorrow will not have the program because it will break the bank.

This is actually sensible. It is a way that we can do this. We can make sure our veterans are taken care of. We need to pass the bill that we were just discussing, which is H.R. 1228.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to support this bill. 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. 1228.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum

is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

VIETNAM VETERANS LIVER FLUKE CANCER STUDY ACT

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 586) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to study and report on the prevalence of cholangiocarcinoma in veterans who served in the Vietnam theater of operations during the Vietnam era, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 586

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 “Vietnam Veterans Liver Fluke Cancer Study Act”.

SEC. 2. STUDY ON THE PREVALENCE OF CHOLANGIOCARCINOMA IN VETERANS WHO SERVED IN THE VIETNAM THEATER OF OPERATIONS DURING THE VIETNAM ERA.

(a) **EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDY.**—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the Department of Health and Human Services, shall commence an epidemiological study on the prevalence of cholangiocarcinoma in covered veterans of the Vietnam era, using data from the Veterans Affairs Central Cancer Registry and the National Program of Cancer Registries. The study shall include—

(1) an identification of the rate of incidence of cholangiocarcinoma in covered veterans of the Vietnam era and in residents of the United States, from the beginning of the Vietnam era to the date of enactment of this Act; and

(2) for each of the groups specified in paragraph (1), an identification of the percentage of individuals with cholangiocarcinoma by various demographic characteristics, including by age, gender, race, ethnicity, and the geographic location of the patient at the time of diagnosis.

(b) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—

(1) **INITIAL REPORT.**—Not later than one year after the completion of the study under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report containing—

(A) the results of the study under subsection (a); and

(B) recommendations for administrative or legislative actions required to address issues identified in the study under subsection (a).

(2) **FOLLOW-UP REPORTS.**—The Secretary shall periodically submit to the Congress a follow-up reports, as determined by the Secretary, to provide updates to the information included in the initial report under paragraph (1) and information collected pursuant to subsection (c).

(c) **CONTINUED TRACKING OF CHOLANGIOCARCINOMA IN COVERED VETERANS OF THE VIETNAM ERA.**—The Secretary shall track the prevalence of cholangiocarcinoma in covered veterans of the Vietnam era using