

GOLD STAR FAMILIES VOICES ACT

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JULY 5, 2016.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of
the Union and ordered to be printed
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Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, from the Committee on House
Administration, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 4511]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on House Administration, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 4511) to amend the Veterans' Oral History Project Act to allow the collection of video and audio recordings of biographical histories by immediate family members of members of the Armed Forces who died as a result of their service during a period of war, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

H.R. 4511, titled the "Gold Star Families Voices Act," amends the Veterans' Oral History Project Act to include the collection of video and audio recordings of biographical histories by immediate family members of members of the Armed Forces who became missing in action or who died as a result of their wartime service.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THE LEGISLATION

In 2000, Congress created the Veterans History Project (VHP) at the Library of Congress to collect and catalog the stories of American war veterans. The purpose of the VHP (which was established by Public Law 106-380) is "to preserve the memories of this Nation's war veterans so that Americans of all current and future generations may hear directly from veterans and better appreciate the realities of war and the sacrifices made by those who served in uniform during wartime."

To date, the VHP has collected the oral history records of over 100,000 veterans who have served in military engagements since World War I.

However, the current project Veterans' History Project limits the scope of veterans' service, as it is not able to provide accounts and histories of service members who did not return from action.

H.R. 4511 allows the immediate family members of veterans who were killed in action or are missing in action to provide these stories on behalf of their relatives who gave their lives for their country. Immediate family members who can participate include parents, spouses, siblings, and/or children. This bill is supported by the American Gold Star Mothers Inc., a group of mothers who have lost a son or daughter in service of the country. The organization was established in 1928 and chartered Congress in 1984, and the organization honors lost sons and daughters through service to veterans and patriotic events.

CONCLUSION

H.R. 4511 recognizes and honors this country's service members who were either killed in action or are missing in action. Given their enormous sacrifice, their stories should be included in the Veterans' Oral History Project. The Gold Star Families Voices Act will ensure we record and remember the lives and sacrifices of all who have served.

INTRODUCTION AND REFERRAL

On February 9, 2016, Rep. Christopher Smith (NJ-4) introduced H.R. 4511, which was referred to the Committee on House Administration.

HEARINGS

There were no legislative hearings held on H.R. 4511.

COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

On May 17, 2016, the Committee on House Administration met to consider H.R. 4511. The Committee ordered the bill reported favorably to the House without amendment by voice vote with a quorum present.

COMMITTEE RECORD VOTES

In compliance with House rule XIII, clause 3(b), requiring the results of each record vote on an amendment or motion to report, together with the names of those voting for and against, to be printed in the Committee report, the Committee states that there were no record votes during the Committee's consideration of H.R. 4511.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In compliance with House rule XIII, clause 3(c)(1), the Committee states that the findings and recommendations of the Committee, based on oversight activities under House rule X, clause 2(b)(1), are incorporated into the general discussion section of this report.

STATEMENT OF BUDGET AUTHORITY AND RELATED ITEMS

Clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives does not apply where a cost estimate and comparison prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office under section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 has been timely submitted prior to the filing of the report and is included in the report. Such a cost estimate is included in this report.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

With respect to the requirement of clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has received the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 4511, from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office.

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, June 14, 2016.

Hon. CANDICE MILLER,
*Chairman, Committee on House Administration,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MADAM CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 4511, the Gold Star Families Voices Act.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Christina Hawley Anthony.

Sincerely,

KEITH HALL.

Enclosure.

H.R. 4511—Gold Star Families Voices Act

H.R. 4511 would amend the Veterans Oral History Project Act to allow the immediate family of certain members of the armed forces to provide biographical histories of those members through video and audio recordings. Under current law, only histories by veterans may be collected. About \$2 million was appropriated for the project in 2016. Based on information from the Library of Congress, CBO estimates that expansion would result in approximately 1,000 new collections to the project, and that the cost of the expansion would be \$0.6 million.

Assuming the appropriation of the necessary amounts, CBO estimates enacting H.R. 4511 would increase spending over the 2017–2021 period by \$0.6 million. Enacting the bill would not affect direct spending or revenues, and so pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply. CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 4511 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2027.

H.R. 4511 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Christina Hawley Anthony. This estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In compliance with House rule XIII, clause 3(c)(4), the Committee states that the general discussion section of this report includes a statement of the general performance goals and objectives, including outcome-related goals and objectives.

DUPLICATION OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

In compliance with Sec. 3(g)(2) of H. Res. 5 (114th Congress), the Committee states that no provision of the bill establishes or reauthorizes: (1) a program of the Federal Government known to be duplicative of another Federal program; (2) a program included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111–139; or (3) a program related to a program identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, published pursuant to the Federal Program Information Act (Pub. L. No. 95–220, as amended by Pub. L. No. 98–169).

DISCLOSURE OF DIRECTED RULE MAKINGS

In compliance with Sec. 3(i) of H. Res. 5 (114th Congress), the following statement is made concerning directed rule makings: The Committee estimates that the bill requires no directed rule makings within the meaning of such section.

INFORMATION RELATING TO UNFUNDED MANDATES

This information is provided in accordance with section 423 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (Pub. L. No. 104–4). The Committee has determined that the bill contains no unfunded mandate on the private sector, nor does it impose a Federal inter-governmental mandate on State, local, or tribal governments.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution granting Congress the authority to exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten miles square) as may, by cession of particular states, and the acceptance of Congress, become the seat of the government of the United States.

ADVISORY ON EARMARKS

In accordance with House rule XXI, clause 9, the Committee states that H.R. 4511 does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(e), 9(f), or 9(g) of rule XXI.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italic, and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

VETERANS' ORAL HISTORY PROJECT ACT

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SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM AT AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER TO COLLECT VIDEO AND AUDIO RECORDINGS OF HISTORIES OF VETERANS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Director of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress shall establish an oral history program—

【(1) to collect video and audio recordings of personal histories and testimonials of veterans of the Armed Forces who served during a period of war;】

(1) *to collect video and audio recordings of—*

(A) *personal histories and testimonials of veterans of the Armed Forces who served during a period of war; and*

(B) *biographical histories by immediate family members of members of the Armed Forces who became missing in action or died as a result of their service during a period of war;*

(2) to create a collection of the recordings obtained (including a catalog and index) which will be available for public use through the National Digital Library of the Library of Congress and such other methods as the Director considers appropriate to the extent feasible subject to available resources; and

(3) to solicit, reproduce, and collect written materials (such as letters and diaries) relevant to the personal histories of veterans of the Armed Forces who served during a period of war and to catalog such materials in a manner the Director considers appropriate, consistent with and complimentary to the efforts described in paragraphs (1) and (2).

(b) **USE OF AND CONSULTATION WITH OTHER ENTITIES.**—The Director may carry out the activities described in paragraphs (1) and (3) of subsection (a) through agreements and partnerships entered into with other government and private entities, and may otherwise consult with interested persons (within the limits of available resources) and develop appropriate guidelines and arrangements for soliciting, acquiring, and making available recordings under the program under this Act.

(c) **TIMING.**—As soon as practicable after the enactment of this Act, the Director shall begin collecting video and audio recordings under subsection (a)(1), and shall attempt to collect the first such recordings from the oldest veterans.

(d) **DEFINITION OF IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER.**—*For purposes of subsection (a), the term “immediate family member” means a parent, spouse, sibling, or child.*

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