

fight for themselves—we remain unable to fully eliminate the restriction, as I wish we could. However, we are doing the next best thing—raising the limits to a more realistic dollar amount and indexing it to account for future increases in compensation. Section 304 provides that the \$1,500 will be replaced with the dollar value represented by five times the 100-percent service-connected compensation rate, and that amount will be indexed to include future cost-of-living adjustments. If we can't eliminate this type of discrimination, I am gratified that we could at least reduce its application and impact.

I am especially pleased that this legislation includes authorization for the construction of a \$9.5 million nursing home in Beckley, West Virginia. With the World War II and Korean War veteran population aging, there is an increased demand for an alternative to private long-term care, which is often costly and beyond the reach of many veterans and their families. I fought so hard for this federally funded facility because it will be available to all veterans in need of care, regardless of income. It will also contain a 20-bed Alzheimer's unit, to meet the special needs of those suffering from this horrible disease. Long-term care for Alzheimer's patients is very limited in southern West Virginia, and the Beckley VA Medical Center must often send veterans outside the state for this specialized care. Quality long-term care for West Virginia veterans is long overdue.

Currently, the Senate is deliberating on a bill that would appropriate \$1 million in design funds for this project. I am hopeful that we will get the full amount needed for completion of the facility in the near future.

I am very proud of the nurses' pay provision in section 201 of S. 1402, which finally gives a very valued segment of VA's health care staff their due. Since the inception of the locality pay system in 1990, which determined the rate of pay for nurses according to trends in local health care labor markets, only some nurses in the VA system nationwide have actually seen pay increases. This was an unjust consequence of implementing the locality pay system that I am very glad we can now rectify.

This bill prohibits directors from reducing nurses' pay, and guarantees VA nurses a national comparability increase equivalent to that provided to other federal employees. Additionally, it reforms the local labor market survey process currently used to determine wages. Finally, I am pleased that this provision also requires Veterans Health Administration network directors to consult directly with nurses on policy issues that involve the work of VA nurses, and allows registered nurses to participate on medical center committees considering clinical care, budget matters, or resource allocation involving the care and treatment of veteran patients.

Section 202, the dentists' pay provision of S. 1402, is one that I am very satisfied with as it seeks to improve the recruitment and retention of dentists within the VA, and, therefore, the level of dental care our veterans receive as well. The basic pay rates of dentists employed in the VHA are supplemented by special pay and incentive pay scales that were originally enacted with the intent of helping recruitment and retention rates. However, they were not sufficient enough to keep this vital sector of veterans' care secured. This bill will build on what was already started nearly 10 years ago by finally revising and increasing the rates of special pay for VA dentists.

Another important provision in this legislation that I am very proud of is the creation of a physician assistant advisory position within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). This position will finally give voice to a very essential segment of the VA health care system.

Current law requires that the office of Under Secretary for Health in the VA include representatives of a variety of health care professions. However, despite the fact that the VA is the nation's largest single employer of physician assistants, physician assistants have not had any representation within this office.

That is why I am pleased to be able to provide these often underrated health care workers with their own representative advisor. The VA Under Secretary for Health will designate a VHA physician assistant to fill this position and charge that person with advising on all matters regarding the employment and use of physician assistants within the Veterans Health Administration. The advisor may be assigned out in the field with periodical visits as necessary to VHA headquarters for reports, so that they are able to keep in touch both with physician assistants working all over the country and the VA Under Secretary for Health in VA Headquarters. The language associated with this section specifically calls upon VA to provide this individual with the necessary support and resources to enable this consultant to fulfill the assigned responsibilities of this position.

Just over 15 years ago, the VA conducted a large-scale survey on the occurrence of PTSD and other psychological problems in Vietnam veterans. The study found that 15 percent of male veterans and 8.5 percent of female veterans suffered from PTSD. However, among those veterans exposed to higher levels of war zone stress, PTSD rates were significantly higher. In addition, the study found that nearly one-third of both male and female Vietnam veterans had suffered from PTSD at some point following military service.

Therefore, I am very gratified that this bill provides for a followup study to be conducted to monitor the effectiveness of the PTSD programs and other psychiatric services the VA has

provided over the years to help veterans cope with the symptoms of this debilitating disorder. The study is to be conducted by an independent contractor, but the VA is being encouraged to design the study protocol itself in order to secure high quality responses to the survey.

Mr. President, in closing, I want to acknowledge the work of our Committee's Chairman, Senator SPECTER, in developing this comprehensive legislation. Through his efforts, and that of his staff—Bill Turek, Staff Director; Chris Yoder, Assistant Staff Director; and Legislative Assistants Jon Tower and William Cahill, we are moving this significant piece of legislation today.

I appreciate the willingness of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, especially Chairman BOB STUMP and Ranking Member LANE EVANS, to work together to reach compromise on so many vital issues.

And I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the efforts of my own staff: Jim Gottlieb, Minority Staff Director; Kim Lipsky, Professional Staff Member; and Mary Schoelen, Counsel. I am enormously grateful for their diligence, and for their commitment to the work we do in this Committee on behalf of our Nation's veterans.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the amendment (No. 4314) is agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate concurs in the amendment of the House to the title of the bill with an amendment.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "An Act to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the rates of educational assistance under the Montgomery GI Bill, to improve procedures for the adjustment of rates of pay for nurses employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, to make other improvements in veterans educational assistance, health care, and benefits programs, and for other purposes."

VETERANS' COMPENSATION COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 2000

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Veterans' Affairs Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 4850 and the Senate then proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4850) to provide a cost-of-living adjustment in rates of compensation paid to veterans with service-connected disabilities, to enhance programs providing compensation and life insurance benefits for veterans, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 4315 AND 4316, EN BLOC

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Senator SPECTER and Senator ROCKEFELLER have amendments at the desk, and I ask for their consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Alaska [Mr. MURKOWSKI], for Mr. SPECTER, proposes amendments numbered 4315 and 4316, en bloc.

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 4315

(Purpose: To provide a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Veterans Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2000".

SEC. 2. INCREASE IN RATES OF DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION.

(a) RATE ADJUSTMENT.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, effective on December 1, 2000, increase the dollar amounts in effect for the payment of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation by the Secretary, as specified in subsection (b).

(b) AMOUNTS TO BE INCREASED.—The dollar amounts to be increased pursuant to subsection (a) are the following:

(1) COMPENSATION.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under section 1114 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR DEPENDENTS.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under sections 1115(1) of such title.

(3) CLOTHING ALLOWANCE.—The dollar amount in effect under section 1162 of such title.

(4) NEW DIC RATES.—The dollar amounts in effect under paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 1311(a) of such title.

(5) OLD DIC RATES.—Each of the dollar amounts in effect under section 1311(a)(3) of such title.

(6) ADDITIONAL DIC FOR SURVIVING SPOUSES WITH MINOR CHILDREN.—The dollar amount in effect under section 1311(b) of such title.

(7) ADDITIONAL DIC FOR DISABILITY.—The dollar amounts in effect under sections 1311(c) and 1311(d) of such title.

(8) DIC FOR DEPENDENT CHILDREN.—The dollar amounts in effect under sections 1313(a) and 1314 of such title.

(c) DETERMINATION OF INCREASE.—(1) The increase under subsection (a) shall be made in the dollar amounts specified in subsection (b) as in effect on November 30, 2000.

(2) Except as provided in paragraph (3), each such amount shall be increased by the same percentage as the percentage by which benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) are increased effective December 1, 2000, as a result of a determination under section 215(i) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)).

(3) Each dollar amount increased pursuant to paragraph (2) shall, if not a whole dollar amount, be rounded down to the next lower whole dollar amount.

(d) SPECIAL RULE.—The Secretary may adjust administratively, consistent with the increases made under subsection (a), the rates of disability compensation payable to persons within the purview of section 10 of Public Law 85-857 (72 Stat. 1263) who are not in receipt of compensation payable pursuant to chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 3. PUBLICATION OF ADJUSTED RATES.

At the same time as the matters specified in section 215(i)(2)(D) of the Social Security

Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)(2)(D)) are required to be published by reason of a determination made under section 215(i) of such Act during fiscal year 2001, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish in the Federal Register the amounts specified in subsection (b) of section 2, as increased pursuant to that section.

AMENDMENT NO. 4316

(Purpose: To amend the title)

Amend the title so as to read: "An Act to increase, effective as of December 1, 2000, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans".

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the amendments be agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendments (Nos. 4315 and 4316) were agreed to.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the bill, as amended, be read the third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 4850), as amended, was considered read the third time and passed.

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2000

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, on behalf of the leader, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it recess until the hour of 10 a.m. on Friday, October 13. I further ask consent that on Friday, immediately following the prayer, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and that the Senate then proceed to the conference report to accompany H.R. 4461, the Agriculture appropriations bill, as under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROGRAM

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, the leader has asked me to announce that, for the information of all Senators, the Senate will begin consideration of the conference report to accompany the Agriculture appropriations bill at 10 a.m. tomorrow. Debate on the conference report will take place all day tomorrow and all day on Tuesday, with a vote scheduled to occur on Wednesday at 11:30 a.m. Those Senators who intend to make statements on the conference report are encouraged to come to the floor as soon as possible due to the lack of time prior to the vote on Wednesday.

RECESS UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come be-

fore the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 9:31 p.m., recessed until Friday, October 13, 2000, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate October 12, 2000:

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

MORA L. MCLEAN, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 19, 2001, VICE ALLEN WEINSTEIN, TERM EXPIRED.

MORA L. MCLEAN, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 19, 2005. (REAPPOINTMENT)

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be colonel

KIRK M. KRIST, 0000
DENNIS J. SANTO TOMAS, 0000
KEVIN D. THOMAS, 0000
CHARLES F. WALSH, 0000
ROBERT H. WILLIAMS, 0000

THE FOLLOWING NAMED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be colonel

JAMES W. LENOIR, 0000
KENNETH D. MCRAE, 0000
STANLEY P. SHOPE, 0000
EARNEST C. SMITH, 0000
LARRY E. SMITH, 0000
JEFFRY K. WOLFE, 0000
CHARLES L. YRIARTE, 0000

THE FOLLOWING NAMED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be colonel

TIMOTHY L. BARTHOLOMEW, 0000
GEORGE M. BESHENICH, 0000
FRANCIS T. DINUCCI, 0000
RICKIE C. GURR, 0000
NORMA J. KRUEGER, 0000
CORY L. LOFTUS, 0000
RONALD M. SCHROCK, 0000
SCOTT D. WAGNER, 0000
ROBERT E. WELCH JR., 0000

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 531, AND 624:

To be major

ANGELO RIDICK, 0000

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY IN THE CHAPLAIN CORPS UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 531, 624 AND 3064:

To be major

JAMES WHITE, 0000 CH

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate October 12, 2000:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

ROBERT N. SHAMANSKY, OF OHIO, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY EDUCATION BOARD FOR A TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

ROBERT B. PIRIE, JR., OF MARYLAND, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

THE ABOVE NOMINATION WAS APPROVED SUBJECT TO THE NOMINEE'S COMMITMENT TO RESPOND TO REQUESTS TO APPEAR AND TESTIFY BEFORE ANY DULY CONSTITUTED COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE.