

Specifically, the two reports call on Congress to increase our investment in the study, management, and protection of our oceans. Relative to their size and economic value, funding for ocean research and management pales in comparison for other natural resource programs. The federal government spends over \$10 billion to manage public lands and more than \$16 billion on space exploration.

In 2001, the Pew Commission recommended a doubling of the NOAA budget to \$6 billion over 5 years. Similarly, the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy recommended an additional \$3.9 billion in new spending on top of what we already allocate to NOAA. Yet, the legislation we are debating today sets NOAA's budget for Fiscal Year 2006 at only \$3.95 billion. This level is only a modest increase of \$28 million over funding levels enacted in FY '05 (\$3.92 billion total).

Now I have a great deal of respect for the Chairman, Mr. WOLF, and the Ranking Member, Mr. MOLLOHAN, and I know that they did the best they could with this bill under the tight budget allocations that they were forced to deal with. In this conference report there are modest increases to fishery and coastal management programs but these are unfortunately accompanied by cuts to other vital programs such as marine sanctuaries, the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program, and the National Sea Grant Program.

Our economy, security, and health all hinge on healthy ocean ecosystems. I look forward to working with the Chairman and the Ranking Member on implementing the recommendations of the Ocean Commissions and investing appropriately in our coasts and oceans in the FY 2007 budget.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I rise to applaud the passage of the FY 2006 Science-State-Justice-Commerce Appropriations Bill, which includes funding for Montgomery and Prince George's Counties Joint Gang Suppression and Prevention Initiative in my district. I salute my colleague Mr. WOLF and thank him for his leadership on confronting the issue of gang violence in the Washington metropolitan area.

The federal funding approved today builds on the ongoing work of the Joint County Gang Prevention Task Force, which was established by the county executives of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in February 2004. This funding will allow for the establishment of centralized anti-gang units within each county's police force, enabling them to pursue a zero-tolerance policy for gang violence. A cross jurisdictional community-based program, serving youth and families, would be created to provide gang prevention education, mentoring, and outreach services. Critical after-school programs would be funded for areas where there is a high incidence of gang activity.

Law enforcement research shows that there are approximately 3,600 gang members in Maryland, the District of Columbia and Virginia and that there are nine major active gangs and more than 100 additional crews region wide. Montgomery County Police estimate that there are 20 to 22 active gangs with approximately 540 to 560 active members and associates. Prince George's County Police estimate that there are 50 crews or gangs in that county with a total of over 400 members. Officials in Prince George's County note a recent increase in the number of Latino gangs and

report that the criminal activity of these gangs has expanded to sophisticated car theft rings and prostitution.

This funding will help the people of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties fight the growing problem of gang violence and teach young people that gang life is not the road to success, but rather the path to prison. It is important that we provide our law enforcement officials, our teachers, and our community leaders with the support they need as they work to keep our youth safe from gangs and teach them the long term consequences of joining a gang.

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the conference report.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the conference report.

Pursuant to clause 10 of rule XX, the yeas and nays are ordered.

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken tomorrow.

VETERANS HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2005

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3665) to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide adaptive housing assistance to disabled veterans residing temporarily in housing owned by a family member and to make direct housing loans to Native American veterans, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3665

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 “Veterans Housing and Employment Improvement Act of 2005”.

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Sec. 101. Adaptive housing assistance for disabled veterans residing temporarily in housing owned by family member.

Sec. 102. Permanent authority to make direct housing loans to Native American veterans.

Sec. 103. Extension of eligibility for direct loans for Native American veterans to a veteran who is the spouse of a Native American.

Sec. 104. Terminology amendments to revise references to certain veterans in provisions relating to eligibility for compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation.

TITLE II—EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Sec. 201. Extension of operation of the President's National Hire Veterans Committee.

Sec. 202. Additional duty for the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training to raise awareness of skills of veterans and of the benefits of hiring veterans.

Sec. 203. Modifications to the Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment and Training.

TITLE III—HOMELESS VETERANS REINTEGRATION PROGRAM

Sec. 301. Reauthorization of appropriations for Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program.

TITLE IV—TECHNICAL, CLARIFYING, AND CLERICAL AMENDMENTS

Sec. 401. Technical and clarifying amendments to new traumatic injury protection coverage under Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance.

Sec. 402. Technical and clerical amendments.

TITLE I—HOUSING ASSISTANCE

SEC. 101. ADAPTIVE HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR DISABLED VETERANS RESIDING TEMPORARILY IN HOUSING OWNED BY FAMILY MEMBER.

(a) *ASSISTANCE AUTHORIZED.*—Chapter 21 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 2102 the following new section:

“§2102A. Assistance for veterans residing temporarily in housing owned by family member

“(a) In the case of a disabled veteran who is described in subsection (a)(2) or (b)(2) of section 2101 of this title and who is residing, but does not intend to permanently reside, in a residence owned by a member of such veteran's family, the Secretary may assist the veteran in acquiring such adaptations to such residence as are determined by the Secretary to be reasonably necessary because of the veteran's disability.

“(b) The assistance authorized under subsection (a) may not exceed—

“(1) \$10,000, in the case of a veteran described in section 2101(a)(2) of this title; or

“(2) \$2,000, in the case of a veteran described in section 2101(b)(2) of this title.

“(c) The assistance authorized by subsection (a) shall be limited in the case of any veteran to one residence.

“(d) Assistance under this section shall be provided in accordance with such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe.

“(e) No assistance may be provided under this section after the end of the five-year period that begins on the date of the enactment of the Veterans Housing and Employment Improvement Act of 2005.”.

(b) *LIMITATIONS ON ADAPTIVE HOUSING ASSISTANCE.*—Section 2102 of such title is amended—

(1) in the matter in subsection (a) preceding paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking “shall be limited in the case of any veteran to one housing unit, and necessary land therefor, and”; and

(B) by striking “veteran but shall not exceed \$50,000 in any one case—” and inserting “veteran—”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(d)(1) The aggregate amount of assistance available to a veteran under sections 2101(a) and 2102A of this title shall be limited to \$50,000.

“(2) The aggregate amount of assistance available to a veteran under sections 2101(b) and 2102A of this title shall be limited to \$10,000.

“(3) No veteran may receive more than three grants of assistance under this chapter.”.

(c) COORDINATION OF ADMINISTRATION OF BENEFITS.—Chapter 21 of such title is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§2107. Coordination of administration of benefits

“The Secretary shall provide for the coordination of the administration of programs to provide specially adapted housing that are administered by the Under Secretary for Health and such programs that are administered by the Under Secretary for Benefits under this chapter, chapter 17, and chapter 31 of this title.”.

(d) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter of such title is amended—

(1) by inserting after the item relating to section 2102 the following new item:

“2102A. Assistance for veterans residing temporarily in housing owned by family member.”;

and

(2) by adding at the end the following new item:

“2107. Coordination of administration of benefits.”.

(e) GAO REPORTS.—(1) Not later than three years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress an interim report on the implementation by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs of section 2102A of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

(2) Not later than five years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a final report on the implementation of such section.

SEC. 102. PERMANENT AUTHORITY TO MAKE DIRECT HOUSING LOANS TO NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS.

(a) PERMANENT AUTHORITY.—Section 3761 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking “establish and implement a pilot program under which the Secretary may” in the first sentence; and

(B) by striking “shall establish and implement the pilot program” in the third sentence and inserting “shall make such loans”;

(2) in subsection (b), by striking “In carrying out the pilot program under this subchapter, the” and inserting “The”; and

(3) by striking subsection (c).

(b) REPORTS.—Section 3762(j) of such title is amended to read as follows:

“(j) The Secretary shall include as part of the annual report required by section 529 of this title and as part of any annual benefits report of the Veterans Benefits Administration information concerning the cost and number of loans provided under this subchapter for each fiscal year.”.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 3762 of such title is amended—

(A) in subsection (a), by inserting “under this subchapter” after “to a Native American veteran”;

(B) in subsection (b)(1)(E), by striking “the pilot program established under this subchapter is implemented” and inserting “loans under this subchapter are made”;

(C) in subsection (c)(1)(B), by striking “carry out the pilot program under this subchapter in a manner that demonstrates the advisability of making direct housing loans” in the second sentence and inserting “make direct housing loans under this subchapter”;

(D) in subsection (i)—

(i) by striking “the pilot program provided for under this subchapter and” in paragraph (1);

(ii) by striking “under the pilot program and in assisting such organizations and veterans in participating in the pilot program” in paragraph (2)(A) and inserting “under this subchapter and in assisting such organizations and veterans with respect to such housing benefits”; and

(iii) by striking “in participating in the pilot program” in paragraph (2)(E) and inserting “with respect to such benefits”.

(2) Section 8(b) of the Veterans Home Loan Program Amendments of 1992 (Public Law 102-547; 38 U.S.C. 3761 note) is repealed.

(d) ESTABLISHMENT OF MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF LOANS.—Section 3762(c)(1)(B) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking “(B) The” and inserting “(B)(i) Subject to clause (ii), the”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new clause:

“(ii) The amount of a loan made by the Secretary under this subchapter may not exceed the maximum loan amount authorized for loans guaranteed under section 3703(a)(1)(C) of this title.”.

(e) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Subsection (c)(1)(A) of section 3762 of such title is amended by inserting “veteran” after “Native American”.

(f) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—

(1) SUBCHAPTER HEADING.—The heading for subchapter V of chapter 37 of such title is amended to read as follows:

“SUBCHAPTER V—DIRECT HOUSING LOANS FOR NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS”.

(2) SECTION HEADING.—The heading for section 3761 of such title is amended to read as follows:

“§3761. Direct housing loans to Native American veterans; program authority”.

(3) SECTION HEADING.—The heading for section 3762 of such title is amended to read as follows:

“§3762. Direct housing loans to Native American veterans; program administration”.

(4) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 37 of such title is amended by striking the items relating to subchapter V and sections 3761 and 3762 and inserting the following new items:

“SUBCHAPTER V—DIRECT HOUSING LOANS FOR NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS

“3761. Direct housing loans to Native American veterans; program authority.

“3762. Direct housing loans to Native American veterans; program administration.”.

SEC. 103. EXTENSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR DIRECT HOUSING LOANS TO A VETERAN WHO IS THE SPOUSE OF A NATIVE AMERICAN.

(a) EXTENSION.—Subchapter V of chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating section 3764 as section 3765; and

(2) by inserting after section 3763 the following new section:

“§3764. Qualified non-Native American veterans

“(a) Subject to the succeeding provisions of this section, for purposes of this subchapter—

“(1) a qualified non-Native American veteran is deemed to be a Native American veteran; and

“(2) for purposes of applicability to a non-Native American veteran, any reference in this subchapter to the jurisdiction of a tribal organization over a Native American veteran is deemed to be a reference to jurisdiction of a tribal organization over the Native American spouse of the qualified non-Native American veteran.

“(b) In making direct loans under this subchapter to a qualified non-Native American vet-

eran by reason of eligibility under subsection (a), the Secretary shall ensure that the tribal organization permits, and the qualified non-Native American veteran actually holds, possesses, or purchases, using the proceeds of the loan, jointly with the Native American spouse of the qualified non-Native American veteran, a meaningful interest in the lot, dwelling, or both, that is located on trust land.

“(c) Nothing in subsection (b) shall be construed as precluding a tribal organization from imposing reasonable restrictions on the right of the qualified non-Native American veteran to convey, assign, or otherwise dispose of such interest in the lot or dwelling, or both, if such restrictions are designed to ensure the continuation in trust status of the lot or dwelling, or both. Such requirements may include the termination of the interest of the qualified non-Native American veteran in the lot or dwelling, or both, upon the dissolution of the marriage of the qualified non-Native American veteran to the Native American spouse.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 3765 of such title, as redesignated by subsection (a), is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(5) The term ‘qualified non-Native American veteran’ means a veteran who—

“(A) is the spouse of a Native American, but

“(B) is not a Native American.”.

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 37 of such title is amended by striking the item relating to section 3764 and inserting the following new items:

“3764. Qualified non-Native American veterans.

“3765. Definitions.”.

SEC. 104. TERMINOLOGY AMENDMENTS TO REVISE REFERENCES TO CERTAIN VETERANS IN PROVISIONS RELATING TO ELIGIBILITY FOR COMPENSATION OR DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION.

Title 38, United States Code, is amended as follows:

(1) Section 1114(l) is amended by striking “so helpless” and inserting “with such significant disabilities”.

(2) Section 1114(m) is amended by striking “so helpless” and inserting “so significantly disabled”.

(3) Sections 1115(1)(E)(ii), 1122(b)(2), 1311(c)(2), 1315(g)(2), and 1502(b)(2) are amended by striking “helpless or blind, or so nearly helpless or blind as to” and inserting “blind, or so nearly blind or significantly disabled as to”.

TITLE II—EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

SEC. 201. EXTENSION OF OPERATION OF THE PRESIDENT'S NATIONAL HIRE VETERANS COMMITTEE.

(a) ONE-YEAR EXTENSION.—Subsection (f) of section 6 of the Jobs for Veterans Act (Public Law 107-288; 116 Stat. 2048) is amended—

(1) by striking “60 days” and inserting “not later than 60 days”; and

(2) by striking “on December 31, 2005” and inserting “not later than December 31, 2006”.

(b) ADDITIONAL AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Subsection (g) of such section is amended by striking “2005” and inserting “2006”.

(c) ADDITIONAL REPORT.—Subsection (e) of such section is amended by striking “and 2005,” and inserting “2005, and 2006,”.

SEC. 202. ADDITIONAL DUTY FOR THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF LABOR FOR VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING TO RAISE AWARENESS OF SKILLS OF VETERANS AND OF THE BENEFITS OF HIRING VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (b) of section 4102A of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(8) With advice and assistance from the Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach established

under section 4110 of this title, furnish information to employers (through meetings in person with hiring executives of corporations and otherwise) with respect to the training and skills of veterans and disabled veterans, and the advantages afforded employers by hiring veterans with such training and skills, and to facilitate employment of veterans and disabled veterans through participation in labor exchanges (Internet-based and otherwise), and other means.”.

(b) **TRANSITION PLAN.**—(1) The Secretary of Labor, acting through the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans’ Employment and Training, shall develop a plan for the transition of the assumption of certain duties and functions of the President’s National Hire Veterans Committee by the Assistant Secretary in carrying out section 4102A(b)(8) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a). Such plan shall include the identification of the activities and operations of the Committee that the Assistant Secretary determines should be continued or expanded.

(2) Not later than July 1, 2006, the Secretary shall transmit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives the transition plan developed under paragraph (1).

SEC. 203. MODIFICATIONS TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING.

(a) **COMMITTEE NAME.**—(1) Subsection (a)(1) of section 4110 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment and Training” and inserting “Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach”.

(2) The heading of such section is amended to read as follows:

“§4110. Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach”.

(3) The item relating to section 4110 in the table of sections at the beginning of chapter 41 of such title is amended to read as follows:

“4110. Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach.”.

(4) Any reference to the Advisory Committee established under section 4110 of such title in any law, regulation, map, document, record, or other paper of the United States shall be considered to be a reference to the Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach.

(b) **EXPANSION OF DUTIES OF THE COMMITTEE.**—Subsection (a)(2) of such section is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by inserting “and their integration into the workforce” after “veterans”;

(2) by striking “and” at the end of subparagraph (B);

(3) by redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph (E); and

(4) by inserting after subparagraph (B) the following new subparagraphs:

“(C) assist the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans Employment and Training in carrying out outreach activities to employers with respect to the training and skills of veterans and the advantages afforded employers by hiring veterans;

“(D) make recommendations to the Secretary, through the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans Employment and Training, with respect to outreach activities and the employment and training of veterans; and”.

(c) **MODIFICATION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP.**—(1) Subsection (c)(1) of such section is amended to read as follows:

“(c)(1) The Secretary of Labor shall appoint at least 12, but no more than 15, individuals to serve as members of the advisory committee as follows:

“(A) Six individuals, one each from among representatives nominated by each of the following organizations:

“(i) The National Society of Human Resource Managers.

“(ii) The Business Roundtable.

“(iii) The National Association of State Workforce Agencies.

“(iv) The U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

“(v) The National Federation of Independent Business.

“(vi) A nationally recognized labor union or organization.

“(B) Not more than five individuals from among representatives nominated by veterans service organizations that have a national employment program.

“(C) Not more than five individuals who are recognized authorities in the fields of business, employment, training, rehabilitation, or labor and who are not employees of the Department of Labor.”.

(2) Subsection (d) of such section is amended—

(A) by striking paragraphs (3), (4), (8), (10), (11), and (12); and

(B) by redesignating paragraphs (5), (6), (7), and (9) as paragraphs (3), (4), (5), and (6), respectively.

(d) **REINSTATEMENT AND MODIFICATION OF REPORTING REQUIREMENT.**—Subsection (f)(1) of such section is amended—

(1) by striking the first sentence and inserting the following: “Notwithstanding section 3003 of Public Law 104-66, not later than December 31 of each year, the advisory committee shall submit to the Secretary and to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the employment and training needs of veterans, with special emphasis on disabled veterans, for the previous fiscal year.”;

(2) in subparagraph (A), by inserting “and their integration into the workforce” after “veterans”;

(3) by striking “and” at the end of subparagraph (B);

(4) by redesignating subparagraphs (B) and (C) as subparagraphs (C) and (F), respectively;

(5) by inserting after subparagraph (A) the following new subparagraph:

“(B) an assessment of the outreach activities carried out by the Secretary of Labor to employers with respect to the training and skills of veterans and the advantages afforded employers by hiring veterans;” and

(6) by inserting after subparagraph (C), as so redesignated, the following new subparagraphs:

“(D) a description of the activities of the advisory committee during that fiscal year;

“(E) a description of activities that the advisory committee proposes to undertake in the succeeding fiscal year; and”.

TITLE III—HOMELESS VETERANS REINTEGRATION PROGRAM

SEC. 301. REAUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR HOMELESS VETERANS REINTEGRATION PROGRAM.

Subsection (e)(1) of section 2021 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(F) \$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2007 through 2009.”.

TITLE IV—TECHNICAL, CLARIFYING, AND CLERICAL AMENDMENTS

SEC. 401. TECHNICAL AND CLARIFYING AMENDMENTS TO NEW TRAUMATIC INJURY PROTECTION COVERAGE UNDER SERVICEMEMBERS’ GROUP LIFE INSURANCE.

(a) **SECTION 1980A.**—Section 1980A of title 38, United States Code, as enacted by section 1032(a)(2) of Public Law 109-13 (119 Stat. 257), is amended as follows:

(1) Subsection (a) is amended to read as follows:

“(a)(1) A member of the uniformed services who is insured under Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance shall automatically be insured for traumatic injury in accordance with this

section. Insurance benefits under this section shall be payable if the member, while so insured, sustains a traumatic injury that results in a qualifying loss specified pursuant to subsection (b)(1).

“(2) If a member suffers more than one such qualifying loss as a result of traumatic injury from the same traumatic event, payment shall be made under this section in accordance with the schedule prescribed pursuant to subsection (d) for the single loss providing the highest payment.”.

(2) Subsection (b) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking “issued a” and all that follows through “limited to—” and inserting “insured against traumatic injury under this section is insured against such losses due to traumatic injury (in this section referred to as ‘qualifying losses’) as are prescribed by the Secretary by regulation. Qualifying losses so prescribed shall include the following:”;

(ii) by capitalizing the first letter of the first word of each of subparagraphs (A) through (H);

(iii) by striking the semicolon at the end of each of subparagraphs (A) through (F) and inserting a period; and

(iv) by striking “; and” at the end of subparagraph (G) and inserting a period;

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by striking “subsection—” and inserting “subsection.”;

(ii) by striking “the” at the beginning of subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) and inserting “The”;

(iii) in subparagraph (A), by striking “4 limbs;” and inserting “four limbs.”;

(iv) in subparagraph (B), by striking “; and” at the end and inserting a period;

(v) in subparagraph (C), by striking “I side” and inserting “one side”; and

(vi) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(D) The term ‘inability to carry out the activities of daily living’ means the inability to independently perform two or more of the following six functions:

“(i) Bathing.

“(ii) Contenance.

“(iii) Dressing.

“(iv) Eating.

“(v) Toileting.

“(vi) Transferring.”;

(C) in paragraph (3)—

(i) by striking “, in collaboration with the Secretary of Defense.”;

(ii) by striking “shall prescribe” and inserting “may prescribe”; and

(iii) by striking “the conditions under which coverage against loss will not be provided”; and inserting “conditions under which coverage otherwise provided under this section is excluded”; and

(D) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4) A member shall not be considered for the purposes of this section to be a member insured under Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance if the member is insured under Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance only as an insurable dependent of another member pursuant to subparagraph (A)(ii) or (C)(ii) of section 1967(a)(1) of this title.”.

(3) Subsection (c) is amended to read as follows:

“(c)(1) A payment may be made to a member under this section only for a qualifying loss that results directly from a traumatic injury sustained while the member is covered against loss under this section and from no other cause.

“(2)(A) A payment may be made to a member under this section for a qualifying loss resulting from a traumatic injury only for a loss that is incurred during the applicable period of time specified pursuant to subparagraph (B).

“(B) For each qualifying loss, the Secretary shall prescribe, by regulation, a period of time to be the period of time within which a loss of that

type must be incurred, determined from the date on which the member sustains the traumatic injury resulting in that loss, in order for that loss to be covered under this section. For quadriplegia, paraplegia, and hemiplegia, the period of time so prescribed shall be 365 days.”

(4) Subsection (d) is amended by striking “losses described in subsection (b)(1) shall be—” and all that follows and inserting “qualifying losses shall be made in accordance with a schedule prescribed by the Secretary, by regulation, specifying the amount of payment to be made for each type of qualifying loss, to be based on the severity of the qualifying loss. The minimum payment that may be prescribed for a qualifying loss is \$25,000, and the maximum payment that may be prescribed for a qualifying loss is \$100,000.”

(5) Subsection (e) is amended—

(A) by striking “of Veterans Affairs” each place it appears;

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking “as the premium allocable” and all that follows through “protection under this section”;

(C) in paragraph (2), by striking “Secretary of the concerned service” and inserting “Secretary concerned”; and

(D) by striking paragraphs (6), (7), and (8) and inserting the following:

“(6) The cost attributable to insuring members under this section for any month or other period specified by the Secretary, less the premiums paid by the members, shall be paid by the Secretary concerned to the Secretary. The Secretary shall allocate the amount payable among the uniformed services using such methods and data as the Secretary determines to be reasonable and practicable. Payments under this paragraph shall be made on a monthly basis or at such other intervals as may be specified by the Secretary and shall be made within 10 days of the date on which the Secretary provides notice to the Secretary concerned of the amount required.

“(7) For each period for which a payment by a Secretary concerned is required under paragraph (6), the Secretary concerned shall contribute such amount from appropriations available for active duty pay of the uniformed service concerned.

“(8) The sums withheld from the basic or other pay of members, or collected from them by the Secretary concerned, under this subsection, and the sums contributed from appropriations under this subsection, together with the income derived from any dividends or premium rate adjustments received from insurers shall be deposited to the credit of the revolving fund established in the Treasury of the United States under section 1869(d)(1) of this title.”

(6) Subsection (f) is amended to read as follows:

“(f) When a claim for benefits is submitted under this section, the Secretary of Defense or, in the case of a member not under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary concerned shall certify to the Secretary whether the member with respect to whom the claim is submitted—

“(1) was at the time of the injury giving rise to the claim insured under Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance for the purposes of this section; and

“(2) has sustained a qualifying loss.”

(7) Subsection (g) of such section is amended—

(A) by inserting “(1)” after “(g)”;

(B) by striking “will not be made” and inserting “may not be made under the insurance coverage under this section”;

(C) by striking “the period” and all that follows through “the date” and inserting “a period prescribed by the Secretary, by regulation, for such purpose that begins on the date”;

(D) by designating the second sentence as paragraph (2);

(E) by striking “If the member” and inserting “If a member eligible for a payment under this section”;

(F) by striking “will be” and inserting “shall be”; and

(G) by striking “according to” and all that follows and inserting “to the beneficiary or beneficiaries to whom the payment would be made if the payment were life insurance under section 1967(a) of this title.”

(8) Subsection (h) of such section is amended—

(A) in the first sentence, by striking “member’s separation from the uniformed services” and inserting “termination of the member’s duty status in the uniformed services that established eligibility for Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance”;

(B) by striking the second sentence; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new sentence: “The termination of coverage under this section is effective in accordance with the preceding sentence, notwithstanding any continuation after the date specified in that sentence of Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance coverage pursuant to 1968(a) of this title for a period specified in that section.”

(9) Such section is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(j) Regulations under this section shall be prescribed in consultation with the Secretary of Defense.”

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 1980A of title 38, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a), shall take effect on December 1, 2005, and (except as provided in subsection (d)) shall apply with respect to losses resulting from traumatic injuries incurred on or after that date.

(c) DEADLINE FOR IMPLEMENTING REGULATIONS.—Regulations to carry out section 1980A of title 38, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a), shall be prescribed not later than December 1, 2005.

(d) APPLICABILITY TO PRIOR QUALIFYING LOSSES INCURRED IN OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM AND OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM.—

(1) ELIGIBILITY.—A member of the uniformed services who during the period beginning on October 7, 2001, and ending at the close of November 30, 2005, sustains a traumatic injury resulting in a qualifying loss is eligible for coverage for that loss under section 1980A of title 38, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a), if, as determined by the Secretary concerned, that loss was a direct result of a traumatic injury incurred in the theater of operations for Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom.

(2) CERTIFICATION OF PERSONS ENTITLED TO PAYMENT.—The Secretary concerned shall certify to the life insurance company issuing the policy of life insurance for Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance under chapter 19 of title 38, United States Code, the name and address of each person who the Secretary concerned determines to be entitled by reason of paragraph (1) to a payment under section 1980A of title 38, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a), plus such additional information as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may require.

(3) FUNDING.—At the time a certification is made under paragraph (2), the Secretary concerned, from funds then available to that Secretary for the pay of members of the uniformed services under the jurisdiction of that Secretary, shall pay to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs the amount of funds the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines to be necessary to pay all costs related to payments to be made under that certification. Amounts received by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under this paragraph shall be deposited to the credit of the revolving fund in the Treasury of the United States established under section 1969(d) of title 38, United States Code.

(4) QUALIFYING LOSS.—For purposes of this subsection, the term “qualifying loss” means—

(A) a loss specified in the second sentence of subsection (b)(1) of section 1980A of title 38, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a); and

(B) any other loss specified by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs pursuant to the first sentence of that subsection.

(e) FUNDING FOR FIRST YEAR OF BENEFITS.—Upon the date specified in subsection (b), the Secretary concerned shall pay to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs an amount that is equivalent to one-half the amount anticipated to be necessary to pay all costs related to payments to be made under section 1980A of title 38, United States Code, for fiscal year 2006, effective December 1, 2005. The amount received by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under this subsection shall be deposited to the credit of the revolving fund in the Treasury of the United States established under section 1969(d) of title 38, United States Code.

(f) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section, the term “Secretary concerned” has the meaning given that term in paragraph (25) of section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

(g) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 1032 of Public Law 109-13 (119 Stat. 257) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking paragraph (1), including the amendment that would be made by that paragraph effective December 1, 2005; and

(2) by striking subsections (c) and (d).

SEC. 402. TECHNICAL AND CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.

Title 38, United States Code, is amended as follows:

(1) TYPOGRAPHICAL ERROR.—Section 1117(h)(1) is amended by striking “notwithstanding” and inserting “notwithstanding”.

(2) INSERTION OF MISSING WORD.—Section 1513(a) is amended by inserting “section” after “prescribed by”.

(3) DELETION OF EXTRA WORDS.—Section 3012(a)(1)(C)(ii) is amended by striking “on or”.

(4) CROSS REFERENCE CORRECTION.—Section 3017(b)(1)(D) is amended by striking “3011(c)” and inserting “3011(e)”.

(5) STYLISTIC AMENDMENTS.—Section 3018A is amended—

(A) by striking “of this section” in subsections (b) and (c);

(B) by striking “of this subsection” in subsections (a)(4), (a)(5), (d)(1) (both places it appears), and (d)(3); and

(C) by striking “of this chapter” in subsection (d)(3) and inserting “of this title”.

(6) CROSS REFERENCE CORRECTION.—Section 3117(b)(1) is amended—

(A) by striking “section 8” and inserting “section 4(b)(1)”; and

(B) by striking “633(b)” and inserting “633(b)(1)”.

(7) INSERTION OF MISSING WORD.—Section 3511(a)(1) is amended by inserting “sections” after “under both”.

(8) SUBSECTION HEADINGS.—

(A) Sections 3461, 3462, 3481, 3565, 3680, and 3690 are each amended by revising each subsection heading for a subsection therein (appearing as a centered heading immediately before the text of the subsection) so that such heading appears immediately after the subsection designation and is set forth in capitals-and-small-capitals typeface, followed by a period and a one-em dash.

(B) Section 3461(c) is amended by inserting after the subsection designation the following: “DURATION OF ENTITLEMENT.—”

(C) Section 3462 is amended—

(i) in subsection (d), by inserting after the subsection designation the following: “PRISONERS OF WAR.—”; and

(ii) in subsection (e), by inserting after the subsection designation the following: “TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE.—”

(9) CROSS REFERENCE CORRECTION.—Section 3732(c)(10)(D) is amended by striking “clause (B) of paragraphs (5), (6), (7), and (8) of this subsection” and inserting “paragraphs (5)(B), (6), (7)(B), and (8)(B)”.

(10) DATE OF ENACTMENT REFERENCE.—Section 3733(a)(7) is amended by striking “the date of

the enactment of the Veterans' Benefits Act of 2003" and inserting "December 16, 2003".

(11) REPEAL OF OBSOLETE PROVISIONS.—Section 4102A is amended

(A) in subsection (c)(7)—

(i) by striking "With respect to program years beginning during or after fiscal year 2004, one percent of" and inserting "Of"; and

(ii) by striking "for the program year" and inserting "for any program year, one percent"; and

(B) in subsection (f)(1), by striking "By not later than May 7, 2003, the" and inserting "The".

(12) REPEAL OF OBSOLETE PROVISIONS.—Section 4105(b) is amended—

(A) by striking "shall provide," and all that follows through "Affairs with" and inserting "shall, on the 15th day of each month, provide the Secretary and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with updated information regarding"; and

(B) by striking "and shall" and all that follows through "regarding the list".

(13) CITATION CORRECTION.—Section 4110B is amended—

(A) by striking "this Act" and inserting "the Workforce Investment Act of 1998"; and

(B) by inserting "(29 U.S.C. 2822(b))" before the period at the end.

(14) CROSS-REFERENCE CORRECTION.—Section 4331(b)(2)(C) is amended by striking "section 2303(a)(2)(C)(ii)" and inserting "section 2302(a)(2)(C)(ii)".

(15) CAPITALIZATION CORRECTION.—Section 7253(d)(5) is amended by striking "court" and inserting "Court".

Amend the title so as to read: "A bill to provide adaptive housing assistance to disabled veterans residing temporarily in housing owned by a family member, to make certain improvements in veterans employment assistance programs, and for other purposes."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN).

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

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to commend H.R. 3665, as amended, to the House for passage. This bill has several goals. First, we want to provide some flexibility in several VA programs, including the Adapted Housing Grant program and the Native American Loan program. Second, we want to protect and institutionalize the taxpayers' investment in the President's National Hiring Veterans Committee. Third, we want to reauthorize the Homeless Veterans Reintegration program for 3 years.

Madam Speaker, it is no secret that many of those wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan return home with significant disabilities. Many of those severely disabled servicemembers spend their convalescence at a family home before moving to their own home when they are well enough to do so. Under the current rules, VA cannot help adapt those family homes for their specific disabilities unless the veteran has an ownership interest in the property. This bill would eliminate the ownership requirement for a partial grant. Therefore, title I would provide a partial adaptive housing assistance grant

up to \$10,000 or \$2,000, depending on the level of disability to veterans residing temporarily in housing owned by a family member. It would also authorize up to three specially adaptive housing grants within the allotted maximum amount.

Madam Speaker, this measure contains several provisions from H.R. 1773, originally introduced by the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee ranking member, Ms. HERSETH. I want to compliment her and her staff for their hard work on this issue. These provisions would make permanent the pilot program for housing loans to Native American veterans; extend the eligibility for Native American loans to certain non-Native American veterans who have a meaningful interest in the property under tribal law and are the spouses of a Native American. And finally, this would adjust the maximum loan to conform with the Freddie Mac limits similar to other VA loans, currently \$59,650.

Madam Speaker, the taxpayers have made a significant investment in the work of the President's National Hire Veterans Committee, and we feel strongly that a 1-year extension will allow a proper transition of the duties and products of the committee to the Veterans Employment and Training Service of the Department of Labor. Therefore, title II would extend the committee's work until not later than December 31, 2006. Transition of its duties to the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans Employment and Training require the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans Employment and Training to develop a transition plan for those duties and modify the membership and duties of the advisory committee on veterans employment and training to include outreach activities.

Madam Speaker, we all know that homelessness among the veterans continues to be a problem. While there is some disagreement about the total number of homeless veterans needing a job to break the cycle of homelessness, there is no disagreement that the Homeless Veterans Reintegration program remains a valuable tool to put homeless veterans back to work. I want to emphasize that this is an employment program managed by the Veterans Employment and Training Service of the Department of Labor, not a housing program. Therefore, title III would reauthorize the Homeless Veterans Reintegration program for fiscal years 2007 through 2009 and retain the maximum authorization of \$50 million per year.

Finally, title IV makes technical amendments to the servicemembers group life insurance legislation as well as clerical and technical amendments to a number of other sections of title 38.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BERKLEY. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank Chairman BUYER, Ranking Member EVANS, Subcommittee Chairman BOOZMAN, and Ranking Member HERSETH for bringing this bill to the floor. Ms. HERSETH has been detained at a legislative hearing before the Resources Committee concerning the bill she has introduced. I hope that she will be able to join us before the debate on the bill is completed, but I want to particularly thank her for her input into this important piece of legislation.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of H.R. 3665. As amended, the bill before us would provide greater flexibility to the VA's Adaptive Housing Grant program. It also includes measures to extend the Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Service. The bill also includes language from H.R. 1773, which Ms. HERSETH introduced to make the Native American Veteran Home Loan program permanent.

Section 102 of the bill would make permanent the Native American Housing Loan program, currently a pilot program administered by the Veterans Administration since 1993. The Native American Housing Loan program has provided more than 443 direct loans nationwide since its inception. By all accounts, the pilot program has been a great success and, in fact, currently does not require any government subsidy.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that enactment of the provision would generate savings of \$1 million over the next 5 years. Section 103 of the bill would authorize non-Native American veterans married to a Native American spouse and living on trust or tribal land to fully participate in this direct loan program. Because certain tribal sovereignty rules prohibit ownership interest by nonnative persons, they have been unable to qualify for this home loan program. The language in section 103 would make it possible for a nonnative military member or for a nonnative military member or veteran to qualify for a VA loan if he or she shares a meaningful interest rather than an ownership interest with their respective spouse in their home.

Madam Speaker, on this Friday we will celebrate and honor the service of our Nation's veterans. Hopefully, we will all be in our home districts attending Veterans Day parades and other activities that we share with our veterans. As I do so, I am mindful that over 3,000 veterans in Nevada are homeless. Most of them are living on the streets in Las Vegas. The number of homeless veterans in America is, I am sorry to say, a national disgrace and simply must be addressed. According to the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, there are already 400 veterans who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan who have sought shelter through homeless programs.

□ 1415

I strongly support the provision in H.R. 3665 which would reauthorize appropriations for the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program to help veterans get off the street and working again.

With increased efforts to deny VA benefits and, thereby, health care to veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, I fear that our efforts to reduce the number of homeless veterans, many who are suffering from PTSD, may be at risk.

One homeless veteran who recently contacted the VA Committee had a VA claim pending for PTSD. We learned that because of a perceived pressure to deny claims, regional office adjudicators were afraid to accept the veteran's testimony of his Iraq combat experience, an article naming him and describing the attack, and a statement of his soldier passenger, who was wounded in the attack, as sufficient credible evidence of a stressor.

VA officials later acknowledged that the evidence provided by the veteran met the legal requirements and the claim was approved, finally.

This veteran's story is an example of how severely mentally disabled veterans are at risk of becoming homeless due to VA policies.

Congress must stop the administration's assault on veterans with severe PTSD. We must also provide opportunities to those veterans who are homeless due to their disabilities. H.R. 3665 will do just this.

I appreciate the cooperation of the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) in including language I had suggested to eliminate the obsolete term "helpless" from title 38. Although severely disabled veterans may require significant help with activities of daily life, characterizing them as helpless is demeaning and, quite frankly, inaccurate.

The bill under consideration today will benefit our Nation's veterans and deserves the support of all Members of the House.

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. BROWN), chairman of the Health Subcommittee.

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me time and for his leadership in bringing these bills to the floor.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 3665, the Veterans Housing and Employment Improvement Act of 2005, provides needed enhancements to veterans' benefit programs. Specifically, I would like to discuss the provisions which were contained in H.R. 3279, the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program Reauthorization Act of 2005, of which I was an original cosponsor.

H.R. 3279 was rolled into H.R. 3665 in the full committee markup held on October 7. This legislation would reauthorize HVRP through fiscal year 2009.

Currently, the authority for this program expires at the end of fiscal year 2006. This legislation continues the current authorization for \$50 million per year. I am eager for this legislation to be sent to the President as soon as possible.

The Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program, or HVRP, is designed to take the men and women who are probably the most difficult population of veterans to serve off the streets and return them as productive contributors to society. It is a tall order and one that presents unique challenges to both the government and to those who deliver services to homeless veterans.

HVRP program providers have taken on this difficult task and have turned HVRP into one of the most successful programs in the Federal Government. HVRP grantees are taking on the difficult task of breaking the cycle of homelessness. I urge my colleagues to support this program and this important legislation.

Ms. BERKLEY. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO).

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3665, the Veterans Housing and Employment Improvement Act. This legislation would permanently authorize a successful and worthy pilot program, commonly referred to as the Native American Home Loan Program.

Established in 1992 as a 5-year pilot program, Congress has extended the authority for this loan program on three separate occasions. Clearly, the program has proven very effective and deserves a permanent authorization.

Administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, this program makes direct loans to Native American veterans who reside on tribal lands and veterans who reside on land trust properties in the United States territories, Hawaii and Alaska. We have thousands of veterans on Guam, many suffering from military-related illnesses. Currently, Madam Speaker, five veterans from my district of Guam have loan applications under this program, pending review by the Department.

These loans are for the purchase, renovation, or construction of new homes. And, as you know, home ownership is also a primary driver for economic growth of local communities. Affordable housing is important, very important, for our veterans. Furthermore, home ownership is part of the American dream.

Permanent authorization will ensure this important lending program remains an option for veterans who seek to purchase homes. Permanent authorization of this program will contribute to the growth of our local community. Permanent authorization will allow veterans to live the American dream which they have served to defend.

I want to take this opportunity, Madam Speaker, to thank my colleague from Arkansas, JOHN BOOZMAN; the chairman, STEVE BUYER; the rank-

ing member, LANE EVANS; and the hardworking committee for their diligent work on this legislation. I strongly urge its passage.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. SIMPSON), the sponsor of the original bill to extend the operation of the President's National Hire Veterans Committee, and former chairman of the Veterans' Benefits Subcommittee.

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Speaker, I want to thank Chairman BOOZMAN and Ranking Member HERSETH for their work on this piece of legislation.

Earlier this year, I introduced H.R. 419, which would authorize the President's National Hire Veterans Committee through 2008. The bill before us today, H.R. 3665, not only extends the life of this important committee, but also provides for its continued operation long into the future under a new Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment Training and Employer Outreach.

It is important that we continue to support and fund the work of this committee which strives to make employers and businesses more aware of the valuable role that veterans play in the public workforce.

Today's employers do not often realize the wealth of skills possessed by the men and woman returning from duty in the Armed Forces. Through the creation of the One Stop Career Centers for veterans and the development of hirevetsfirst.gov Web site for potential employers, the President's National Hire Veterans Committee has fostered a vital link between military and civilian employment.

As Veterans Day approaches many of us take for granted the sacrifices made by those who defend our Nation. Voting for this bill is a way to truly show our veterans that we appreciate them and are willing to support them not only when they are serving our country abroad, but when they return home as well.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3665 and thank them for their work on this bill.

Ms. BERKLEY. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from the great State of Hawaii (Mr. CASE).

Mr. CASE. Madam Speaker, I also rise in full support of H.R. 3665, the Veterans Housing and Improvement Act of 2005, which addresses the critical housing needs of our Nation's disabled and Native American veterans.

I also would like to thank Representatives BOOZMAN and HERSETH for their leadership on this legislation and, of course, Veterans Committee Chair BUYER and Ranking Member EVANS for expeditiously bringing this bill to the House floor.

H.R. 3665, in part, provides permanent authority for the Native American Direct Home Loan Program and extends eligibility for such loan to non-Native American spouses of Native Americans living on Native American trust and tribal lands.

The Native American Direct Home Loan Program has been a highly successful veterans effort, particularly in my Hawaii, where it applies to veterans living on lands held in trust under this Congress' own Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920. The majority of these Hawaiian homelands in my Second Congressional District on the islands of Oahu, Kauai, Molokai, Maui, Hawaii, and Lanai.

Since the inception of this program, which was spearheaded by the great Hawaii Senator Spark Matsunaga, and continued by Senator DANIEL AKAKA, native Hawaiian veterans have successfully used this direct home loan program for their acute housing needs, and I am proud to say with nominal deficiencies and delinquencies.

Over \$20 million has now been approved for over 200 loans in Hawaii, with 106 loans totaling \$7.5 million pending. This is an incredible help not only with the needs of many veterans who would likely otherwise be precluded from quality housing, but about Hawaii's overall housing crisis.

Due to its success over the last 13 years, the Native American Direct Home Loan Program, which initially started out as a pilot program, was twice extended by Congress but is currently set to expire on December 31 of this year. It is vital to understand why this program is so important to our Native American veterans and why we should make the program permanent, as this bill proposes.

Of course, the most basic reason is the success of the overall program in honoring our commitment to our Nation's veterans. Beyond that, Congress found some years ago that during the entire history to that date of the program, not a single Native American veteran living on Indian trust lands or Hawaii homelands had in fact received the VA home loan under the VA's traditional home loan program. The reason for that was quite simple.

The unique trust status of native lands did not lend itself to conventional lending practices because banks and other financial institutions did not recognize those lands as valid collateral.

As part of our obligation to all of our Nation's veterans, that obligation being to ensure that they are all able to tap fully into VA programs, the Native American Direct Home Loan Program addressed this unique and discrete challenge facing many Native American veterans and afforded them the same opportunity of home ownership availed their comrades-in-arms.

This bill recognizes and improves upon the clear success of this effort, and I ask my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 3665.

Mahalo.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. BRADLEY), the vice chairman of the Veterans Disability and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee, a gentleman who, since

coming to Congress, has been a tireless advocate for veterans.

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman and the ranking minority member for their hard work to make this bill a reality.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the Veterans Housing Improvement Act, H.R. 3665. All of us, as Members of Congress, have had the opportunity to meet our brave soldiers who are serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, fighting in the war on terror. One of the components of the war on terror is that many of them are coming home with disabling injuries.

This bill in a very significant way will help families to be able to allow the reintegration of these disabled heroes back into not only working life, but at-home life. The \$10,000 grant will help home owners to be able to renovate their houses to make them suitable for disabled veterans, and that is why it is so important that we authorize and fund this pilot program to do what needs to be done to help these heroes integrate back into life.

I thank the chairman and the ranking member for their hard work and urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Ms. BERKLEY. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, first, I would like to thank the chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER), and the committee's ranking member, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS), for their leadership and support in bringing this bill to the floor. I would also like to thank the ranking member of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, the gentleman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH), as well as her staff and my staff for their hard work and cooperation on this bipartisan legislation.

□ 1430

Special thanks to the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY), who is the ranking member for Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

This bill is an example of how we can work together to achieve good things for veterans, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3665, the Veterans Housing and Employment Improvement Act of 2005.

I do not think we can close today before noting that this coming Friday is Veterans Day, a day that originally marked the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in the war to end all wars. Unfortunately, that idealistic prediction failed, and several generations of Americans have since served in wartime. So today, instead of honoring the end of World War I, Veterans Day now honors all of those who have worn the uniform in defense of the Nation. Whether a veteran served in war or peacetime, we owe them our gratitude, and this bill is just one small token of our appreciation.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the House, I want to say thank you to all who have served.

Ms. HERSETH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3665, as amended, the Veterans Housing and Employment Improvement Act of 2005. This bill incorporates a number of important measures aimed at improving the quality of life of our servicemembers, veterans and military families.

I would like to thank Chairman BUYER and Ranking Member EVANS for their leadership on the full committee and for their assistance in moving this bill to the floor today.

I also want to express my appreciation to the Chairman of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee—Mr. BOOZMAN, for all his hard work and bipartisan leadership on the subcommittee this legislative session. I look forward to continue working with my friend from Arkansas as we begin discussions with the Senate to ensure passage of a bipartisan, bicameral veterans' benefits package for this year. I know that the veterans of my home state of South Dakota and all veterans of this nation will appreciate the important benefits and program improvements we have included in this legislative measure.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 3665, as amended, incorporates important provisions that would provide greater flexibility to the VA's adaptive housing grant program. It also includes important measures to extend the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program and improve the Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Service. In addition, the bill also includes language from H.R. 1773, the Native American Veteran Home Loan Act—a measure I introduced along with a number of colleagues earlier this year.

Section 102 of the bill would make permanent the Native American Housing Loan Program, currently a pilot program administered by VA since 1993. The Native American Housing Loan program has provided 443 direct loans nationwide since its inception—20 to veterans in South Dakota. By all accounts the pilot program has been a great success and in fact currently has a negative subsidy—that is, it actually pays for itself. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that enactment of the provision would generate savings of \$1 million over five years.

Section 103 of the bill would authorize non-native American veterans married to a Native American spouse and living on trust or tribal land to fully participate in this direct loan program. Because certain tribal sovereignty rules prohibit ownership interests by non-native persons they have been unable to qualify for this home loan program. The language in section 103 now makes it possible for a non-native military member or veteran to qualify for a VA loan if he or she shares a "meaningful interest" rather than "ownership interest" with their respective spouse in their home.

I want to thank Mr. FALEOMAVEAGA the Delegate of American Samoa for bringing this issue to my attention, and I want to also thank the VA for its assistance in drafting this particular provision.

Madam Speaker, the service members, veterans and military families of this nation have earned and deserve our best efforts here in Congress. Indeed, they deserve so much more.

As we approach Veterans Day, I am very proud to support this legislation and confident

it will benefit the veterans of my home state of South Dakota, as well as the other veterans around the country.

I fully support H.R. 3665, as amended, and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. BUYER. Madam Speaker, as Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3665, the Veterans Housing and Employment Improvement Act of 2005, as amended. This is a bipartisan bill that as amended also includes provisions from Chairman BOOZMAN'S H.R. 3279, the Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program Reauthorization Act of 2005, Ranking Member HERSETH'S H.R. 1773, the Native American Veteran Home Loan Act, and Mr. SIMPSON'S H.R. 419, the Hire Veterans Act of 2005.

Title I of this bill, as amended, would improve the flexibility of the VA's Adapted Housing Grant Program, and make the Native American Veterans Home Loan Program permanent.

Title II of the bill would extend the life of the President's National Hire Veterans Committee (PNHVC), which was created by Public Law 107-288 to improve industry's awareness of the value inherent in increasing the number of veterans hired by the private sector. The Committee determined that a one-year extension of the PNHVC's three-year authority for purposes of winding down its operations, in addition to providing opportunity for added oversight, would be an appropriate way to ensure that the Department of Labor integrates the positive aspects of the PNHVC into its future activities.

Title III of the bill would reauthorize the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP), which is administered by VETS. Based on testimony and meetings with HVRP providers, the program appears to be one of the more successful homeless programs in government by rehabilitating and finding jobs for the most difficult to place population of veterans.

Title IV of the bill would also make technical, clarifying, and conforming changes to new section 1980A of title 38, the Traumatic Injury Protection program, which was established in the supplemental.

Madam Speaker, as Chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I would like to thank the Ranking Member of the Committee, Mr. LANE EVANS (IL) for his cooperation in moving this legislation to the floor. I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of Mr. BOOZMAN (AR), and Ms. HERSETH (SD), the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, through whose leadership and hard work, this legislation has come before the House. Its timing is especially propitious, the day after tomorrow being Veterans' Day.

Madam Speaker, I strongly urge all my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. EVANS. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3665, as amended.

It is only fitting that as November 11th approaches and we prepare to commemorate another Veterans Day, we are meeting here today on the House floor to discuss and pass this legislation, which is intended to honor the courage and sacrifice of the nation's veterans.

I would like to thank Chairman BUYER for his support of this bill.

I also want to thank the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, JOHN BOOZMAN and STEPHANIE

HERSETH, for their work in developing and moving this important legislation to the floor.

The housing, employment and homeless provisions contained in the bill are very important and should be enacted into law.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this bill.

Our servicemembers, veterans and military families sacrifice greatly.

It is our responsibility to care and provide for them upon their return from service as we do when we send them off to war.

I strongly support this measure, Madam Speaker, and I urge all my colleagues to vote for its passage.

Mr. FALCOMA. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3665, the Veterans Housing and Employment Improvement Act of 2005. I especially want to thank Chairman STEVE BUYER and Ranking Member LANE EVANS of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and also Chairman JOHN BOOZMAN and Ranking Member STEPHANIE HERSETH of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity for their leadership in making it possible for Native Americans to participate in the veterans' housing loan program.

I am especially thankful that American Samoa's veterans have also been able to participate in this very successful program. Today, I am here to thank my colleagues for working with me to address the concerns of American Samoans without adversely affecting the rights of other tribes.

Many Samoans have served in the military and they are allowed to obtain home loans under current law. Other Samoans are married to non-Samoan veterans. Nonnative military spouses married to native Samoans have not been able to qualify for the VA home loan program. In part, this is because the Native American Home Loan program excludes the spouses of non-native Americans from qualifying for a VA home loan.

For my constituents, this is problematic. In brief, most land in American Samoa is communal, meaning that only Samoans of Tutuila, Manu's, Aunu'u, or Swain Islands may qualify for home loans offered by traditional lending institutions because only they can make claim to native land.

As a result of these land laws, non-native spouses of veterans or persons serving in the U.S. Armed Forces who are married to a Samoan may not qualify for a VA home loan. The VA has been helpful in assisting the Veterans' Affairs Committee and my office in drafting language to rectify this problem and I am pleased that this language has now been included in H.R. 3665.

As we have agreed, it is our understanding that this language now makes it possible for a non-Samoan military member or veteran to qualify for a VA loan if the non-Samoan military member has a "meaningful interest" in the housing a Samoan spouse has been granted permission to build on communal land. It is also our understanding that "meaningful interest" means that the veteran has the right to reside in the home under tribal laws.

Madam Speaker, I urge support of H.R. 3665 and I again thank my colleagues for including my provision in this important legislation. I also thank the VA for its assistance, and Ms. Mary Ellen McCarthy, Democratic Staff Director for Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, for her tireless efforts. I urge support of this legislation.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, having no further requests for time, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. CAPITO). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3665, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3665.

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

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Conference report on H.R. 2419, by the yeas and nays;

Conference report on H.R. 2862, by the yeas and nays;

Motion to suspend the rules on S. 1894, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2419, ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question on adoption of the conference report on the bill, H.R. 2419, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the conference report.

Pursuant to clause 10 of rule XX, the yeas and nays are ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 399, nays 17, not voting 17, as follows: