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- (1) the face value of the coins;
- (2) the surcharge provided in subsection (b) with respect to such coins; and
- (3) the cost of designing and issuing the coins (including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, overhead expenses, marketing, and shipping).

(b) **SURCHARGES.**—All sales of coins issued under this Act shall include a surcharge of \$10 per coin.

(c) **BULK SALES.**—The Secretary shall make bulk sales of the coins issued under this Act at a reasonable discount.

(d) **PREPAID ORDERS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall accept prepaid orders for the coins minted under this Act before the issuance of such coins.

(2) **DISCOUNT.**—Sale prices with respect to prepaid orders under paragraph (1) shall be at a reasonable discount.

**SEC. 7. DISTRIBUTION OF SURCHARGES.**

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to section 5134(f) of title 31, United States Code, all surcharges received by the Secretary from the sale of coins issued under this Act shall be paid to the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation for the purpose of establishing an endowment to support the construction of the American Veterans' Disabled for Life Memorial in Washington, D.C.

(b) **AUDITS.**—The Comptroller General of the United States shall have the right to examine such books, records, documents, and other data of the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation as may be related to the expenditures of amounts paid under subsection (a).

**SEC. 8. FINANCIAL ASSURANCES.**

(a) **NO NET COST TO THE GOVERNMENT.**—The Secretary shall take such actions as may be necessary to ensure that minting and issuing coins under this Act will not result in any net cost to the United States Government.

(b) **PAYMENT FOR COINS.**—A coin shall not be issued under this Act unless the Secretary has received—

- (1) full payment for the coin;
- (2) security satisfactory to the Secretary to indemnify the United States for full payment; or
- (3) a guarantee of full payment satisfactory to the Secretary from a depository institution whose deposits are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or the National Credit Union Administration Board.

**FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL ACT**

The bill (S. 2784) to award a congressional gold medal to Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, in recognition of his many enduring and outstanding contributions to peace, non-violence, human rights, and religious understanding, was considered, ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, read the third time, and passed; as follows:

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the "Fourteenth Dalai Lama Congressional Gold Medal Act".

**SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

Congress finds that Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama—

- (1) is recognized in the United States and throughout the world as a leading figure of moral and religious authority;
- (2) is the unrivaled spiritual and cultural leader of the Tibetan people, and has used

his leadership to promote democracy, freedom, and peace for the Tibetan people through a negotiated settlement of the Tibet issue, based on autonomy within the People's Republic of China;

(3) has led the effort to preserve the rich cultural, religious, and linguistic heritage of the Tibetan people and to promote the safeguarding of other endangered cultures throughout the world;

(4) was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 for his efforts to promote peace and non-violence throughout the globe, and to find democratic reconciliation for the Tibetan people through his "Middle Way" approach;

(5) has significantly advanced the goal of greater understanding, tolerance, harmony, and respect among the different religious faiths of the world through interfaith dialogue and outreach to other religious leaders; and

(6) has used his moral authority to promote the concept of universal responsibility as a guiding tenet for how human beings should treat one another and the planet we share.

**SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

(a) **PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.**—The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold medal of appropriate design, to Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, in recognition of his many enduring contributions to peace and religious understanding.

(b) **DESIGN AND STRIKING.**—For purposes of the presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (referred to in this Act as the "Secretary") shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions to be determined by the Secretary.

**SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3 under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, at a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses, and the cost of the gold medal.

**SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

(a) **NATIONAL MEDALS.**—The medals struck pursuant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

(b) **NUMISMATIC ITEMS.**—For purposes of sections 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

**SEC. 6. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF SALE.**

(a) **AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.**—There is authorized to be charged against the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund such amounts as may be necessary to pay for the costs of the medals struck pursuant to this Act.

(b) **PROCEEDS OF SALE.**—Amounts received from the sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section 4 shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.

**VETERANS' BENEFITS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2005**

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask the Chair now lay before the Senate a House message to accompany S. 1235.

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

*Resolved,* That the bill from the Senate (S. 1235) entitled "An Act to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the availability of \$400,000 in life insurance coverage to servicemembers and veterans, to make a stillborn child an insurable dependent for purposes of the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance program, to make technical corrections to the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004, to make permanent a pilot program for direct housing loans for Native American veterans, and to require an annual plan on outreach activities of the Department of Veterans Affairs", do pass with the following

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

(a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the "Veterans' Housing Opportunity and Benefits Improvement Act of 2006".

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

**TITLE I—HOUSING MATTERS**

- Sec. 101. Adapted housing assistance for disabled veterans residing temporarily in housing owned by family member.
- Sec. 102. Adjustable rate mortgages.
- Sec. 103. Permanent authority to make direct housing loans to Native American veterans.
- Sec. 104. Extension of eligibility for direct loans for Native American veterans to a veteran who is the spouse of a Native American.
- Sec. 105. Technical corrections to Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004.

**TITLE II—EMPLOYMENT MATTERS**

- Sec. 201. 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. 202. Modifications to the Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment and Training.
- Sec. 203. Reauthorization of appropriations for homeless veterans reintegration programs.

**TITLE III—LIFE AND HEALTH INSURANCE MATTERS**

- Sec. 301. Duration of Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance coverage for totally disabled veterans following separation from service.
- Sec. 302. Limitation on premium increases for reinstated health insurance of servicemembers released from active military service.
- Sec. 303. Preservation of employer-sponsored health plan coverage for certain reserve-component members who acquire TRICARE eligibility.

**TITLE IV—OTHER MATTERS**

- Sec. 401. Inclusion of additional diseases and conditions in diseases and disabilities presumed to be associated with prisoner of war status.
- Sec. 402. Consolidation and revision of outreach authorities.
- Sec. 403. Extension of annual report requirement on equitable relief cases.

**TITLE V—TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS**

- Sec. 501. Technical and clarifying amendments to new traumatic injury protection coverage under Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance.

Sec. 502. Terminology amendments to revise references to certain veterans in provisions relating to eligibility for compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation.

Sec. 503. Technical and clerical amendments.

#### TITLE I—HOUSING MATTERS

##### SEC. 101. ADAPTED HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR DISABLED VETERANS RESIDING TEMPORARILY IN HOUSING OWNED BY A 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 a family member

“(a) PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE.—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) AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE.—The assistance authorized under subsection (a) may not exceed—

“(1) \$14,000, 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) LIMITATION.—The assistance authorized by subsection (a) shall be limited in the case of any veteran to one residence.

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

“(e) TERMINATION.—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 Opportunity and Benefits Improvement Act of 2006.”.

(b) LIMITATIONS ON ADAPTED 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 AMENDMENTS.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter 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 a family member.”;

and

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

“2107. Coordination of administration of benefits.”.

(e) GAO REPORTS.—

(1) INTERIM REPORT.—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) FINAL REPORT.—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.

(f) TEMPORARY INCREASE IN CERTAIN HOUSING LOAN FEES.—For a subsequent loan described in subsection (a) of section 3710 of title 38, United States Code, to purchase or construct a dwelling with 0-down or any other subsequent loan described in that subsection, other than a loan with 5-down or 10-down, that is closed during fiscal year 2007, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall apply section 3729(b)(2) of such title by substituting “3.35” for “3.30”.

##### SEC. 102. ADJUSTABLE RATE MORTGAGES.

Section 3707A(c)(4) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “1 percentage point” and inserting “such percentage points as the Secretary may prescribe”.

##### SEC. 103. 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”; and

(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 benefits report of the Veterans Benefits Administration information concerning the cost and number of loans provided under this subchapter for the fiscal year covered by the report.”.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) SECTION 3762.—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”; and

(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) CONFORMING REPEAL.—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. 104. EXTENSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR DIRECT LOANS FOR NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS 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) TREATMENT OF NON-NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS.—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) USE OF LOAN.—In making direct loans under this subchapter to a qualified non-Native American veteran 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) RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED BY TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS.—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)(1), 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. 105. TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS TO VETERANS BENEFITS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2004.**

(a) CORRECTIONS.—Section 2101 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 401 of the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-454; 118 Stat. 3614), is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (c) as subsection (d);

(2) by inserting after subsection (b) a new subsection (c) consisting of the text of subsection (c) of such section 2101 as in effect immediately before the enactment of such Act, modified—

(A) in paragraph (1)—  
 (i) in the first sentence, by striking "paragraph (1), (2), or (3)" and inserting "subparagraph (A), (B), (C), or (D) of paragraph (2)"; and

(ii) in the second sentence, by striking "the second sentence" and inserting "paragraph (3)"; and

(B) in paragraph (2)—  
 (i) in the first sentence, by striking "paragraph (1)" and inserting "paragraph (2)"; and  
 (ii) in the second sentence, by striking "paragraph (2)" and inserting "paragraph (3)"; and  
 (3) in subsection (a)(3), by striking "subsection (c)" in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) and inserting "subsection (d)".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect as of December 10, 2004, as if enacted immediately after the enactment of the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004 on that date.

**TITLE II—EMPLOYMENT MATTERS**

**SEC. 201. 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.**

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 and 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."

**SEC. 202. MODIFICATIONS TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING.**

(a) COMMITTEE NAME.—

(1) CHANGE OF NAME.—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) SECTION HEADING.—The heading of such section is amended to read as follows:

**"§4110. Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach"**

(3) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—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) REFERENCES.—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 ADVISORY 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 ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP.—  
 (1) MEMBERSHIP.—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 United States 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) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—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: "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"

**SEC. 203. REAUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR HOMELESS VETERANS REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS.**

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 III—LIFE AND HEALTH INSURANCE MATTERS**

**SEC. 301. DURATION OF SERVICEMEMBERS' GROUP LIFE INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR TOTALLY DISABLED VETERANS FOLLOWING SEPARATION FROM SERVICE.**

(a) SEPARATION OR RELEASE FROM ACTIVE DUTY.—

(1) EXTENSION OF PERIOD OF COVERAGE.—Paragraph (1)(A) of section 1968(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking "shall cease" and all that follows and inserting "shall cease on the earlier of the following dates (but in no event before the end of 120 days after such separation or release):

"(i) The date on which the insured ceases to be totally disabled.

"(ii) The date that is—

"(I) two years after the date of separation or release from such active duty or active duty for training, in the case of such a separation or release during the period beginning on the date that is one year before the date of the enactment of Veterans' Housing Opportunity and Benefits Improvement Act of 2006 and ending on September 30, 2011; and

"(II) 18 months after the date of separation or release from such active duty or active duty for training, in the case of such a separation or release on or after October 1, 2011."

(2) TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.—Paragraph (1) of such section is further amended—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking "shall cease—" and inserting "shall cease as follows:"; and

(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking "at" after "(B)" and inserting "At".

(b) SEPARATION OR RELEASE FROM CERTAIN RESERVE ASSIGNMENTS.—Paragraph (4) of such section is amended by striking "shall cease" the second place it appears and all that follows and inserting "shall cease on the earlier of the following dates (but in no event before the end of 120 days after separation or release from such assignment):

"(A) The date on which the insured ceases to be totally disabled.

"(B) The date that is—

"(i) two years after the date of separation or release from such assignment, in the case of

such a separation or release during the period beginning on the date that is one year before the date of the enactment of Veterans' Housing Opportunity and Benefits Improvement Act of 2006 and ending on September 30, 2011; and

“(ii) 18 months after the date of separation or release from such assignment, in the case of such a separation or release on or after October 1, 2011.”

**SEC. 302. LIMITATION ON PREMIUM INCREASES FOR REINSTATED HEALTH INSURANCE OF SERVICEMEMBERS RELEASED FROM ACTIVE MILITARY SERVICE.**

(a) **PREMIUM PROTECTION.**—Section 704 of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 594) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(e) **LIMITATION ON PREMIUM INCREASES.**—

“(1) **PREMIUM PROTECTION.**—The amount of the premium for health insurance coverage that was terminated by a servicemember and required to be reinstated under subsection (a) may not be increased, for the balance of the period for which coverage would have been continued had the coverage not been terminated, to an amount greater than the amount chargeable for such coverage before the termination.

“(2) **INCREASES OF GENERAL APPLICABILITY NOT PRECLUDED.**—Paragraph (1) does not prevent an increase in premium to the extent of any general increase in the premiums charged by the carrier of the health care insurance for the same health insurance coverage for persons similarly covered by such insurance during the period between the termination and the reinstatement.”

(b) **TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.**—Subsection (b)(3) of such section is amended by striking “if the” and inserting “in a case in which the”.

**SEC. 303. PRESERVATION OF EMPLOYER-SPONSORED HEALTH PLAN COVERAGE FOR CERTAIN RESERVE-COMPONENT MEMBERS WHO ACQUIRE TRICARE ELIGIBILITY.**

(a) **CONTINUATION OF COVERAGE.**—Subsection (a)(1) of section 4317 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after “by reason of service in the uniformed services,” the following: “or such person becomes eligible for medical and dental care under chapter 55 of title 10 by reason of subsection (d) of section 1074 of that title.”

(b) **REINSTATEMENT OF COVERAGE.**—Subsection (b) of such section is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by inserting after “by reason of service in the uniformed services,” the following: “or by reason of the person’s having become eligible for medical and dental care under chapter 55 of title 10 by reason of subsection (d) of section 1074 of that title.”; and

(B) by inserting “or eligibility” before the period at the end of the first sentence; and

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

“(3) In the case of a person whose coverage under a health plan is terminated by reason of the person having become eligible for medical and dental care under chapter 55 of title 10 by reason of subsection (d) of section 1074 of that title but who subsequently does not commence a period of active duty under the order to active duty that established such eligibility because the order is canceled before such active duty commences, the provisions of paragraph (1) relating to any exclusion or waiting period in connection with the reinstatement of coverage under a health plan shall apply to such person’s continued employment, upon the termination of such eligibility for medical and dental care under chapter 55 of title 10 that is incident to the cancellation of such order, in the same manner as if the person had become reemployed upon such termination of eligibility.”

**TITLE IV—OTHER MATTERS**

**SEC. 401. INCLUSION OF ADDITIONAL DISEASES AND CONDITIONS IN DISEASES AND DISABILITIES PRESUMED TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH PRISONER OF WAR STATUS.**

Section 1112(b)(3) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

“(L) Atherosclerotic heart disease or hypertensive vascular disease (including hypertensive heart disease) and their complications (including myocardial infarction, congestive heart failure and arrhythmia).

“(M) Stroke and its complications.”

**SEC. 402. CONSOLIDATION AND REVISION OF OUTREACH AUTHORITIES.**

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Part IV of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new chapter:

**“CHAPTER 63—OUTREACH ACTIVITIES**

“ 6301. Purpose; definitions.

“ 6302. Biennial plan.

“ 6303. Outreach services.

“ 6304. Veterans assistance offices.

“ 6305. Outstationing of counseling and outreach personnel.

“ 6306. Use of other agencies.

“ 6307. Outreach for eligible dependents.

“ 6308. Biennial report to Congress.

**“§ 6301. Purpose; definitions**

“(a) **PURPOSE.**—The Congress declares that—

“(1) the outreach services program authorized by this chapter is for the purpose of ensuring that all veterans (especially those who have been recently discharged or released from active military, naval, or air service and those who are eligible for readjustment or other benefits and services under laws administered by the Department) are provided timely and appropriate assistance to aid and encourage them in applying for and obtaining such benefits and services in order that they may achieve a rapid social and economic readjustment to civilian life and obtain a higher standard of living for themselves and their dependents; and

“(2) the outreach services program authorized by this chapter is for the purpose of charging the Department with the affirmative duty of seeking out eligible veterans and eligible dependents and providing them with such services.

“(b) **DEFINITIONS.**—For the purposes of this chapter—

“(1) the term ‘other governmental programs’ includes all programs under State or local laws as well as all programs under Federal law other than those authorized by this title; and

“(2) the term ‘eligible dependent’ means a spouse, surviving spouse, child, or dependent parent of a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service.

**“§ 6302. Biennial plan**

“(a) **BIENNIAL PLAN REQUIRED.**—The Secretary shall, during the first nine months of every odd-numbered year, prepare a biennial plan for the outreach activities of the Department for the two-fiscal-year period beginning on October 1 of that year.

“(b) **ELEMENTS.**—Each biennial plan under subsection (a) shall include the following:

“(1) Plans for efforts to identify eligible veterans and eligible dependents who are not enrolled or registered with the Department for benefits or services under the programs administered by the Secretary.

“(2) Plans for informing eligible veterans and eligible dependents of modifications of the benefits and services under the programs administered by the Secretary, including eligibility for medical and nursing care and services.

“(c) **COORDINATION IN DEVELOPMENT.**—In developing the biennial plan under subsection (a), the Secretary shall consult with the following:

“(1) Directors or other appropriate officials of organizations approved by the Secretary under section 5902 of this title.

“(2) Directors or other appropriate officials of State and local education and training programs.

“(3) Representatives of nongovernmental organizations that carry out veterans outreach programs.

“(4) Representatives of State and local veterans employment organizations.

“(5) Other individuals and organizations that the Secretary considers appropriate.

**“§ 6303. Outreach services**

“(a) **REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE SERVICES.**—In carrying out the purposes of this chapter, the Secretary shall provide the outreach services specified in subsections (b) through (d). In areas where a significant number of eligible veterans and eligible dependents speak a language other than English as their principal language, such services shall, to the maximum feasible extent, be provided in the principal language of such persons.

“(b) **INDIVIDUAL NOTICE TO NEW VETERANS.**—The Secretary shall by letter advise each veteran at the time of the veteran’s discharge or release from active military, naval, or air service (or as soon as possible after such discharge or release) of all benefits and services under laws administered by the Department for which the veteran may be eligible. In carrying out this subsection, the Secretary shall ensure, through the use of veteran-student services under section 3485 of this title, that contact, in person or by telephone, is made with those veterans who, on the basis of their military service records, do not have a high school education or equivalent at the time of discharge or release.

“(c) **DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION.**—(1) The Secretary—

“(A) shall distribute full information to eligible veterans and eligible dependents regarding all benefits and services to which they may be entitled under laws administered by the Secretary; and

“(B) may, to the extent feasible, distribute information on other governmental programs (including manpower and training programs) which the Secretary determines would be beneficial to veterans.

“(2) Whenever a veteran or dependent first applies for any benefit under laws administered by the Secretary (including a request for burial or related benefits or an application for life insurance proceeds), the Secretary shall provide to the veteran or dependent information concerning benefits and health care services under programs administered by the Secretary. Such information shall be provided not later than three months after the date of such application.

“(d) **PROVISION OF AID AND ASSISTANCE.**—The Secretary shall provide, to the maximum extent possible, aid and assistance (including personal interviews) to members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and eligible dependents with respect to subsections (b) and (c) and in the preparation and presentation of claims under laws administered by the Department.

“(e) **ASSIGNMENT OF EMPLOYEES.**—In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall assign such employees as the Secretary considers appropriate to conduct outreach programs and provide outreach services for homeless veterans. Such outreach services may include site visits through which homeless veterans can be identified and provided assistance in obtaining benefits and services that may be available to them.

**“§ 6304. Veterans assistance offices**

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall establish and maintain veterans assistance offices at such places throughout the United States and its territories and possessions, and in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, as the Secretary determines to be necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter. The Secretary may maintain such offices on such military installations located elsewhere as the Secretary, after consultation with the Secretary of Defense and taking into account recommendations, if any, of

the Secretary of Labor, determines to be necessary to carry out such purposes.

“(b) LOCATION OF OFFICES.—In establishing and maintaining such offices, the Secretary shall give due regard to—

“(1) the geographical distribution of veterans recently discharged or released from active military, naval, or air service;

“(2) the special needs of educationally disadvantaged veterans (including their need for accessibility of outreach services); and

“(3) the necessity of providing appropriate outreach services in less populated areas.

“§6305. **Outstationing of counseling and outreach personnel**

“The Secretary may station employees of the Department at locations other than Department offices, including educational institutions, to provide—

“(1) counseling and other assistance regarding benefits under this title to veterans and other persons eligible for benefits under this title; and

“(2) outreach services under this chapter.

“§6306. **Use of other agencies**

“(a) In carrying out this chapter, the Secretary shall arrange with the Secretary of Labor for the State employment service to match the particular qualifications of an eligible veteran or eligible dependent with an appropriate job or job training opportunity, including, where possible, arrangements for outstationing the State employment personnel who provide such assistance at appropriate facilities of the Department.

“(b) In carrying out this chapter, the Secretary shall, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor, actively seek to promote the development and establishment of employment opportunities, training opportunities, and other opportunities for veterans, with particular emphasis on the needs of veterans with service-connected disabilities and other eligible veterans, taking into account applicable rates of unemployment and the employment emphases set forth in chapter 42 of this title.

“(c) In carrying out this chapter, the Secretary shall cooperate with and use the services of any Federal department or agency or any State or local governmental agency or recognized national or other organization.

“(d) In carrying out this chapter, the Secretary shall, where appropriate, make referrals to any Federal department or agency or State or local governmental unit or recognized national or other organization.

“(e) In carrying out this chapter, the Secretary may furnish available space and office facilities for the use of authorized representatives of such governmental unit or other organization providing services.

“(f) In carrying out this chapter, the Secretary shall conduct and provide for studies, in consultation with appropriate Federal departments and agencies, to determine the most effective program design to carry out the purposes of this chapter.

“§6307. **Outreach for eligible dependents**

“(a) NEEDS OF DEPENDENTS.—In carrying out this chapter, the Secretary shall ensure that the needs of eligible dependents are fully addressed.

“(b) INFORMATION AS TO AVAILABILITY OF OUTREACH SERVICES FOR DEPENDENTS.—The Secretary shall ensure that the availability of outreach services and assistance for eligible dependents under this chapter is made known through a variety of means, including the Internet, announcements in veterans publications, and announcements to the media.

“§6308. **Biennial report to Congress**

“(a) REPORT REQUIRED.—The Secretary shall, not later than December 1 of every even-numbered year (beginning in 2008), submit to Congress a report on the outreach activities carried out by the Department.

“(b) CONTENT.—Each report under this section shall include the following:

“(1) A description of the implementation during the preceding fiscal year of the current biennial plan under section 6302 of this title.

“(2) Recommendations for the improvement or more effective administration of the outreach activities of the Department.”.

(b) INCORPORATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE OUTREACH AND AWARENESS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, to the extent appropriate, incorporate the recommendations for the improvement of veterans outreach and awareness activities included in the report submitted to Congress by the Secretary pursuant to section 805 of the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-454).

(c) REPEAL OF RECODIFIED PROVISIONS.—Subchapter II of chapter 77 of title 38, United States Code, is repealed.

(d) CONFORMING AND CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Subchapter III of chapter 77 of such title is redesignated as subchapter II.

(2) The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by striking the items relating to the heading for subchapter II, sections 7721 through 7727, and the heading for subchapter III and inserting the following:

“SUBCHAPTER II—QUALITY ASSURANCE”.

(3) The tables of chapters at the beginning of such title, and at the beginning of part IV of such title, are amended by inserting after the item relating to chapter 61 the following new item:

“63. Outreach Activities ..... 6301”.

(e) CROSS-REFERENCE AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 3485(a)(4)(A) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “subchapter II of chapter 77” and inserting “chapter 63”.

(2) Section 4113(a)(2) of such title is amended by striking “section 7723(a)” and inserting “section 6304(a)”.

(3) Section 4214(g) of such title is amended by striking “section 7722” and “section 7724” and inserting “section 6303” and “section 6305”, respectively.

(4) Section 168(b)(2)(B) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2913(b)(2)(B)) is amended by striking “subchapter II of chapter 77” and inserting “chapter 63”.

SEC. 403. **EXTENSION OF ANNUAL REPORT REQUIREMENT ON EQUITABLE RELIEF CASES.**

Section 503(c) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “December 31, 2004” and inserting “December 31, 2009”.

**TITLE V—TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS**

SEC. 501. **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, 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 on or after December 1, 2005, 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—

(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.”.

(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) by striking 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 service” 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 con-

tinuation 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) APPLICABILITY TO QUALIFYING LOSSES INCURRED IN OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM AND OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM BEFORE EFFECTIVE DATE OF NEW PROGRAM.—

(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, 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, 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.

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

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 1965 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking paragraph (11).

(2) Section 1032(c) of Public Law 109-13 (119 Stat. 257; 38 U.S.C. 1980A note) is repealed.

**SEC. 502. TERMINOLOGY AMENDMENTS TO REVERSE 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”.

**SEC. 503. 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)”;

(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 “An Act to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve and extend housing, insurance, outreach, and benefits programs provided under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, to improve and extend employment programs for veterans under laws administered by the Secretary of Labor, and for other purposes.”.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I have sought recognition to comment on S. 1235, the Veterans’ Housing Opportunity and Benefits Act of 2006. This legislation is the product of a compromise agreement reached between the Senate and House Committees on Veterans’ Affairs. The legislation cleared the House on Monday by a unanimous vote of 372 to 0. Its passage today in the Senate will continue the tradition of cooperation between the two Houses of Congress and among all political parties when it comes to legislation to improve the benefits and services available for our nation’s veterans.

Before I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who worked diligently on the provisions of this bill, I would like to take a few moments to comment on provisions that I was particularly interested in seeing enacted in that they will impact the lives of servicemembers returning from the global war on terrorism who have severe disabilities.

It is quite natural, and in many cases necessary for therapeutic or rehabilitative reasons, for a young servicemember who is severely wounded to spend some time convalescing at the home of his or her family before moving on to live a fully independent life. The nature of some severely wounded servicemembers’ wounds require adaptations to the homes in which they live—such as larger doorways, ramps, hand rails, and other modifications. VA has a grant program to assist servicemembers and veterans with expenses associated with these modifications, but the program needs greater flexibility to address the reality of how young wounded warriors convalesce. Section 101 of the legislation provides that flexibility. It authorizes VA to equip a family member’s home using a partial grant—with some portion, or all, of the remainder of the grant available for later use—of between \$2,000 and \$14,000. I was proud to join Senator JOHN SUNUNU on an amendment that cleared the Senate earlier this year that contained this provision. I am even prouder that we were able to include it in the final bill.

Section 301 of S. 1235 is another provision that makes a reasonable accommodation in a benefit program to meet the realities faced by convalescing, severely disabled servicemembers. Servicemembers adjudicated as totally

disabled at the time of their separation from service have up to one year after separation to apply to receive premium-free Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance coverage during the 1-year, post separation period, and to convert their coverage to Veterans’ Group Life Insurance, or an individual plan or policy. Taking advantage of the conversion option is especially critical for totally disabled veterans who, because of their disabilities, may not be insurable at competitive commercial rates after military service. Through a targeted outreach effort to this population, VA learned that many totally disabled veterans do not convert their coverage to VGLI because they may have neglected post-separation financial planning due to the effects of their disabilities, or because they were simply unaware of the extension option. To give these convalescing servicemembers as much time as possible to make informed decisions about their future financial security, section 301 would extend from 1 to 2 years the available conversion period.

There are many other enhancements contained in this legislation. They cover housing, insurance, employment and other miscellaneous benefit programs. And, not a small point in this time of fiscal austerity, the legislation is budget neutral.

I would like to take a moment to thank those who are responsible for bringing this compromise agreement to the brink of enactment. First, the committee’s ranking member, Senator DANIEL AKAKA, provided his customary—and indispensable—cooperation and leadership. He and his staff worked very closely with me and my staff to shepherd the original legislation through the Senate, and then to work together with my House colleagues on this compromise. Veterans in Hawaii should be proud to have Senator AKAKA at the helm. And I am proud to have him as the committee’s ranking member.

I salute Chairman STEVE BUYER and Ranking Member LANE EVANS of the House Veterans’ Committee; Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Chairman JEFF MILLER and Ranking Member SHELLEY BERKLEY; and Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity Chairman JOHN BOOZMAN and Ranking Member STEPHANIE HERSETH for their work and for their spirit of accommodation. They and their staffs are to be commended for a job well done.

Yesterday, the Congress sent bipartisan legislation, the Respect for America’s Fallen Heroes Act, to the President for his signature. Today, I am also asking my colleagues in the Senate to send the Veterans’ Housing Opportunity and Benefits Act of 2006, to the President. I am thankful that our celebration of Memorial Day on Monday coincides with the Congress sending so strong a message of support to those who have worn the uniform.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the attached joint

explanatory statement be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT ON AMENDMENT TO SENATE BILL, S. 1235, AS AMENDED

S. 1235, as amended, the Veterans’ Housing Opportunity and Benefits Improvement Act of 2006, reflects a Compromise Agreement reached by the Senate and House Committees on Veterans’ Affairs (the Committees) on the following bills reported during the 109th Congress: S. 1235, as amended (Senate Bill), H.R. 1220, as amended, H.R. 2046, as amended, and H.R. 3665, as amended (House Bills). S. 1235, as amended, passed the Senate on September 28, 2005; H.R. 2046, as amended, passed the House on May 23, 2005; H.R. 3665, as amended, passed the House on November 10, 2005.

The Committees have prepared the following explanation of S. 1235, as further amended to reflect a compromise agreement between the Committees (Compromise Agreement). Differences between the provisions contained in the Compromise Agreement and the related provisions of the Senate Bill and the House Bills are noted in this document, except for clerical corrections, conforming changes made necessary by the Compromise Agreement, and minor drafting, technical, and clarifying changes.

#### TITLE I—HOUSING MATTERS

Adapted housing assistance for disabled veterans residing in housing owned by family member

##### *Current law*

Chapter 21 of title 38, United States Code, authorizes the Secretary to provide grants to adapt or acquire suitable housing for certain severely disabled veterans. The grant amounts are limited to \$50,000 for severely disabled veterans with impairments of locomotion or loss of function of both arms described in section 2101(a) of title 38, United States Code, and \$10,000 to severely disabled veterans with loss of vision or loss of function of both hands as described in section 2101(b) of title 38, United States Code. Currently a veteran may receive a grant for specially adapted housing only once. However, a veteran who has qualified for the smaller grant may nonetheless receive a higher grant if disabilities under that provision later develop.

##### *Senate bill*

The Senate Bill contains no comparable provision.

##### *House bills*

Section 101(a) through (e) of H.R. 3665, as amended, would amend chapter 21 of title 38, United States Code, by inserting a new section 2102A. Subparagraph (a) would authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a program providing a partial adapted housing grant to severely injured veterans residing temporarily in housing owned by a family member. Subparagraph (b) would authorize the Secretary to provide up to a \$10,000 grant for such veterans with disabilities involving impairments of locomotion and up to a \$2,000 grant for such veterans with visual impairments or loss of function of both hands. Subparagraph (c) would limit the assistance to one family residence. Subparagraph (d) would require the Secretary to issue relevant regulations. Finally, subparagraph (e) would limit the program to 5 years after enactment.

Section 101(b) of H.R. 3665, as amended, would amend section 2102 of title 38, United States Code, to allow a veteran to receive no more than three grants of assistance under chapter 21 of title 38, United States Code.

The total value of all grants would not exceed \$50,000 for the most severely disabled veterans and \$10,000 for less severely disabled veterans. However, a veteran who receives a grant under section 2102(b) of title 38, United States Code, would still be allowed to receive grants under section 2102(a) of title 38, United States Code, if he or she becomes eligible.

Section 101(c) would amend chapter 21 of title 38, United States Code, by adding at the end a new section 2107 to provide that the Secretary shall coordinate the administration of programs to provide specially adapted housing that are administered by both the Under Secretary for Health and the Under Secretary for Benefits under chapters 17, 21, and 31 of title 38, United States Code.

*Compromise agreement*

Section 101 of the Compromise Agreement generally follows the House language except in the case of veterans residing temporarily in housing owned by a family member, veterans with disabilities involving impairments of locomotion may receive up to \$14,000. Section 101 would also increase the funding fee for a subsequent use of the VA home loan guaranty with no money down by 5 basis points for the period October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007.

Adjustable rate mortgages

*Current law*

Section 3707A(c)(4) of title 38, United States Code, limits the maximum increase or decrease of any single annual interest rate adjustment after the initial contract interest rate adjustment to 1 percentage point.

*Senate bill*

Section 201 of the Senate Bill would give VA the flexibility to prescribe an appropriate annual rate adjustment cap for VA hybrid Adjustable Rate Mortgage loans with an initial rate of interest fixed for 5 or more years.

*House bills*

The House Bills contain no comparable provision.

*Compromise agreement*

Section 102 of the Compromise Agreement follows the Senate language.

Permanent authority to make direct housing loans to native american veterans

*Current law*

Section 3761 of title 38, United States Code, establishes a pilot program to make direct housing loans to Native American veterans for homes on tribal lands. The authorization expires on December 31, 2008. Section 3762 of title 38, United States Code, describes the administration of the program and limits the maximum loan amount to \$80,000, unless the Secretary allows a larger amount due to higher housing costs in a particular geographic area.

*Senate bill*

Section 203 of the Senate Bill contains a similar provision.

*House bills*

Section 102 of H.R. 3665, as amended, would make permanent the Native American Veteran Housing Loan Program. It would also limit the Secretary's discretion in approving a loan larger than \$80,000 to the loan limitation amount provided by the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation Act for a single-family residence.

*Compromise agreement*

Section 103 of the Compromise Agreement follows the House language.

Extension of Eligibility for direct loans for Native American Veterans to a veteran who is the spouse of a Native American

*Current law*

Section 3761 of title 38, United States Code, limits loans under the Native American

Home Loan Program to veterans who are Native Americans. Under current law, a veteran residing on tribal lands with a Native American spouse is not eligible to receive a home loan under this program.

*Senate bill*

The Senate Bill contains no comparable provision.

*House bills*

Section 103 of H.R. 3665, as amended, would extend eligibility for the Native American Veteran Housing Loan Program to non-Native American veterans who are spouses of Native Americans eligible to be housed on tribal land. The non-Native American veteran must be able to acquire a meaningful interest in the property under tribal law.

*Compromise agreement*

Section 104 of the Compromise Agreement follows the House language.

Technical Corrections to Veterans' Benefit Improvement Act of 2004

*Current law*

Section 2101 of title 38, United States Code, provides for grants to adapt or acquire suitable housing for certain severely disabled veterans. Section 401 of Public Law 108-183 amended section 2101 to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide adapted housing assistance to certain disabled servicemembers who have not yet been processed for discharge from military service, but who will qualify for the benefit upon discharge due to the severity of their disabilities. However, this provision was inadvertently omitted from section 2101 of title 38, United States Code when changes to that section were made by P.L. 108-454.

*Senate bill*

Section 202 of S. 1235 would amend section 2101 of title 38, United States Code, to reinstate the authority of the Secretary to provide adapted housing assistance to certain members of the armed services and make other conforming amendments. The amendments made by this provision would take effect on December 10, 2004, immediately after the enactment of Public Law 108-454.

*House bills*

Section 4 of H.R. 2046, as amended, contains a similar provision.

*Compromise agreement*

Section 105 of the Compromise Agreement contains this provision.

TITLE II—EMPLOYMENT MATTERS

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

*Current law*

Subsection (b) of section 4102A of title 38, United States Code, describes the duties to be carried out by the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training.

*Senate bill*

The Senate Bill contains no comparable provision.

*House bills*

Section 202(a) of H.R. 3665, as amended, would add a new duty for the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET) under section 4102A of title 38, United States Code, to furnish information to employers (through meetings with hiring executives of corporations and otherwise) concerning the training and skills of veterans and disabled veterans, and the advantages of hiring veterans. The ASVET would also be required to facilitate employment of veterans and disabled veterans

through participation in labor exchanges (Internet-based and otherwise), and by other means.

Section 202(b) of H.R. 3665, as amended, would require the Secretary of Labor, acting through the ASVET, to develop a transition plan for the ASVET to assume certain duties and functions of the President's National Hire Veterans Committee and transmit the plan to the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees not later than July 1, 2006.

*Compromise agreement*

Section 201 of the Compromise Agreement generally follows the House language, but does not include the requirement that the Secretary of Labor develop and transmit a transition plan.

Modifications to the Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment and Training

*Current law*

Section 4110 of title 38, United States Code, establishes the Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment and Training, its membership, and its duties. The Advisory Committee advises the ASVET on the employment and training needs of veterans and how the Department of Labor is meeting those needs. No outreach efforts are required of the Advisory Committee in current law.

*Senate bill*

The Senate Bill contains no comparable provision.

*House bills*

Section 203(a) of H.R. 3665, as amended, would amend section 4110 of title 38, United States Code, by renaming the "Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment and Training" to "Advisory Committee on Veterans Employment, Training, and Employer Outreach".

Section 203(b) would modify the duties of the Advisory Committee to include assisting and advising the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET) in carrying out outreach to employers.

Section 203(c) would modify the membership of the Advisory Committee to include representatives from the National Society of Human Resource Managers, The Business Roundtable, the National Association of State Workforce Agencies, the United States Chamber of Commerce, the National Federation of Independent Business, a nationally recognized labor union or organization, veterans service organizations that have a national employment program, and recognized authorities in the fields of business, employment, training, rehabilitation, or labor. Section 203(c) would also retain six nonvoting ex officio members of the Advisory Committee: Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Secretary of Defense, Director of the Office of Personnel Management, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training, and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

Section 203(d) of H.R. 3665, as amended, would require the Advisory Committee to submit a report to the Secretary of Labor on the employment and training needs of veterans for the previous fiscal year. The report would include a description of the activities of the Advisory Committee during that fiscal year as well as suggested outreach activities to be 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.

*Compromise agreement*

Section 202 of the Compromise Agreement follows the House language.



Reauthorization of Appropriations for Homeless Veterans Reintegration Programs  
*Current law*

Section 2021 of title 38, United States Code, authorizes appropriations for the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Programs (HVRP) through fiscal year 2006.

*Senate bill*

The Senate Bill contains no comparable provision.

*House bills*

Section 301 of H.R. 3665, as amended, would reauthorize HVRP for fiscal years 2007 through 2009, and retain the maximum authorization of \$50 million per year.

*Compromise agreement*

Section 203 of the Compromise Agreement follows the House language.

TITLE III—LIFE AND HEALTH INSURANCE MATTERS

Duration of Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance coverage for totally disabled veterans following separation from service  
*Current law*

Section 1968 of title 38, United States Code, provides coverage at no charge under the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance program for 1 year after the date of separation or release from active duty if a veteran is rated totally disabled at the time of separation. Veterans may also convert their insurance coverage from Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance to Veterans' Group Life Insurance, or to an individual policy of insurance, during the 1-year, post-separation period.

*Senate bill*

Section 101 of the Senate Bill would extend from 1 to 2 years, after separation from active duty service, the period within which totally disabled members may receive premium-free SGLI coverage. In addition, such members would be eligible to convert their coverage to Veterans' Group Life Insurance or an individual policy of insurance.

*House bills*

The House Bills contain no comparable provision.

*Compromise agreement*

Section 301 of the Compromise Agreement would extend the post-separation coverage period from 1 to 2 years until September 30, 2011, for all members who are totally disabled when separated or released from active duty 1 year before date of enactment of this Act. For members who are totally disabled when they separate or are released on or after October 1, 2011, the post-separation coverage period would be reduced to 18 months.

Limitation on premium increases for reinstated health insurance of servicemembers released from active military service  
*Current law*

Section 704 of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) provides that a servicemember who is ordered to active duty is entitled, upon release from active duty, to reinstatement of any health insurance coverage in effect on the day before such service commenced. Section 704 of the SCRA currently contains no express provision regarding premium increases.

*Senate bill*

The Senate Bill contains no comparable provision.

*House bills*

Section 2 of H.R. 2046, as amended, would amend section 704 of SCRA by adding at the end a new subsection that would limit health insurance premium increases. The amount charged for the coverage once reinstated

would not exceed the amount charged for coverage before the termination except for any general increase for persons similarly covered by the insurance during the period between termination and the reinstatement.

*Compromise agreement*

Section 302 of the Compromise Agreement follows the House language.

Preservation of employer-sponsored health plan coverage for certain reserve-component members who acquire tricare eligibility  
*Current law*

Section 4317 of title 38, United States Code, requires an employer to provide employees returning from active duty with the same employer-sponsored health benefits they had when they reported for active duty. However, section 4317 does not preserve employer-sponsored health plan reinstatement rights for certain Reserve-component members who acquire health insurance coverage under TRICARE prior to entering active duty under section 1074(d) of title 10, United States Code. This option became available by an amendment to the TRICARE authority enacted on November 24, 2003.

*Senate bill*

The Senate Bill contains no comparable provision.

*House bills*

Section 3 of H.R. 2046, as amended, would amend section 4317 of title 38, United States Code, to preserve employer-sponsored health plan reinstatement rights under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act for Reserve-component members who acquire TRICARE coverage prior to entering active duty. This includes those Reserve Component members whose active duty orders are canceled prior to reporting to active duty.

*Compromise agreement*

Section 303 of the Compromise Agreement follows the House language.

TITLE IV—OTHER MATTERS

Inclusion of additional diseases and conditions in diseases and disabilities presumed to be associated with prisoner of war status  
*Current law*

Section 1112(b) of title 38, United States Code, contains two lists of diseases that are presumed to be related to an individual's experience as a prisoner of war. The first presumptive list requires no minimum internment period and includes diseases associated with mental trauma or acute physical trauma, which could plausibly be caused by a single day of captivity. The second list has a 30-day minimum internment requirement.

*Senate bill*

Section 303 of the Senate Bill would codify a June 28, 2005, VA regulation which added atherosclerotic heart disease or hypertensive vascular disease (including hypertensive heart disease) and their complications (including myocardial infarction, congestive heart failure and arrhythmia), and stroke and its complications as presumptive conditions for service-connection when related to the prisoner of war experience. These diseases would be included under the list requiring a minimum 30-day internment period.

*House bills*

The House Bills contain no comparable provision.

*Compromise agreement*

Section 401 of the Compromise Agreement follows the Senate language.

Consolidation and revision of outreach activities  
*Current law*

Section 7722 of title 38, United States Code, requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to

distribute full information to eligible servicemembers, veterans, and dependents regarding all benefits and services to which they may be entitled under laws administered by the Department.

*Senate bill*

Section 301 of the Senate Bill would require VA to prepare annually (and submit to Congress) a plan governing an upcoming year's outreach activities. Such a plan would incorporate the recommendations of the report mandated by Public Law 108-454, and would be prepared after consultations with veterans service organizations, State and local officials, and other interested groups and advocates.

*House bills*

The House Bills contain no comparable provision.

*Compromise agreement*

Section 402 of the Compromise Agreement follows the Senate language with modifications. VA outreach activities would be revised and consolidated in a new chapter 63 of title 38, United States Code. Additionally, VA would be required to prepare biennially an outreach plan governing an upcoming 2 years of outreach activities, beginning on October 1, 2007. Furthermore, VA would be required to report biennially on the execution of the outreach plan, beginning on October 1, 2008.

Extension of reporting requirements on equitable relief cases  
*Current law*

Section 503 of title 38, United States Code, authorizes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide monetary relief to persons whom the Secretary determines were deprived of VA benefits by reason of administrative error by a federal government employee. The Secretary may also provide relief which the Secretary determines is equitable to a VA beneficiary who has suffered loss as a consequence of an erroneous decision made by a federal government employee. No later than April 1 of each year, the Secretary was required to submit to Congress a report containing a statement as to the disposition of each case recommended to the Secretary for equitable relief during the preceding calendar year; the requirement for this report expired on December 31, 2004.

*Senate bill*

Section 302 of the Senate Bill would extend the equitable relief reporting requirement through December 31, 2009.

*House bills*

The House Bills contain no comparable provision.

*Compromise agreement*

Section 403 of the Compromise Agreement follows the Senate language.

TITLE V—TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS

Technical and clarifying amendments to new traumatic injury protection coverage under servicemembers' group life insurance  
*Current law*

Section 1032 of Public Law 109-13 (119 STAT. 257) established, effective December 1, 2005, a new traumatic injury protection program within title 38, United States Code. Section 1980A provides servicemembers enrolled in the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) program automatic coverage against qualified traumatic injuries. In the event a servicemember sustains a qualified traumatic injury, SGLI will pay the injured servicemember between \$25,000 to \$100,000, depending on the nature of the injury and in accordance with a payment schedule prescribed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

*Senate bill*

The Senate Bill contains no comparable provision.

*House bills*

Section 401 of H.R. 3665, as amended, would make various technical and clerical amendments to section 1980A of title 38, United States Code. These technical amendments more clearly specify the responsibilities of the different uniformed services who participate in the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance program: military services under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Defense, the United States Coast Guard under the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Public Health Service under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Commerce.

The technical amendments in section 401 are intended to clarify and to conform section 1980A of title 38, United States Code, to current provisions and are not intended to make any substantive change in current law.

*Compromise agreement*

Section 501 of the Compromise Agreement follows the House language.

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

*Current law*

Sections 1114(l), 1114(m), 1115(b)(2), 1122(b)(2), 1311(c)(2), 1315(g)(2), and 1502(b)(2) of title 38, United States Code, contain language that refers to "helpless veterans" when relating to eligibility for compensation or dependency and indemnity compensation.

*Senate bill*

The Senate Bill contains no comparable provision.

*House bills*

Section 104 of H.R. 3665, as amended, would amend sections 1114(l), 1114(m), 1115(1)(E)(ii), 1122(b)(2), 1311(c)(2), 1315(g)(2), and 1502(b)(2) of title 38, United States Code, eliminating use of the obsolete term "helpless" when describing significantly disabled veterans. No substantive change is intended by these amendments.

*Compromise agreement*

Section 502 of the Compromise Agreement follows the House language.

## LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS NOT ADOPTED

## Post traumatic stress disorder claims

*Current law*

Section 501 of title 38, United States Code, provides the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with the authority to prescribe all rules and regulations necessary or appropriate to carry out the laws administered by VA, including the methods of making medical examinations and the manner and form of adjudications and awards.

*Senate bill*

Section 304 would require VA to develop and implement policy and training initiatives to standardize the assessment of PTSD disability compensation claims.

*House Bills*

The House Bills contain no comparable provision.

Increase in rates of disability compensation paid to certain surviving spouses with children

*Current law*

Under current law, a surviving spouse with one or more children under the age of 18 is entitled to receive a transitional benefit of an additional \$250 per month for the first two

years of eligibility for dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC).

*Senate bill*

The Senate Bill contains no comparable provision.

*House bills*

Section 206 of H.R. 1220, as amended, would provide a cost-of-living adjustment for the \$250 transitional DIC for 2006.

Treatment of stillborn children as insurable dependents under servicemembers' group life insurance program

*Current law*

Section 1967 of title 38, United States Code, provides coverage under the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance program to the spouse and children of insured, full-time, active duty servicemembers, as well as covered members of the Ready Reserve. Coverage for the spouse may not exceed \$100,000, and the servicemember may elect in writing not to insure a spouse. Coverage for each child, in the amount of \$10,000, is automatic. Coverage for the dependent begins immediately following a live birth.

*Senate bill*

Section 102 of the Senate Bill would cover a member's stillborn child as an insurable dependent under the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance program.

*House bills*

The House Bills contain no comparable provision.

Demonstration project to improve business practices of Veterans Health Administration

*Current law*

There is no applicable current law.

*Senate bill*

The Senate Bill contains no comparable provision.

*House bills*

Section 5 of H.R. 1220, as amended, would establish a demonstration project to improve the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) collections from third-party payers.

Parkinson's disease research, education, and clinical centers

*Current law*

There is no applicable current law.

*Senate bill*

The Senate Bill contains no comparable provision.

*House bills*

Section 6 of H.R. 1220, as amended, would permanently authorize six Parkinson's disease Research Education and Clinical Centers (PADRECCs), subject to appropriations, and give priority to the existing PADRECCs for medical care and research dollars, insofar as such funds are awarded to projects for research in Parkinson's disease and other movement disorders.

Extension of operation of the president's national hire veterans committee

*Current law*

Section 6 of the Jobs for Veterans Act, Public Law 107-288, established the President's National Hire Veterans Committee (PNHVC) within the Department of Labor. The PNHVC furnishes information to employers with respect to the training and skills of veterans and disabled veterans and the advantages of hiring veterans. The Secretary of Labor provides staff and administrative support to the PNHVC to assist it in carrying out its duties under this section. The PNHVC also has the authority to contract with government and private agencies to furnish information to employers. Under current law, the PNHVC terminated on December 31, 2005. The PNHVC was authorized

\$3 million appropriated from the Unemployment Trust Fund through fiscal year 2005.

*Senate bill*

The Senate Bill contains no comparable provision.

*House bills*

Section 201 of H.R. 3665, as amended, would amend section 6 of the Jobs for Veterans Act by extending, for up to 1 year, the President's National Hire Veterans Committee until not later than December 31, 2006. Section 201 would also extend the authorization for appropriations through fiscal year 2006 and require an additional PNHVC report to the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees in 2006.

Mr. SUNUNU. Mr. President, today I rise in strong support of S. 1235, the Veterans' Housing Opportunity and Benefits Improvement Act of 2006. This legislation passed the House unanimously on Monday, and I urge my Senate colleagues to do the same.

S. 1235 contains many important provisions, but I would like to focus my remarks on section 101 of the bill, which deals with adaptive housing grants. Section 101 upgrades eligibility criteria for housing assistance grants to better reflect the needs of today's veteran community and will help all disabled veterans move home from medical facilities sooner. The language in section 101 is almost identical to my bipartisan legislation, S. 1947, The Specially Adapted Housing Improvements Grants Act and a bi-partisan amendment I introduced to S. 1932, the Deficit Reduction Act, which passed the Senate unanimously by voice vote.

First, I want to acknowledge my House colleague, Representative JOHN BOOZMAN of Arkansas, who serves as Chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity and has demonstrated real leadership on this issue. I am grateful to him for his considerable efforts to advance this measure in the House and I am happy to do so here in this Chamber. I also appreciate the hard work of the Chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee here in the Senate, Senator CRAIG, and the bipartisan group of Senators who cosponsored both my bill and amendment. The broad support of S. 1235 and its provisions represent a bipartisan belief on Capitol Hill that Congress must constantly evaluate veterans programs to make certain that our Nation provides responsive support to veterans.

While representing New Hampshire in the House and Senate, I have worked to ensure that those who served in our armed services receive their hard-earned benefits quickly and in full. Too often, out-of-date and burdensome regulations deny qualified veterans from receiving the benefits to which they are entitled. Whenever possible, it is imperative that we remove red tape that does not take into account the realities faced by today's veterans.

That is why I introduced legislation to reform rules that determine requirements for a Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, grant program that helps many disabled veterans make their

homes suitable for occupancy. Currently, a disabled veteran must at least partly own his or her residence to receive VA housing assistance grants to perform necessary residence modifications, such as installing wheelchair ramps or railings. However, many younger veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan have not yet had the opportunity to become homeowners. Being ineligible for VA funding assistance to modify their homes, these veterans and their families often are compelled to either shoulder the costs of retrofitting their residences or face extended stays in VA medical facilities.

Section 101 of S. 1235 will establish a 5-year pilot program to allow severely disabled veterans who live temporarily with family to receive up to \$10,000 in adaptive housing assistance; less severely disabled veterans could receive a maximum of \$2,000. This grant money will help ensure that all disabled veterans—regardless of whether they own property—are able to leave hospitals and return home as quickly as possible.

Also, mindful that these individuals will likely purchase their own residence, the bill will allow disabled veterans to receive two additional specially adaptive housing grants to be used for homes that they own in the future. Severely disabled veterans could receive a total of \$50,000 to modify residences; less severely disabled veterans would be eligible for a total of \$10,000. Only one of the three total grants could be used for a temporary residence, such as a family-owned home.

America's veterans have made enormous sacrifices to protect our Nation and the ideals for which it stands. Our country owes a special obligation to those men and women who have become disabled as a result of their service. Under no circumstances should these American heroes be divided into groups of "haves" and "have nots."

This Nation must do no less than to ensure that all disabled veterans are returned to the normalcy of home life as quickly and comfortably as possible. The common sense changes put forth in section 101 of S. 1235 do just that, and I urge my colleagues in the Senate to send this bill to President Bush to sign in to law in time, fittingly, for Memorial Day.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, as ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I urge my colleagues to support our current servicemembers, veterans, and their families by supporting the pending measure, the final agreement on the Veterans' Housing Opportunity and Benefits Improvement Act of 2006. This is a vital and timely piece of legislation that has already passed the House of Representatives. With Senate passage today and the President's signature it will quickly become public law.

Mr. President, this measure, which I shall refer to as the "Compromise Agreement," will improve and expand a wide variety of veterans benefits and programs, including, among others,

housing benefits for Native American veterans and severely disabled servicemembers; insurance benefits for certain disabled veterans; compensation benefits for former prisoners of war; and programs that provide assistance to homeless veterans.

This legislation is appropriate at a time when our servicemembers are in harm's way. We must always remember the sacrifices that our servicemembers, both past and present, have made on behalf of this great Nation and we must do our part to respond to their service by improving and expanding veterans benefits.

In 1992, I authored the legislation that established a pilot program to make direct housing loans to Native American veterans for homes on tribal lands. As of the end of April, VA had made 504 loans to this group of veterans. Under this program, VA offers loan guarantees that protect lenders against loss up to the amount of the guaranty if the borrower fails to repay the loan. Prior to the enactment of this law, Native American veterans residing on tribal lands were unable to qualify for VA home loan benefits. With the Native American Veteran Housing Loan Program indigenous peoples residing on trust lands are now able to use this very important VA benefit. I am pleased that the Compromise Agreement contains a provision derived from legislation I offered, S. 917, that would make this pilot program, which was set to expire on December 31, 2008, permanent.

The Compromise Agreement also extends, from 1 to 2 years, the amount of time a disabled servicemember has to convert his or her Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance coverage into Veterans' Group Life Insurance coverage. This change is being made so that veterans may concentrate on recovering from their injuries or conditions, and not on meeting deadlines for life insurance conversion.

Under current law, former prisoners of war have to been held for a minimum of 30 days before they can benefit from a presumption that certain diseases are linked to their service. The Compromise Agreement also would add heart disease and stroke to presumptive conditions for service-connection for former prisoners of war.

Homelessness among veterans is a critical problem. It is particularly troubling to me that an estimated 56 percent of today's homeless veterans are minorities. The homeless rate in my home state of Hawaii has nearly doubled since early 2000, with the majority of Hawaii's new homeless being Native Hawaiians. The city of Honolulu has a tremendous problem with affordable housing, increasing the possibility of becoming homeless for those who already struggle to make ends meet. The Compromise Agreement would reauthorize through fiscal year 2009 the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Programs, which are the only Federal programs dedicated wholly to providing

employment services to homeless veterans.

Also included in the Compromise Agreement is my provision that would make a technical change to the specially adapted housing grant program. Last session, the law that allows severely disabled members of the Armed Forces to receive specially adapted housing grants from VA, while still on active duty, was inadvertently repealed. My provision would correct this and restore the grant to its original intent.

In conclusion, I thank Senator CRAIG and the benefits staff on the majority for their work on this comprehensive bill, especially Jon Towers, Amanda Meredith, and Lupe Wissel and, on the Democratic staff Dahlia Melendrez, Pat Driscoll, and Noe Kalipi for their hard work on this legislation.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation on behalf of America's veterans and their families.

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent the Senate concur in the House amendments, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements related to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

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MEASURE READ THE FIRST  
TIME—S. 3064

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the title of the bill for the first time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3064) to express the policy of the United States regarding the United States relationship with Native Hawaiians and to provide a process for the recognition by the United States of the Native Hawaiian governing entity.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I now ask for its second reading, and in order to place the bill on the calendar under rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will receive its second reading on the next legislative day.

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ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, MAY 26, 2006

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand in adjournment until 8:45 a.m. on Friday, May 26. I further ask consent that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved, and the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of Executive Calendar No. 632, the Kavanaugh nomination; provided further that all time during the adjournment of the Senate count under rule XXII.