

Committee on Rules and the leadership teams on both sides of the aisle to ensure that we can in fact pursue further transparency, openness, accountability and enforceability when it comes to the issue of earmarks.

With that, I withdraw my reservation, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 491

Resolved, That during the remainder of the 110th Congress it shall not be in order to consider a conference report to accompany a regular general appropriation bill unless the joint explanatory statement prepared by the managers on the part of the House and the managers on the part of the Senate includes a list of congressional earmarks (as that term is used in clause 9(d) of rule XXI) in the conference report or joint statement (and the name of any Member, Delegate, Resident Commissioner, or Senator who submitted a request to the respective House or Senate committee for each respective item included on such list) that were not committed to the conference committee by either House, not in a report on such bill, and not in a report of a committee of the Senate on a companion measure.

SEC. 2. It shall not be in order to consider a rule or order that waives the application of the first section of this resolution.

SEC. 3. A point of order under this resolution shall be disposed of by the question of consideration under the same terms as specified in clause 9(b) of rule XXI.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR RULES COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, the Rules Committee is expected to meet Wednesday, June 20, to grant a rule which may structure the amendment process for floor consideration of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2008.

Members who wish to offer an amendment to this bill should submit 30 copies of the amendment and a brief description of the amendment to the Rules Committee in H-312 in the Capitol no later than 10 a.m. on Wednesday, June 20. Members are strongly advised to adhere to the amendment deadlines to ensure the amendments receive consideration.

Amendments should be drafted to the bill as ordered reported by the Committee on Appropriations. A copy of that bill is expected to be posted on the Web site of the Rules Committee on Tuesday afternoon.

Amendments should be drafted by Legislative Counsel and also should be reviewed by the Office of the Parliamentarian to be sure that the amendments comply with the Rules of the House. Members are also strongly en-

couraged to submit their amendments to the Congressional Budget Office for analysis regarding possible PAYGO violations.

SBA VETERANS' PROGRAMS ACT OF 2007

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2366) to reauthorize the veterans entrepreneurial development programs of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2366

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “SBA Veterans’ Programs Act of 2007”.

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—OFFICE OF VETERANS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Sec. 101. Office of Veterans Business Development.

TITLE II—VETERANS ASSISTANCE AND SERVICES

Sec. 201. Veterans Assistance and Services program.

TITLE III—EXPANDING VETERANS BUSINESS OUTREACH CENTERS

Sec. 301. Increasing the number of outreach centers.

Sec. 302. Independent study on gaps in availability of outreach centers.

TITLE I—OFFICE OF VETERANS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

SEC. 101. OFFICE OF VETERANS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT.

Section 32 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 657b) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (c) as subsection (e); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (b) the following:

“(c) PARTICIPATION IN TAP WORKSHOPS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Associate Administrator shall increase veteran outreach by ensuring that Veteran Business Outreach Centers regularly participate, on a nationwide basis, in the workshops of the Transition Assistance Program of the Department of Labor.

“(2) PRESENTATIONS.—In carrying out paragraph (1), a Center may provide grants to eligible entities located in Transition Assistance Program locations to make presentations on the opportunities available from the Administration for recently separating veterans. Each such presentation must include, at a minimum, the entrepreneurial and business training resources available from the Administration.

“(3) REPORTS.—The Associate Administrator shall submit to Congress progress reports on the implementation of this subsection.

“(d) WOMEN VETERANS BUSINESS TRAINING RESOURCE PROGRAM.—The Associate Administrator shall establish a Women Veterans Business Training Resource Program. The program shall—

“(1) compile information on resources available to women veterans for business training, including resources for—

“(A) vocational and technical education;

“(B) general business skills, such as marketing and accounting; and

“(C) business assistance programs targeted to women veterans; and

“(2) disseminate the information through Veteran Business Outreach Centers and women’s business centers.”.

TITLE II—VETERANS ASSISTANCE AND SERVICES

SEC. 201. VETERANS ASSISTANCE AND SERVICES PROGRAM.

Section 21 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(n) VETERANS ASSISTANCE AND SERVICES PROGRAM.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—A Small Business Development Center may apply for an additional grant to carry out a veterans assistance and services program.

“(2) ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM.—Under a program under paragraph (1), the Center shall—

“(A) create a marketing campaign to promote awareness and education of the services of the Center that are available to veterans, and to target the campaign toward veterans, disabled veterans, military units, Federal agencies, and veterans organizations;

“(B) use technology-assisted online counseling and distance learning technology to overcome the impediments to entrepreneurship faced by veterans and members of the Armed Forces; and

“(C) increase coordination among organizations that assist veterans, including by establishing virtual integration of service providers and offerings for a one-stop point of contact for veterans who are entrepreneurs or small business owners.

“(3) MINIMUM AMOUNT.—Each grant under this subsection shall be for at least \$75,000.

“(4) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—A grant under this subsection may not exceed \$250,000.

“(5) FUNDING.—Subject to amounts approved in advance in appropriations Acts, the Administration may make grants or enter into cooperative agreements to carry out the provisions of this subsection.”.

TITLE III—EXPANDING VETERANS BUSINESS OUTREACH CENTERS

SEC. 301. INCREASING THE NUMBER OF OUTREACH CENTERS.

The Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall use the authority in section 8(b)(17) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 647(b)) to ensure that the number of Veterans Business Outreach Centers throughout the United States increases—

(1) by at least 2, for each of fiscal years 2008 and 2009; and

(2) by the number that the Administrator considers appropriate, based on existing need, for each fiscal year thereafter.

SEC. 302. INDEPENDENT STUDY ON GAPS IN AVAILABILITY OF OUTREACH CENTERS.

The Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall sponsor an independent study on gaps in the availability of Veterans Business Outreach Centers across the United States. The purpose of the study shall be to identify the gaps that do exist so as to inform decisions on funding and on the allocation and coordination of resources. Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to Congress a report on the results of the study.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DAVID DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LOEBSACK).

Mr. LOEBSACK. I thank the gentlewoman from New York for yielding, and I thank the gentleman from Florida for introducing this legislation.

I rise today to voice my strong support for the SBA's Veterans' Programs Act.

The SBA's Veterans' Business Outreach Initiative was established to facilitate business ownership among disabled veterans by providing one-stop assistance and counseling. Today's legislation will expand the success of this initiative.

As an exemplary public/private partnership, Veterans' Business Outreach Centers represent the comprehensive, cooperative and effective support that our Nation can and should provide our country's veterans.

This program provides greater opportunity to returning servicemembers and encourages economic development in communities across the country. Our troops fight for our country abroad, and we have a responsibility to provide for their future at home. Their sacrifice warrants our support. And they deserve every opportunity to succeed in business after their dedicated service to our country.

This bill provides veterans with the community and government support necessary to ensure their success, and I support its passage.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, veterans have not only been critical to the defense of our Nation, but with the increasing number of service men and women engaging in entrepreneurship, they have also been invaluable in helping our economy grow. These men and women have dedicated their lives to preserving our freedom. It is crucial that we show our appreciation for their service. The SBA Veterans' Programs Act of 2007 does just that.

I strongly urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 2366, the SBA Veterans' Program Act of 2007. I urge its adoption.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2366, the SBA Veterans' Programs Act of 2007. This legislation will assist our soldiers when they return home with opportunities and information about starting a small business.

More than a million and a half (1,502,125) men and women have answered the call to serve their country since 2001. They interrupted their careers, put their families economic security at risk, and face big personal challenges upon returning home.

I recently visited Iraq and Afghanistan. That trip gave me an even greater appreciation for the significant sacrifices our soldiers must make and must cope with for the rest of their lives. If our soldiers faced mortal danger every day abroad, let us help them have economic security when they return home.

It isn't just the veteran who makes the sacrifice, their families do as well: their parents, their spouses, their children, girlfriends and boyfriends and siblings. They give up so much in defense of our country.

It is our job, as Members of Congress, to make sure that our Nation lives up to its com-

mitment to our veterans. It is a simple pact we have made with our troops—and one we are obligated to fulfill: after they have sacrificed to serve our country on the battlefield, we must do all we can to serve them here at home. The cost of any war must include caring for the warrior.

This legislation helps our veterans get started with business opportunities in their communities. It does so by providing grants, information services, and personal assistance to help veterans evaluate business opportunities; increasing the number of veteran business outreach centers around the country, and encouraging further assistance to women veterans.

Countless soldiers are returning from their tours of duty with new confidence and skills developed during their time in the military. This SBA program will help to ensure that those new abilities are put to good use when they return to civilian life.

This bill is the right thing to do for those who have given so much and it will directly impact Vermont and every State around the country. 97 percent of all Vermont firms are small businesses. My office has been involved in helping the Vermont Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) run business readiness classes for veterans. The Vermont SBDC is the primary small business assistance resource sought out by small business clients, lenders, government agencies and other economic development partners. The Vermont SBDC is the keystone in a statewide business assistance infrastructure tying together all appropriate resources and serving as a "one-stop" gateway and clearing house to serve small businesses' needs. Drawing on collaborative relationships among service providers, Vermont SBDC leverages economic development resources of all kinds for advancement of small businesses, growing the local economy.

Roughly 6 percent of deployed soldiers have small businesses depending on them. Veterans face a number of unique challenges, from increasing lengths and number of deployments overseas, to translating their military experience into business ventures. Yet, there is a lack of substantive programs to help these businesses survive through deployment, and to assist veterans returning home. This program is designed to meet current, real-time needs of people on active duty in business who now need to leave for protracted periods, or for those who have just come back and really "need" to do something new with their lives.

I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 2366.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2366, the Small Business Administration Veterans' Programs Act of 2007. I commend my colleague from Florida (Mr. BUCHANAN) for introducing this legislation.

This bill would authorize the Small Business Administration (SBA) to award grants to Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) for the establishment of programs that would improve outreach to veterans and veterans service organizations. Specifically, this bill would authorize SBDCs to use such grant funds to create a marketing campaign to promote awareness of the services made available to veterans through that SBDC, and to target the campaign toward veterans, disabled veterans, military units, federal agencies, and veterans service organizations. The bill would also au-

thorize SBDCs to utilize grant funds to develop and expand technology-assisted counseling and distance learning services designed to help veterans and members of the United States Armed Forces overcome barriers to entrepreneurship. This bill would further authorize SBDCs to facilitate and increase coordination among organizations that assist veterans, including through the integration of service providers and offerings into a one-stop point of contact for veterans who are entrepreneurs or small business owners.

This bill would further require that Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOCs) participate in the U.S. Department of Labor Technical Assistance Program (TAP). The Technical Assistance Program is offered in 173 locations throughout the United States and 53 locations internationally. H.R. 2366 would authorize VBOCs to provide grants to eligible entities located in TAP locations to make presentations on the opportunities available from the SBA for recently separated veterans. According to this bill such presentations must include, at a minimum, the entrepreneurial and business training resources available from the SBA. This bill would increase the number of authorized VBOCs by two in each of fiscal years 2008 and 2009.

Additionally, H.R. 2366 would direct the SBA to establish a Women Veterans Business Training Resource Program. This program would compile information on resources available to women veterans for business training, including resources for vocational and technical education, the development of general business skills, and business assistance programs. H.R. 2366 would direct that the SBA disseminate such information through VBOCs and women business centers.

Support for this legislation will help Congress fulfill its commitment to ensuring that our veterans and servicemembers receive the support they need upon separation from service. I support this legislation on behalf of all veterans and servicemembers, in particular those veterans and servicemembers from Guam. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2366.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARDOZA). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2366.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPANDING AND IMPROVING ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2284) to amend the Small Business Act to expand and improve the assistance provided by Small Business Development Centers to Indian tribe members, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.