

CHAFFETZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4155, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

VETERANS' COMPENSATION COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 2012

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4114) to increase, effective as of December 1, 2012, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4114

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 "Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2012".

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

(a) **RATE ADJUSTMENT.**—Effective on December 1, 2012, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall increase, in accordance with subsection (c), the dollar amounts in effect on November 30, 2012, for the payment of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation under the provisions specified in subsection (b).

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

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

(2) **ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR DEPENDENTS.**—Each of the dollar amounts under section 1115(1) of such title.

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

(4) **DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION TO SURVIVING SPOUSE.**—Each of the dollar amounts under subsections (a) through (d) of section 1311 of such title.

(5) **DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION TO CHILDREN.**—Each of the dollar amounts under sections 1313(a) and 1314 of such title.

(c) **DETERMINATION OF INCREASE.**—

(1) **PERCENTAGE.**—Except as provided in paragraph (2), each dollar amount described in subsection (b) shall be increased by the same percentage as the percentage by which benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) are increased effective December 1, 2012, as a result of a determination under section 215(i) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)).

(2) **ROUNDING.**—Each dollar amount increased under paragraph (1), if not a whole dollar amount, shall be rounded to the next lower whole dollar amount.

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

SEC. 3. PUBLICATION OF ADJUSTED RATES.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish in the Federal Register the amounts specified in section 2(b), as increased under that section, not later than the date on which the matters specified in section 215(i)(2)(D) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)(2)(D)) are required to be published by reason of a determination made under section 215(i) of such Act during fiscal year 2013.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I rise in support of H.R. 4114, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2012.

This critically important piece of legislation authorizes a cost-of-living increase for disabled veterans in receipt of disability compensation payments from VA, veterans clothing allowance payments, and other compensation for survivors of veterans who die as a result of their service to this country. The amount of the increase will be determined by the Consumer Price Index, which also controls the cost-of-living adjustment for Social Security beneficiaries.

I want to thank my colleague from New Jersey (Mr. RUNYAN), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, for introducing this important piece of legislation and for working with me and the ranking member to move it forward.

I want to urge all my colleagues to support H.R. 4114, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I wholeheartedly support the Veterans' Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2012, H.R. 4114. While this committee does not control the amount of the COLA, it is critical that we pass the bill so that it can be put in place when the Social Security COLA is enacted. It is so important that the payments that our veterans, their families, and survivors receive keep pace with inflation and better enable them to put food on the table and a roof over their heads.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that last year's veterans COLA increase was 3.6 percent for 2012 and that we can likely expect an increase for 2013. The exact figure will be tied directly to the Social Security COLA, whose beneficiaries will also see the same increase in their payments.

As it has since 1976, Congress, through the passage of the Veterans' Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act, directs the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs to increase the rates of basic compensation for disabled veterans and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation to their survivors and dependents. This bill will benefit disabled veterans, their families, and their survivors from the World War I era through the current conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Many of the over 3.5 million veterans who receive disability compensation benefits depend on these payments not only to provide for their basic needs, but for those of their spouses, children, and parents as well. Without an annual COLA increase, these veterans, their families, and survivors will likely see the value of their hard-earned benefits slowly eroding.

Mr. Speaker, I think we would be derelict in our duties if we fail to guarantee that those who sacrifice so much for this country are able to receive benefits and service that keep pace with their needs and inflation.

□ 1620

We fund the wars; let's fund the warriors. Let me repeat: we fund the wars; let's fund the warriors.

I urge my colleagues to support the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2012, H.R. 4114, without delay.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield as much time as he might consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. RUNYAN), the subcommittee chairman of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, not only the author of this particular piece of legislation, but since coming to this Congress, he has become one of the most ardent supporters of our veterans.

Mr. RUNYAN. Chairman MILLER, thank you for those kind words, and thank you for your support in helping me move this piece of legislation forward.

I rise today in support of H.R. 4114, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2012.

H.R. 4114, which I introduced in February, puts veterans on equal footing with Social Security beneficiaries by increasing the amount provided to several kinds of compensation by the amount of the Social Security cost-of-living adjustment. These include disabled veterans compensation, veterans' clothing allowance, and the DIC for veterans' survivors.

This annual and noncontroversial bill, which has been scored by CBO as having no budgetary impact, is a critical part of ensuring that benefits for disabled veterans and their families are sufficient to meet their needs.

I am proud that the first bill I introduced in Congress last year was the veterans' COLA bill, which gave the first cost-of-living adjustment to our

veterans that they had received in several years. I am equally proud that we are doing right by our veterans by moving the COLA bill increase this year in the form of H.R. 4114.

I urge all Members to support this critical piece of legislation.

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

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, last month we were honored with the presence of over 400 Montford Point Marines in the Capitol to receive the Congressional Gold Medal. From 1942 to 1949, almost 20,000 African American Marines experienced basic training at Camp Montford Point near the New River in Jacksonville, North Carolina.

These heroes fought on two fronts, at home against discrimination, and across the sea to defend our Nation. This highest civilian award in the United States was first presented during the Revolutionary War to George Washington. It is fitting that this latest award should go to those men who, years before Jackie Robinson and Rosa Parks, joined the Marines to defend their country.

During this week when we are going to be debating the Affordable Care Act, we need to discuss a project that affects veterans health in my State of Florida. On July 1, the VA paid an additional \$500,000 to rent a portable operating room for a project that is 95 percent complete in the Miami VA Medical Center. When this renovation was first proposed, two minor projects, each costing \$10 million, were sponsored to fulfill the requirements of the project.

I visited the medical center last month and heard directly from the administrators of the facility about the project. The planners on the ground soon realized that patients could have been put at risk due to contamination of the operating rooms by the construction on the other side of the room.

Veterans health care was being put at risk, and rather than let this happen, it was decided by those who know the veterans health the best—those at the health facilities—to combine the projects into one and rent the portable operating rooms.

We need a procedure to give the Secretary the ability to correct these kinds of projects and not waste taxpayers' money. I will soon be introducing legislation to give the Secretary the help he needs to save taxpayers money.

In the last Congress, our Democratic leadership in the House and the Senate, with President Barack Obama, we were able to pass the largest increase in the veterans budget in history. We also passed advanced appropriations for the VA health care so that veterans would not be subject to the deadline that Congress seems to miss every year to pass a proper budget. It allows the VA to plan for the following year's health care needs and reassure veterans that they will be able to get the care that they need.

We also passed the caregivers law to help those who are taking care of the members of the military, funded PTSD and TBI mental health programs, homeless programs and rural health care in the veterans homes. It is the least we can do for those who have given so much to protect our freedom. We did not just talk the talk but walked the walk.

And since we're discussing repeal of the health care law tomorrow, I would like to briefly discuss how, in fact, the Affordable Care Act benefits our Nation's veterans and all Americans. Although not a perfect bill—and no bill is since there are many compromises made—this is a perfect start, and attempting to obtain universal health care has been a primary goal of every single President and Congress since the days of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who had fought for quality, accessible health care insurance reform for all Americans. And now, 75 years later, after the Supreme Court ruling just over a week ago, our Nation has finally attained that goal.

Millions of Americans have already come to rely on the wide-ranging and lifesaving benefits of the Affordable Care Act.

And let me just say, I keep hearing ObamaCare. Let me just be clear. Obama cares for the American health care.

Before Congress passed the Affordable Care Act, nearly one in five citizens in the wealthiest country in the world had little or no hope of affordable insurance and access to regular health care. When fully implemented, the Affordable Care Act will cover an additional 30 million Americans and 3.8 million African Americans who otherwise would remain uninsured.

Already under the Affordable Health Care Act, 17 million children with pre-existing conditions can no longer be denied coverage; 105 million Americans no longer have a lifetime limit on their coverage; 32.5 million seniors received free preventive service in 2011; 54 million Americans in private plans have received free preventive services; 6.6 million young adults up to the age of 26 have obtained insurance through their parents' plan; and 5.2 million seniors and disabled people save an average of \$704 each on their prescription drugs; 360,000 small businesses received tax credits to help them afford coverage for 2 million workers; 13 million families will receive insurance premium rebates averaging \$151 in 2012.

However, instead of debating a health care repeal, we should be debating a construction reauthorization bill to deal with the waste of taxpayer dollars, like I indicated in Miami—\$500,000 this month for a portable operating room.

In closing, let's get to work.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I think it's rather interesting that my colleague would talk about the supposed great things that are in the ObamaCare bill and not talk about how

it's going to be paid for—in fact, the largest tax increase on the American people that this Congress has ever placed on their backs.

They would make you believe that it was all free, but it's not. It's going to cost somebody, and that's going to be the American citizens.

□ 1630

I also want to talk about the Miami project very quickly. I had to go down and actually visit and then pressure the VA Secretary to make sure that the director of the Miami Medical Center left her job because she was not doing what she was supposed to do. In fact, this was, in a way, a skirting of the rules and of the laws by splitting a project into two, thus costing the taxpayers of the United States considerably more money, including the cost of the rental of the trailers that are being used as temporary operating rooms.

We continue to wait for the Department of Veterans Affairs to actually make an official request for us to come forward and take care of this problem that exists in Miami, specifically because of, I think, poor administrative oversight not only at the administrative level in Miami but with the VISN Director in VISN 8 as well.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, at this point, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous materials that they may have on H.R. 4114.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the Senate itself hasn't been able to pass a budget for almost 4 years, and they cannot pass an appropriations bill on time, so I do support the advanced appropriation that this House supported and that ultimately was signed into law. With that, I encourage all Members to support H.R. 4114.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4114.

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.

ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSFER ACT AMENDMENT

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4367) to amend the Electronic Fund Transfer Act to limit the fee disclosure requirement for an automatic teller machine to the screen of that machine.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.