

COMMUNICATION FROM THE  
CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HARRIS) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, December 28, 2012.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,  
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Wash-  
ington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 28, 2012 at 10:45 a.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 5949.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE  
CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, December 28, 2012.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,  
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Wash-  
ington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 28, 2012 at 9:50 a.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 2338.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3892.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3869.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4389.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 6260.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 6379.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 6587.

That the Senate passed S. 3667.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE  
CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, December 30, 2012.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,  
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Wash-  
ington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 30, 2012 at 1:00 p.m.

That the Senate passed S. 3454.

That the Senate passed with amendments H.R. 1.

That the Senate passed with amendments H.R. 1464.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 6014.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 6620.

That the Senate passed with amendment H.R. 6621.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 15 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1630

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HARRIS) at 4 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER  
PRO TEMPORE

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

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

IMPROVING TRANSPARENCY OF  
EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
VETERANS ACT OF 2012

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 4057) to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop a comprehensive policy to improve outreach and transparency to veterans and members of the Armed Forces through the provision of information on institutions of higher learning, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the Senate amendment is as follows:

Senate amendment:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. COMPREHENSIVE POLICY ON PROVIDING EDUCATION INFORMATION TO VETERANS.

(a) COMPREHENSIVE POLICY REQUIRED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 36 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§3698. Comprehensive policy on providing education information to veterans

“(a) COMPREHENSIVE POLICY REQUIRED.—The Secretary shall develop a comprehensive policy to improve outreach and transparency to veterans and members of the Armed Forces through the provision of information on institutions of higher learning.

“(b) SCOPE.—In developing the policy required by subsection (a), the Secretary shall include each of the following elements:

“(1) Effective and efficient methods to inform individuals of the educational and vocational counseling provided under section 3697A of this title.

“(2) A centralized mechanism for tracking and publishing feedback from students and State approving agencies regarding the quality of instruction, recruiting practices, and post-graduation employment placement of institutions of higher learning that—

“(A) allows institutions of higher learning to verify feedback and address issues regarding feedback before the feedback is published;

“(B) protects the privacy of students, including by not publishing the names of students; and

“(C) publishes only feedback that conforms with criteria for relevancy that the Secretary shall determine.

“(3) The merit of and the manner in which a State approving agency shares with an accrediting agency or association recognized by the Secretary of Education under subpart 2 of part H of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1099b) information regarding the State approving agency's evaluation of an institution of higher learning.

“(4) Description of the information provided to individuals participating in the Transition Assistance Program under section 1144 of title 10 relating to institutions of higher learning.

“(5) Effective and efficient methods to provide veterans and members of the Armed Forces with information regarding postsecondary education and training opportunities available to the veteran or member.

“(c) POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION INFORMATION.—(1) The Secretary shall ensure that the information provided pursuant to subsection (b)(5) includes—

“(A) an explanation of the different types of accreditation available to educational institutions and programs of education;

“(B) a description of Federal student aid programs; and

“(C) for each institution of higher learning, for the most recent academic year for which information is available—

“(i) whether the institution is public, private nonprofit, or proprietary for-profit;

“(ii) the name of the national or regional accrediting agency that accredits the institution, including the contact information used by the agency to receive complaints from students;

“(iii) information on the State approving agency, including the contact information used by the agency to receive complaints from students;

“(iv) whether the institution participates in any programs under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.);

“(v) the tuition and fees;

“(vi) the median amount of debt from Federal student loans under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.) held by individuals upon completion of programs of education at the institution of higher learning (as determined from information collected by the Secretary of Education);

“(vii) the cohort default rate, as defined in section 435(m) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1085(m)), of the institution;

“(viii) the total enrollment, graduation rate, and retention rate, as determined from information collected by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System of the Secretary of Education;

“(ix) whether the institution provides students with technical support, academic support, and other support services, including career counseling and job placement; and

“(x) the information regarding the institution's policies related to transfer of credit from other institutions, as required under section 485(h)(1) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20

U.S.C. 1092(h)(1)) and provided to the Secretary of Education under section 132(i)(1)(V)(iv) of such Act (20 U.S.C. 1015a(i)(1)(V)(iv)).

“(2) To the extent practicable, the Secretary shall provide the information described in paragraph (1) by including hyperlinks on the Internet website of the Department to other Internet websites that contain such information, including the Internet website of the Department of Education, in a form that is comprehensive and easily understood by veterans, members of the Armed Forces, and other individuals.

“(3)(A) If the Secretary of Veterans Affairs requires, for purposes of providing information pursuant to subsection (b)(5), information that has been reported, or information that is similar to information that has been reported, by an institution of higher learning to the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Labor, or the heads of other Federal agencies under a provision of law other than under this section, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall obtain the information the Secretary of Veterans Affairs requires from the Secretary or head with the information rather than the institution of higher learning.

“(B) If the Secretary of Veterans Affairs requires, for purposes of providing information pursuant to subsection (b)(5), information from an institution of higher learning that has not been reported to another Federal agency, the Secretary shall, to the degree practicable, obtain such information through the Secretary of Education.

“(d) **CONSISTENCY WITH EXISTING EDUCATION POLICY.**—In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall ensure that—

“(1) the comprehensive policy is consistent with any requirements and initiatives resulting from Executive Order No. 13607; and

“(2) the efforts of the Secretary to implement the comprehensive policy do not duplicate the efforts being taken by any Federal agencies.

“(e) **COMMUNICATION WITH INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING.**—To the extent practicable, if the Secretary considers it necessary to communicate with an institution of higher learning to carry out the comprehensive policy required by subsection (a), the Secretary shall carry out such communication through the use of a communication system of the Department of Education.

“(f) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘institution of higher learning’ has the meaning given that term in section 3452(f) of this title.

“(2) The term ‘postsecondary education and training opportunities’ means any postsecondary program of education, including apprenticeships and on-job training, for which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs provides assistance to a veteran or member of the Armed Forces.”.

(2) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding after the item relating to section 3697A the following new item:

“3698. Comprehensive policy on providing education information to veterans.”.

(b) **SURVEY.**—In developing the policy required by section 3698(a) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a market survey to determine the availability of the following:

(1) A commercially available off-the-shelf online tool that allows a veteran or member of the Armed Forces to assess whether the veteran or member is academically ready to engage in postsecondary education and training opportunities and whether the veteran or member would need any remedial preparation before beginning such opportunities.

(2) A commercially available off-the-shelf online tool that provides a veteran or member of the Armed Forces with a list of providers of postsecondary education and training opportunities based on criteria selected by the veteran or member.

(c) **REPORT.**—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary

of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report that includes—

(1) a description of the policy developed by the Secretary under section 3698(a) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a);

(2) a plan of the Secretary to implement such policy; and

(3) the results of the survey conducted under subsection (b), including whether the Secretary plans to implement the tools described in such subsection.

(d) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.**—The term “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

(A) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs and the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives.

(2) **COMMERCIALLY AVAILABLE OFF-THE-SHELF.**—The term “commercially available off-the-shelf” has the meaning given that term in section 104 of title 41, United States Code.

(3) **POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.**—The term “postsecondary education and training opportunities” means any postsecondary program of education, including apprenticeships and on-job training, for which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs provides assistance to a veteran or member of the Armed Forces.

## **SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON CERTAIN USES OF INDUCEMENTS BY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.**

Section 3696 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(d)(1) The Secretary shall not approve under this chapter any course offered by an educational institution if the educational institution provides any commission, bonus, or other incentive payment based directly or indirectly on success in securing enrollments or financial aid to any persons or entities engaged in any student recruiting or admission activities or in making decisions regarding the award of student financial assistance.

“(2) To the degree practicable, the Secretary shall carry out paragraph (1) in a manner that is consistent with the Secretary of Education’s enforcement of section 487(a)(20) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1094(a)(20)).”.

## **SEC. 3. DEDICATED POINTS OF CONTACT FOR SCHOOL CERTIFYING OFFICIALS.**

Section 3684 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(d) Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this subsection, the Secretary shall ensure that the Department provides personnel of educational institutions who are charged with submitting reports or certifications to the Secretary under this section with assistance in preparing and submitting such reports or certifications.”.

## **SEC. 4. LIMITATION ON AWARDS AND BONUSES TO EMPLOYEES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

For fiscal year 2013, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may not pay more than \$395,000,000 in awards or bonuses under chapter 45 or 53 of title 5, United States Code, or any other awards or bonuses authorized under such title.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

### **GENERAL LEAVE**

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and add any extraneous material that they

may have on the Senate amendment to H.R. 4057.

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, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, the Senate amendment before us, H.R. 4057, is another bipartisan and bicameral product of the work of the House and the Senate Committees on Veterans’ Affairs to improve the effectiveness of GI Bill benefits for our veterans.

I want to express my appreciation to the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity Chairman MARLIN STUTZMAN, Ranking Member BRUCE BRALEY, and our new committee ranking member, MIKE MICHAUD, for working with us to bring this amended bill to the House floor today. I also want to thank the chairman and ranking member of the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Senators MURRAY and BURR, for their support of this legislation as well.

The Senate amendment responds to concerns about how to ensure that veterans make the best use of their hard-earned GI Bill benefits. Now, I think that by adding some very reasonable transparency requirements to information provided by schools we have met those concerns really without overburdening our colleges and universities with needless government regulations.

The bill, as amended, has four major sections. The first one reflects our vice chairman of the full committee Mr. BILIRAKIS’ original legislation, slightly modified, which would improve the ability of GI Bill users to choose the school that best meets their own educational needs. These provisions will help this generation of veterans make informed choices about how to use those educational benefits.

I appreciate the bipartisanship manner in which our colleagues on both sides of the aisle have worked to reach an accord on the final provisions of this section. I also want to thank the veteran service organizations for their assistance, especially the Veterans of Foreign Wars, for they have been so supportive of this particular section. I also want to thank the higher education associations for their support as well.

Now, section 2 contains additional provisions from the original bill that will prohibit schools from paying or offering any type of inducement to employees or students for recruiting veterans. It would also require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out enforcement of this provision in a manner that is consistent with the Higher Education Act.

Section 3 would require VA to provide a point of contact dedicated to assisting schools with questions about VA education policy and processes.

The fourth section would limit the total amount of bonuses or awards paid to VA employees to \$395 million total in fiscal year 2013, which fully pays for the provisions in the Senate amendment.

Finally, if properly implemented by VA, and if the multitude of Federal, State, and local agencies charged with overseeing the education industry properly enforce existing laws and regulations, there should be little need for further legislation in this area.

Regardless, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs will continue to aggressively monitor the implementation of this legislation and the performance of the entire education industry to ensure that these provisions achieve the desired results.

I encourage all the Members of this body to support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

First of all, I would like to thank the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee and the staff of both the majority and the minority for their work in putting these two bills together before us today.

I rise today in support of this bill, H.R. 4057, a bill requiring the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop a policy to improve outreach and transparency to veterans and members of the Armed Forces through the provision of information on institutions of higher learning, and for other purposes.

Mr. Speaker, our brave men and women of this country put their lives in harm's way to ensure that our freedom is protected. Their actions are without reservation or consideration to what may become of their lives. We must honor their service by ensuring that they have the opportunity to pursue the American Dream when they come home. This includes making it affordable for them to buy a home, protecting their employment while they are deployed, and allowing them to pursue a postsecondary education.

Our servicemembers are trained for the worst when they are deployed, ready to fight in combat, and, if necessary, make the ultimate sacrifice. But when they return home, the battle to transition to civilian life can be difficult and frustrating. With the passage of the post-9/11 GI Bill, which provided generous education benefits, many veterans and their dependents took this opportunity to pursue a higher education and a better life.

However, it is not enough to provide a benefit if the veterans do not have the proper information on the educational opportunities available to them. They need the right tools at the right time to help them determine which school is the best one for them. That is why I support strongly H.R. 4057.

This bill will provide our veterans with the necessary information to make an intelligent and informed decision when deciding to pursue a postsecondary education or vocational training opportunity.

Education is a key factor for a successful professional life, particularly for servicemembers that may have

some difficulty translating their military skill to civilian employment. This bill requires a collective effort from agencies, institutions of higher learning, and Congress to help veterans succeed. Furthermore, this bill can help ensure a better, well-trained workforce for a more competitive America.

I ask my colleagues to join me in support of H.R. 4057, and I respectfully reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I'm now happy to yield as much time as he might consume to the vice chairman of the full committee, Tarpon Springs' favorite son, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS).

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4057, the Improving Transparency of Education Opportunities for Veterans Act, as amended by the Senate. I'm truly proud of my colleagues in both the House and the Senate for putting aside partisan differences and coming together to move this bill through both Chambers in the best interests of our true American heroes, our veterans.

As more and more servicemembers are leaving Active Duty and use their post-9/11 GI benefits, there is an increased need for information to help them choose institutions of higher learning which maximize their benefits and best meet their future career demands.

My bill, as amended, requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to create a comprehensive policy, which includes informing veterans about their eligibility for educational counseling, creating a centralized complaint database on schools, requiring State-approving agencies to better communicate with accrediting agencies, establishing how information will be presented in the transition assistance program, and identifying commercially off-the-shelf available software to assist students in choosing a school and evaluating their readiness to attend postsecondary institutions.

I want to express my sincere appreciation to my good friend, Chairman JEFF MILLER, a fellow Floridian, and also the ranking member, BOB FILNER, of course, Mr. MICHAUD, along with Senators MURRAY and BURRE, for moving this legislation through both Chambers. I would like to thank also Representative BRALEY, the veterans service organizations, and higher education associations for providing feedback on ways to improve this bill and their continued support going forward.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 4057.

□ 1640

Mr. MICHAUD. At this time, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. I thank Mr. MICHAUD very much. I thank him for his leadership on this legislation. And I thank the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee and the author of the bill, along with Mr.

MICHAUD and Mr. BILIRAKIS, for their leadership.

Texas competes with many States for the number of returning soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan and certainly is known for the presence of veterans from almost every single war. We are a State of military personnel and military bases, and Houston is known as well for the large numbers of veterans residing there.

I happen to represent the veterans cemetery and interact with veterans on a regular basis. We have Ellington Field, which we hope will some day hold one of the major commands. So we see veterans every day, and we have the opportunity to interact. And we know their dreams and aspirations and those of their family members.

I rise to support H.R. 4057 with the Senate amendment to particularly emphasize some very important points. I want veterans to be treated fairly. I want them to be able to build on the training and the amount of talent that they've built on in the United States military. This legislation protects them and acts to help them utilize the post-Iraq and Afghanistan GI Bill, one of the most unique initiatives in the Nation and one that we supported in a bipartisan way.

This legislation will allow the VA to conduct a market survey of online tools that allow veterans to assess their academic preparedness, to pursue postsecondary education training opportunities, and provide these veterans with a list of institutions that match the criteria. That is our Achilles' heel. Veterans come back, they see a lot of advertisements, they are attracted to a number of institutions; but they may not work for them. This kind of tracking and guidance will say, We really appreciate you; we want you to use these resources in the best way possible. In addition, the VA will then be required or will be able to secure information from other Departments, like the Department of Education, to know about these institutions and guide our veterans in the best way possible.

I see veterans, as I said, all the time. I see homeless veterans. I see veterans seeking services. I see veterans, as many of us do, in our offices. They want information. They want to be respected. They want to be able to contribute in today's society, to help their families, and to use those skills where they were serving their Nation in the best way possible.

I believe the gift that we've given them in education should be a guided gift to give them the kind of pathway, if you will, that will make sure that these resources are used in the best way possible. So I support this legislation.

I would finally say that I additionally support the bill coming up about dignified burial and other veterans benefits just to specifically say because of my district having the veterans cemetery, because of the many issues we have dealt with in the particular cemetery in Houston, this is great news to

know that no veteran will be undermined in their burial, no veteran will be in an undignified burial because of this legislation.

I thank my colleagues for moving forward on recognizing that our veterans have sacrificed for us. We need now to respect that and sacrifice for them.

With that, I ask my colleagues to support the legislation.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would like to inquire as to whether my friend has any more speakers. If not, I reserve the balance of time, as we have no more speakers.

Mr. MICHAUD. I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I once again encourage all Members to support the Senate amendment to H.R. 4057, and 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 concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 4057.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

## DIGNIFIED BURIAL AND OTHER VETERANS' BENEFITS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2012

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3202) to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that deceased veterans with no known next of kin can receive a dignified burial, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3202

*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 “Dignified Burial and Other Veterans’ Benefits Improvement Act of 2012”.

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Scoring of budgetary effects.

### TITLE I—CEMETERY MATTERS

Sec. 101. Furnishing caskets and urns for deceased veterans with no known next of kin.

Sec. 102. Veterans freedom of conscience protection.

Sec. 103. Improved communication between Department of Veterans Affairs and medical examiners and funeral directors.

Sec. 104. Identification and burial of unclaimed or abandoned human remains.

Sec. 105. Exclusion of persons convicted of committing certain sex offenses from interment or memorialization in national cemeteries, Arlington National Cemetery, and certain State veterans’ cemeteries and from receiving certain funeral honors.

Sec. 106. Restoration, operation, and maintenance of Clark Veterans Cemetery by American Battle Monuments Commission.

Sec. 107. Report on compliance of Department of Veterans Affairs with industry standards for caskets and urns.

### TITLE II—HEALTH CARE

Sec. 201. Establishment of open burn pit registry.

Sec. 202. Transportation of beneficiaries to and from facilities of Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 203. Extension of reduced pension for certain veterans covered by medicaid plans for services furnished by nursing facilities.

Sec. 204. Extension of report requirement for Special Committee on Post-Traumatic-Stress Disorder.

### TITLE III—OTHER MATTERS

Sec. 301. Off-base transition training for veterans and their spouses.

Sec. 302. Requirement that judges on United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims reside within 50 miles of District of Columbia.

Sec. 303. Designation of Trinka Davis Veterans Village.

Sec. 304. Designation of William “Bill” Kling Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic.

Sec. 305. Designation of Mann-Grandstaff Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Sec. 306. Designation of David F. Winder Department of Veterans Affairs Community Based Outpatient Clinic.

### SEC. 2. SCORING OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go-Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

### TITLE I—CEMETERY MATTERS

#### SEC. 101. FURNISHING CASKETS AND URNS FOR DECEASED VETERANS WITH NO KNOWN NEXT OF KIN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2306 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (f) and (g) as subsections (g) and (h), respectively;

(2) by inserting after subsection (e) the following new subsection (f):

“(f) The Secretary may furnish a casket or urn, of such quality as the Secretary considers appropriate for a dignified burial, for burial in a national cemetery of a deceased veteran in any case in which the Secretary—

“(1) is unable to identify the veteran’s next of kin, if any; and

“(2) determines that sufficient resources for the furnishing of a casket or urn for the burial of the veteran in a national cemetery are not otherwise available.”; and

(3) in subsection (h), as redesignated by paragraph (1), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4) A casket or urn may not be furnished under subsection (f) for burial of a person described in section 2411(b) of this title.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subsections (f) and (h)(4) of section 2306 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall take effect on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act and shall apply with respect to deaths occurring on or after the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

#### SEC. 102. VETERANS FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE PROTECTION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2404 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(h)(1) With respect to the interment or funeral, memorial service, or ceremony of a deceased veteran at a national cemetery, the Secretary shall ensure that—

“(A) the expressed wishes of the next of kin or other agent of the deceased veteran are respected and given appropriate deference when evaluating whether the proposed interment or funeral, memorial service, or ceremony affects the safety and security of the national cemetery and visitors to the cemetery;

“(B) to the extent possible, all appropriate public areas of the cemetery, including committal shelters, chapels, and benches, may be used by the family of the deceased veteran for contemplation, prayer, mourning, or reflection; and

“(C) during such interment or funeral, memorial service, or ceremony, the family of the deceased veteran may display any religious or other symbols chosen by the family.

“(2) Subject to regulations prescribed by the Secretary under paragraph (4), including such regulations ensuring the security of a national cemetery, the Secretary shall, to the maximum extent practicable, provide to any military or volunteer veterans honor guard, including such guards belonging to a veterans service organization or other non-governmental group that provides services to veterans, access to public areas of a national cemetery if such access is requested by the next of kin or other agent of a deceased veteran whose interment or funeral, memorial service, or ceremony is being held in such cemetery.

“(3) With respect to the interment or funeral, memorial service, or ceremony of a deceased veteran at a national cemetery, the Secretary shall notify the next of kin or other agent of the deceased veteran of funeral honors available to the deceased veteran, including such honors provided by any military or volunteer veterans honor guard described in paragraph (2).

“(4) The Secretary shall prescribe regulations to carry out this subsection.”.

(b) INTERIM IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary may carry out paragraphs (1) through (3) of section 2404(h) of such title, as added by subsection (a), before the Secretary prescribes regulations pursuant to paragraph (4) of such section, as so added.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the implementation of section 2404(h) of such title, as added by subsection (a). Such report shall include a certification of whether the Secretary is in compliance with all of the provisions of such section.

#### SEC. 103. IMPROVED COMMUNICATION BETWEEN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND MEDICAL EXAMINERS AND FUNERAL DIRECTORS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 24 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section: