

bill to enforce upon me how important it was. He was committed to public service and to ensuring that the world was a better place for the next generation. His commitment to public service was evident from his service on many boards and commissions in the town of Canton, including on the Hydro Power Advisory Commission.

Another strong advocate for this project also, sadly, died this summer, Mark Quattro. Mark, too, made us aware of the importance of this project for the little town of Canton, and he was deeply committed to the community and served on many town organizations, including the chamber of commerce. It would be a fitting tribute to honor these two fine citizens of Canton, Art Fournier and Mark Quattro, by passing this bill today.

I'd like to thank, again, Chairman WHITFIELD, as well as Chairman UPTON and Ranking Members WAXMAN and RUSH and their staffs for bringing the Collinsville Renewable Energy Promotion Act to the floor today for a vote. This project has a long history of bipartisan support at the local level, and I'm proud to be working with my colleagues across the aisle to empower local communities to utilize existing resources to create locally produced clean, renewable power. I respectfully urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, we have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I would just urge my colleagues to adopt this legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WHITFIELD. I want to thank Mr. LUJÁN, members of the committee, and certainly Ms. ESTY for her involvement in this legislation and would urge all the Members to support this legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. WHITFIELD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 316.

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.

VETERAN EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN SUPPORT ACT OF 2013

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 235) to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide grants to States to streamline State requirements and procedures for veterans with military emergency medical training to become civilian emergency medical technicians.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 235

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 "Veteran Emergency Medical Technician Support Act of 2013".

SEC. 2. ASSISTING VETERANS WITH MILITARY EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRAINING TO MEET REQUIREMENTS FOR BECOMING CIVILIAN EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Part B of title III of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 243 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 314 the following:

"SEC. 315. ASSISTING VETERANS WITH MILITARY EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRAINING TO MEET REQUIREMENTS FOR BECOMING CIVILIAN EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS.

"(a) PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall establish a program consisting of awarding demonstration grants to States to streamline State requirements and procedures in order to assist veterans who completed military emergency medical technician training while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States to meet certification, licensure, and other requirements applicable to becoming an emergency medical technician in the State.

"(b) USE OF FUNDS.—Amounts received as a demonstration grant under this section shall be used to prepare and implement a plan to streamline State requirements and procedures as described in subsection (a), including by—

"(1) determining the extent to which the requirements for the education, training, and skill level of emergency medical technicians in the State are equivalent to requirements for the education, training, and skill level of military emergency medical technicians; and

"(2) identifying methods, such as waivers, for military emergency medical technicians to forego or meet any such equivalent State requirements.

"(c) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible for a grant under this section, a State shall demonstrate that the State has a shortage of emergency medical technicians.

"(d) REPORT.—The Secretary shall submit to the Congress an annual report on the program under this section.

"(e) FUNDING.—Of the amount authorized by section 751(j)(1) to be appropriated to carry out section 751 for fiscal year 2014, there is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$1,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2014 through 2018."

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 751(j)(1) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 294a(j)(1)) is amended by striking "There is authorized to be appropriated" and inserting "Subject to section 315(e), there is authorized to be appropriated".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. WHITFIELD) and the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous materials in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise in strong support and urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 235, the Veteran Emergency Medical Technician Support Act of 2013.

At this time I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KINZINGER), a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, who wrote this important legislation.

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your hard work in bringing this forward. I just want to thank all my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for supporting this bill.

Unemployment rates continue to be far too high among our veterans who are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. These returning men and women deserve a smooth transition from the military into the civilian workforce. As a Nation, we must recognize the experience and education that our military-trained EMTs receive. It's inefficient to force these well-trained veterans to start over with basic training in the civilian workforce after aiding wounded men and women who were severely injured in combat. We must recognize military-trained EMT skills and education and streamline the process so these honorable men and women can quickly return to work here at home.

I'm a pilot in the Air National Guard. One of the things that really brought this to my mind is, as a pilot, I went through my pilot training and was able to take an equivalency test in which I was granted, basically, the civilian equivalent of what I learned in the military. And you realize those are very obviously transferable skills. And to be able to bring that into the civilian workforce has done great for airlines and commercial piloting and everything, frankly, related to aviation in the civilian world.

This bill is a commonsense way to help our veterans as they transition back to civilian life. By supporting States to make the process more efficient, veterans with military EMT training will more quickly become certified civilian EMTs. In doing so, returning veterans will not have to start over at square one in their training and can enter the civilian workforce much sooner.

One other point to make in this is that in rural areas—and I represent a lot of rural areas in Illinois—there is a shortage of emergency medical technicians in small towns. But there's not a shortage of folks coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan—veterans in these small communities. To be able to do this small step in ensuring that the rural areas, the rural municipalities and our veterans are matched with jobs where there is need is, I think, a very positive step in the right direction.

I would urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this great piece of legislation.

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 235, the Veteran Emergency Medical

Technician Support Act of 2013. This bill authorizes a demonstration grant program for States that are experiencing emergency medical technician shortages so that States, in turn, can better assist returning veterans and their transition to civilian employment. States receiving grant funding under this program would develop and implement plans to streamline training and educational requirements for returning vets. Specifically, States would determine the extent to which civilian education and training requirements are equivalent to those for previous military EMT work. And States would identify ways for qualified military EMTs to forego duplicative requirements.

H.R. 235 was reported by the Energy and Commerce Committee with broad bipartisan support. And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's also worth noting that H.R. 235 is essentially the same as legislation that passed the House on a voice vote in the last Congress. I commend the sponsors of the bill, Congressman KINZINGER and Congresswoman CAPPS, for their leadership on this important issue. H.R. 235 is a commonsense bipartisan measure. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman and the majority for working with us on this bill, would urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I want to thank once again Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois and Mrs. CAPPS of California for this commonsense legislation. When you think about young men and women serving in the military and Iraq and Afghanistan and responding to a wide array of emergencies that they respond to and having visited the training programs that they have, we know that they are well trained. And yet some State licensing laws for EMTs vary. Many States do not recognize combat medics and other veterans' qualifications as applicable to the licensing requirement of the civilian health care system. Some States make exceptions for former military medics and allow them reciprocity and a chance to sit for the licensing exam without going through the usual training. But, as I said, many States do not.

This legislation simply helps streamline State requirements and make allowances for returning veterans to enter the EMT workforce without unnecessary duplication of their training. And we all know the great demand for emergency technicians in our society today.

□ 1440

This bill also provides for an annual report to Congress. It complies with CutGo because funding of the \$1 million for the program is offset with funds from area health education centers of the Public Health Service Act.

So, I am pleased to support this legislation and urge my colleagues to vote

in favor of H.R. 235. Once again, I thank the gentleman from Illinois and all of those on the committee who brought this legislation to the floor.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 235, the Veteran Emergency Medical Technician Support Act of 2013. Congresswoman CAPPS and Congressman KINZINGER have introduced this commonsense legislation to advance our shared goals of getting our veterans back to work and addressing areas of shortage in health professions.

H.R. 235 is essentially the same as legislation the House passed on a voice vote in the 112th Congress. I know we are all hopeful that this time around the Senate will act quickly to consider and pass this bill.

Each of us is deeply indebted to the members of our military for their patriotism and for all they do to protect our country and its national interests.

We know that our returning vets have unique skills and experiences that make them highly qualified for jobs in the health care and other sectors. However, the unfortunate reality is that our veterans experience unemployment rates well above the national average.

H.R. 235 authorizes a demonstration grant program for states to support planning efforts to streamline their certification and licensure requirements for returning vets with emergency medical training. While states would take the lead in carrying out this program, I believe there would be an important role for partnerships between public and private organizations within the states—such as area health education centers—in its implementation.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 235, and I commend the sponsors of this bill for their work on this legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. WHITFIELD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 235.

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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. After consultation among the Speaker and the majority and minority leaders, and with their consent, the Chair announces that, when the two Houses meet tonight in joint session to hear an address by the President of the United States, only the doors immediately opposite the Speaker and those immediately to his left and right will be open.

No one will be allowed on the floor of the House who does not have the privilege of the floor of the House. Due to the large attendance that is anticipated, the rule regarding the privilege of the floor must be strictly enforced. Children of Members will not be permitted on the floor. The cooperation of all Members is requested.

The practice of purporting to reserve seats prior to the joint session by

placement of placards or personal items will not be allowed. Chamber Security may remove these items from the seats. Members may reserve their seats only by physical presence following the security sweep of the Chamber.

Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 8:35 p.m. for the purpose of receiving in joint session the President of the United States.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 41 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2040

JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS PURSUANT TO HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 11 TO RECEIVE A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 8 o'clock and 40 minutes p.m.

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms, Mrs. Kerri Hanley, announced the Vice President and Members of the U.S. Senate, who entered the Hall of the House of Representatives, the Vice President taking the chair at the right of the Speaker, and the Members of the Senate the seats reserved for them.

The SPEAKER. The joint session will come to order.

The Chair appoints as members of the committee on the part of the House to escort the President of the United States into the Chamber:

The gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR);

The gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY);

The gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS);

The gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN);

The gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD);

The gentlewoman from Kansas (Ms. JENKINS);

The gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOX);

The gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI);

The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER);

The gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN);

The gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA);

The gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY);

The gentleman from New York (Mr. ISRAEL); and

The gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH).

The VICE PRESIDENT. The President of the Senate, at the direction of that body, appoints the following Senators as members of the committee on the part of the Senate to escort the President of the United States into the House Chamber:

The Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID);

The Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY);