

all can do to help veterans and ensure that the value of their benefits does not decrease over time due to inflation. It is a way that we can, the day after Veterans Day, thank our veterans again for their service and their sacrifice. I urge my colleagues to support S. 893.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. RUNYAN), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

Mr. RUNYAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman MILLER for yielding me this time.

I rise today in strong support of S. 893, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2013. This bill is a companion bill to H.R. 569, which I introduced earlier this year in the House of Representatives. H.R. 569 was included in H.R. 357, which passed the House Veterans' Affairs Committee earlier this year.

S. 893 provides a cost-of-living adjustment to veterans' disability compensation, survivors' dependency and indemnity compensation, and other benefits.

Mr. Speaker, many disabled veterans depend on these benefits to make ends meet, and this bill will assist these veterans as the cost-of-living continues to increase.

While I am very supportive of this bill, I would like to once again state that it is unfortunate that we have to be here to pass this bill each and every year. That is why I introduced H.R. 570, the American Heroes COLA Act, which would authorize a COLA every year without congressional action. This would ensure that the COLA for the most deserving Americans is not tied to action or inaction in Washington.

The House passed H.R. 570 earlier this year, and I remain hopeful that our colleagues in the Senate will follow suit so we can provide this needed benefit to veterans and their families without having to wait on Congress to act.

Once again, I thank Chairman MILLER and the House leadership for bringing this important legislation to the floor. I urge all of my colleagues to fully support S. 893.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS).

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman MILLER and thank Ranking Member MICHAUD for yielding me this time.

As the ranking member of the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee, I rise today in strong support of S. 893 to provide a COLA increase for disabled veterans.

In the wake of Veterans Day, let us take a lesson from President Kennedy's admonition that we should show our respect for our heroes not just through words, but through actions. This legislation is an opportunity for us to take such action. With its passage, Congress

can show tangible support for our Nation's heroes.

Unlike with Social Security recipients, Congress is required to adjust veterans' COLAs every year. S. 893 would make that important adjustment for next year. That's a good thing that I support, but I would also urge the Senate in the meantime to pass H.R. 570, the American Heroes COLA Act, that would allow for an automatic COLA increase so that veterans' benefits are not subject to any congressional delay. Making the adjustment automatic would remove this important benefit from the capriciousness of partisan politics or personal grandstanding.

This bill was introduced in a bipartisan fashion by our subcommittee chairman, JON RUNYAN, and me. It was unanimously approved by the House in May and is awaiting action down the hall. So, while we await the passage of that automatic increase, passing S. 893 is an important step forward. I support it. It will ensure that our Nation's heroes receive all the benefits they have earned, and I encourage my colleagues to support it as well because this will be a true recognition of the veterans whose service and sacrifice we honored yesterday.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BENISHEK), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Health.

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 893, legislation to provide a 2014 cost-of-living adjustment to disabled veterans and their survivors. With prices going up for groceries, gas, and utilities, an increase is needed for our veterans and their families in northern Michigan.

However, without this legislation, there would be no COLA. As a doctor who served at the VA hospital in Iron Mountain for 20 years and the father of a Navy veteran, I am disappointed that our veterans are once again put at risk of being held hostage to Washington politics. Those who serve our Nation should never have to wonder whether or not Congress will provide them with the benefits they have earned.

In May, the House passed the American Heroes COLA Act, introduced by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. RUNYAN). This legislation will permanently tie the COLA to the consumer price index, the same as Social Security disability.

I urge the Senate to immediately act on the American Heroes COLA Act and join the House of Representatives in a clear statement that our veterans must not be used as pawns in Washington political games. I urge support of S. 893.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, so I urge my colleagues to support S. 893 and send this important bill to the President today.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I too ask all of my colleagues to support S. 893.

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, S. 893.

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.

REALIGNMENT OF SOUTHERN JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2871) to amend title 28, United States Code, to modify the composition of the southern judicial district of Mississippi to improve judicial efficiency, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2871

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

SECTION 1. REALIGNMENT OF SOUTHERN JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI.

Section 104(b) of title 28, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“Southern District

“(b) The southern district comprises four divisions.

“(1) The Northern Division comprises the counties of Copiah, Hinds, Holmes, Issaquena, Kemper, Lauderdale, Leake, Madison, Neshoba, Newton, Noxubee, Rankin, Scott, Simpson, Sharkey, Smith, Warren, and Yazoo.

Court for the Northern Division shall be held at Jackson.

“(2) The Southern Division comprises the counties of George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Pearl River, and Stone.

Court for the Southern Division shall be held at Gulfport.

“(3) The Eastern Division comprises the counties of Clarke, Covington, Forrest, Jasper, Jefferson Davis, Jones, Lamar, Lawrence, Marion, Perry, Wayne, and Walthall.

Court for the Eastern Division shall be held at Hattiesburg.

“(4) The Western Division comprises the counties of Adams, Amite, Claiborne, Franklin, Jefferson, Lincoln, Pike, and Wilkinson. Court for the Western Division shall be held at Natchez.”.

SEC. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act and the amendment made by this Act shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2871.

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

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 2871 is a simple and straightforward bill that responds to a single question: How should the Federal judicial districts in Mississippi be organized to best serve the needs of litigants, jurors, the bar, and the public once the Meridian, Mississippi, courthouse is permanently closed?

The answer was developed by an ad hoc committee of judges that was formed late last year; and to their credit, they fashioned a solution that has been reviewed and endorsed by everyone from the affected local bar associations and the Inns of Court to the Judicial Conference of the United States.

Specifically, the committee recommended, one, abolishing the Southern District's current Eastern Division; two, modifying the statutory designations of places to hold court; three, realigning the remaining four divisions and places of holding court; and, four, renaming the realigned divisions.

The judiciary and offices within the Department of Justice have reported that they will achieve significant cost savings when this proposal is fully implemented. Quite simply, Mr. Speaker, the sooner we enact this bill, the sooner these savings can be realized.

But beyond the goal of containing unnecessary costs, this legislation is a priority since the affected courts are engaged in the time-consuming and expensive process of replenishing their jury wheel. That process requires the courts to identify the names of possible jurors for criminal trials and grand jury service for the next 4 years and to provide proportional representation under the new divisions. And that process is on hold until Congress passes and the President signs this bill.

Acting through the Administrative Office of the Courts, the judiciary approached the gentleman from North Carolina, the chairman of the Courts, Intellectual Property and the Internet Subcommittee, Representative HOWARD COBLE. Chairman COBLE immediately recognized the importance of moving this legislation expeditiously and personally committed his efforts to ensure its passage.

On behalf of the full committee chairman, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE), I also want to recognize the efforts of the ranking member, Mr. WATT, and the other cosponsors of this bill, which include Representatives HARPER, THOMPSON, and PALAZZO from Mississippi, for their bipartisan support and advocacy.

The Committee on the Judiciary reported this bill unanimously in September. It is supported not only by those that I have mentioned, but also by Senators COCHRAN and WICKER from Mississippi, who are committed to doing everything possible to advance the bill through the other body without delay.

In summary, this is a good bill and it is urgently needed to ensure the Fed-

eral courts in Mississippi are authorized and organized to function in the most economically efficient and least disruptive manner as possible. I urge my colleagues to support its passage.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2871, which I am pleased to be a cosponsor of. This straightforward, bipartisan measure will realign the Southern District of Mississippi. The bill has widespread support that includes Representative BENNIE THOMPSON, who represents a part of Mississippi, as well as the affected judges and local bar.

Rarely is a bill introduced that is forthright, uncomplicated, has universal bipartisan support, and is expected to save money. H.R. 2871 has all of these characteristics.

The bill simply reorganizes the existing district into four divisions which will be designated as northern, southern, eastern, and western divisions. This simple reorganization is estimated to save approximately \$135,000 due to reduced expenditures for juries and the services of the U.S. Marshals. I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense measure.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE), the leader of the North Carolina delegation and the chairman of the Subcommittee on Courts.

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from North Carolina for yielding me this time.

Both gentlemen from North Carolina have pretty well covered this issue, and I will try to not be repetitive.

I rise in support of H.R. 2871.

The legislation will realign the Southern Judicial District in Mississippi. It has been reviewed and is fully supported by members of the majority and the minority from Mississippi.

H.R. 2871 was introduced in response to a plan originally developed by a committee of Federal judges from Mississippi, which was charged with formulating a plan to close the Meridian courthouse. This courthouse is the only court facility located in the Eastern Division of Mississippi's Southern Judicial District. The primary goal of the judges' committee was to recommend a realignment that best serves the needs of litigants, jurors, the bar, and the public.

Given the review and endorsement of the Judicial Conference, the Fifth Circuit Judicial Council, the judges, U.S. attorney, and Federal public defender, local bar association, and Inns of Court, it appears that the judges performed their duty in an exemplary fashion.

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In brief, H.R. 2871, Mr. Speaker, aligns and redesignates the judicial

districts and places of holding court in Mississippi to improve the judicial efficiency.

The CBO estimates that H.R. 2871 will create no budgetary impact. Its enactment will enable the affected judges, bar, and the public to be better served by a more rational structure, organization, and composition of Federal judicial districts in Mississippi and permit the Federal judiciary and the Department of Justice to achieve substantial cost savings.

H.R. 2871 is a good bill, as has been pointed out, and I encourage my colleagues to support that proposal.

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, as I have no further speakers, I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan, commonsense bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank very much Chairman COBLE for his words. I also want to thank him for his friendship and his mentorship and the leadership that he has shown in this body on the Judiciary Committee, and particularly on the subcommittee for intellectual property and the courts.

I urge my colleagues to join with us in support of this bipartisan, commonsense legislation to efficiently reorganize the courts in Mississippi, and I urge a "yes" vote on this.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2871 but also ask that this body continue to work assiduously on the remaining budget matters so that the judicial branch has the funding to do its work that every American has a fair trial—and that they do not have to drive so far that they need to camp out overnight.

In 2012, the Judicial Conference of the United States recommended that certain federal court facilities be closed. This includes leased court space in Meridian, Mississippi. An ad hoc committee of judges, which included the Chief U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Mississippi, was convened to review the issues created by the closure and to recommend the best course of action. I am aware like most Members, that cost-savings are extremely important—but we should be mindful of any perceived inconveniences to plaintiffs and defendants—in a state that is regularly ranked one of the poorest.

Moreover, with numerous nominees of President Obama being held up in the Senate via a nominations process that has in fact become an allegations process, I am also inclined to agree with the judgment of the Judicial Conference of the United States and the Chief Justice of the United States that additional judgeships should be created in many parts of the country in order to ensure that the Constitution's promise of justice is fulfilled.

But the need for Congress to create new judgeships aside, I believe the first step in resolving the crisis in our courts is to fill all the existing district and circuit court seats. As of today, there are 91 total vacancies—74 in district courts and 17 in circuit courts. Astonishingly, there are more empty judgeships now than when President Obama took office, almost five years ago. So while it may be appropriate to eradicate duplicity—let this House institute other reforms in a bipartisan manner so

that access to justice is not an abstract notion. Indeed though—we all know that the Senate holds nearly all the cards in this part of the discussion.

We must ultimately consider the effect the proposed changes have on the court's efficiency and stability of the rule of law in the circuit. My experience is that a decrease in space might lead one to believe that justice might be negatively affected but considering that my colleagues from both sides of the aisle are in full support—we must wait and see and hope that justice is not too deliberate in the affected areas of Mississippi.

The chief argument for this legislation is cost-cutting and simplification—but the Judicial Committee did this with an eye on the budget matters that we have dealt with in this body and Mr. Speaker, I must say that if the cost-savings do not injure the provision of justice then this legislation is supportable in its present form.

I urge my colleagues to Support this important legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2871.

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. HOLDING. 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 motion will be postponed.

EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY OF SUPREME COURT POLICE TO PROTECT COURT OFFICIALS OFF SUPREME COURT GROUNDS

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2922) to extend the authority of the Supreme Court Police to protect court officials away from the Supreme Court grounds.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2922

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

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY OF SUPREME COURT POLICE TO PROTECT COURT OFFICIALS OFF SUPREME COURT GROUNDS.

Section 6121(b)(2) of title 40, United States Code, is amended by striking “2013” and inserting “2019”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. WATT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous mate-

rials on H.R. 2922, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

H.R. 2922 is a simple and straightforward measure that accomplishes one purpose. It extends for a period of 6 years the longstanding authority of the Supreme Court Police to provide appropriate security and protective services to Justices, Court employees, and official guests of the Court.

Mr. Speaker, article III of the Constitution provides, in part, “the judicial power of the United States, shall be vested in one Supreme Court.” It is essential to the functioning of the Supreme Court that Justices, Court employees, and their official visitors be able to perform their critical duties with the knowledge that they are provided adequate and appropriate protective services.

For more than three decades, Mr. Speaker, Congress has specifically authorized the Supreme Court Police to provide limited security beyond the Court building for these specific classes of persons. This authority, which is due to expire at the end of this year, has been extended by Congress seven times since 1986. H.R. 2922 is a straightforward extension of this authority for an additional 6 years.

Mr. Speaker, I served in the Federal law enforcement community as a United States attorney in the Eastern District of North Carolina, and I understand that we can never take security for granted. That is why I decided to personally introduce this bill earlier this year.

I want to thank the chairman of the committee, the Honorable BOB GOODLATTE, for recognizing the significance of this bill and moving it forward. I also want to thank the outstanding support of the ranking member of the full committee, Mr. CONYERS, and chairman and vice chairman and ranking member of the Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Internet Subcommittee, Representatives COBLE, MARINO, and WATT, respectively, for their bipartisan leadership and cooperation in helping to advance this measure.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, this is a good and noncontroversial bill that deserves the House's support. It is also one that we have good reason to expect will be taken up in the other body in the very near future.

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

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

I rise in support of H.R. 2922. I thank the chairman of the committee, Mr. GOODLATTE, and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING) for introducing this commonsense legislation on which I am also an original cosponsor.

This bill extends the authority of the U.S. Marshal Service and the Supreme Court Police to provide for the security of the Justices on and off the grounds of the Supreme Court for an additional 6 years. It also authorizes those enforcement agencies to protect Supreme Court employees performing their official duties and official guests of the Court when they are not on Court premises.

In 1982, Congress first responded to the call of Chief Justice Warren Burger to provide for the safety of the Justices while traveling or away from the Court grounds. Since then, Congress has regularly reauthorized the statute for various lengths of time.

H.R. 2922 provides for an extension for a period of 6 years. Because the current authorization expires in a matter of months on December 31, 2013, it is imperative that we act to provide the Justices the security we have sanctioned over the years.

The work of the Supreme Court is vital to our Nation, and the role of any one Justice can tip the scales one way or the other on matters of grave consequence. The security we have consistently authorized since 1982 seems to work well, and we should act expeditiously to prevent a lapse in security for the Justices, employees, and dignitaries visiting the Court.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for speakers, and I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

This is a bipartisan measure that extends long-existing previous policy, and it is certainly critically needed and should be done as soon as possible so as not to run up against the deadline at the end of the year.

Mr. WATT. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HOLDING. I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, for the record, I neglected to indicate in my comments that our colleague, the chair of the subcommittee, announced last week during the period that we were out on the Veterans Day district work period that he was not planning to run for Congress again, and I hadn't recognized that he was still on the floor.

So I wanted to express how important a contribution he has made to this institution for many years. I am not going to tell you how many. More than I have been here, and I have been here 21 years. He was here when I got here. I always tell people that, of all of the people in the North Carolina delegation when I was elected to Congress, he was the first member of the North Carolina delegation to come to my office and welcome me to Congress, and we have been very good friends ever since then. I am sure all of his virtues in the next year will be appropriately extolled, but it is going to be a big loss for us.

I appreciate the gentleman yielding to me to make those comments because I thought Mr. COBLE had left the