

The veterans in and around the Tampa Bay area will be particularly served by this legislation. The VA recently approved a plan that would take the currently strained five existing clinics that are spread out over a large area and consolidate them into a convenient one-stop facility. This would allow the VA to better meet the growing needs of the veterans community with diverse health status. However, because of the technical issues we are solving today, this project had not been able to move forward.

By passing this bill, the House will allow for not only the consolidation of our five medical clinics in my congressional district into one property, but for 26 other equally important projects to move forward across the country improving access for our heroes. This would not have been done, Mr. Speaker, without our great chairman here, Mr. MILLER, and our ranking member, Mr. MICHAUD, so thank you so very much. I know that our true American heroes, our veterans, appreciate it very much.

I urge passage of this bill.

□ 1415

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY), who has been an advocate for this issue for quite some time and who has two of these facilities in his district.

Mr. BOUSTANY. I thank the chairman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3521. I want to applaud Chairman JEFF MILLER and the chairman of the Budget Committee, PAUL RYAN, and their respective staffs on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and the Budget Committee for advancing this important bill and improving veterans' access to medical care.

I also appreciate the work that the two Senators from my home State, Senators LANDRIEU and VITTER, have been doing. They have pledged their support in the Senate, and we hope to get this done before the end of the year.

This last year, more than 66 Members of Congress signed our bipartisan, bicameral letter calling for progress on the 27 major medical facility leases proposed by the Department of Veterans Affairs during the past 2 years.

Among these leases are two clinics promised by VA Secretary Eric Shinseki to Lake Charles and Lafayette in my congressional district. Without congressional authorization of these clinics, more than 3,000 south Louisiana veterans must travel in excess of 3 hours to receive medical care. A recent CBS Evening News story featured one of these wounded warriors in south Louisiana who goes without care because his family must miss work to drive him 3 hours. It is unacceptable.

The American people expect Congress to demonstrate that it can govern ef-

fectively in a bipartisan manner, and this is one way we can do it, by keeping our promise to our veterans.

The passage of this bill will improve medical access for more than 340,000 veterans in 22 States, and that's why I urge our House and Senate colleagues to send this bill to the President before the end of year.

Again, I thank the committee and Chairman MILLER for his fine work on this and for giving me the opportunity to speak.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, once again I would urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3521, as amended.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, once again I encourage all Members to support this legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, today, the House will consider H.R. 3521, the Department of Veterans Affairs Major Medical Facility Lease Authorization Act of 2013, as Amended. H.R. 3521 authorizes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out major medical facility leases at twenty-seven facilities requested by the Department of Veterans Affairs in their fiscal year 2013 and 2014 budget requests.

Since 1990, CBO has scored VA's major medical facility leases as operating leases and estimated the costs as being subject to appropriation (discretionary). In 2012, after receiving additional information from the Department of Veterans Affairs, CBO concluded that VA has been entering into capital leases, or binding obligations for the full period of the lease. In accordance with OMB Circular A-11 and the Anti-Deficiency Act, VA is required to obligate the budget authority upfront for the full amount of these obligations. This includes budgeting for both the estimated total payments expected to arise under the full term of the contract or, if the contract includes a cancellation clause, an amount sufficient to cover the lease payments for the first year plus an amount sufficient to cover the costs associated with termination of the contract. Up until this point, VA has not been properly budgeting for its leases according to the law.

CBO estimates that enacting this bill would provide contract authority of about \$1.4 billion over the ten-year period.

HBC has worked closely with both HVAC and CBO on this issue and has produced lease authorization language, in addition to report language, that we believe adequately addresses the legitimate issues CBO raised with respect to how VA was budgeting for leases.

HBC believes this language forces VA to comply with budgeting laws, specifically that VA may only enter into binding commitments on behalf of the U.S. Government once funds have been appropriated for the purpose of that proposed commitment and that VA must then obligate the full cost of that commitment at the time it executes the lease. In addition, the language requires VA to submit to Congress a detailed analysis on how its leasing practices comply with these laws.

If the VA fails to faithfully execute the requirements in the bill and to comply with the longstanding laws governing obligations, we will revisit this issue in the context of future requests for leasing authority.

With these fiscal protections in place, I fully support H.R. 3521 moving forward to ensure

continued access for our veterans to the highest quality medical care.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3521, the Department of Veterans Affairs Major Medical Facility Lease Authorization Act, introduced by my good friend and Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee, Mr. MILLER. This legislation authorizes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out major medical facility leases at twenty-seven facilities—including a facility in Cobb County, Georgia—that were requested by the Department of Veterans Affairs in their 2013 and 2014 budget submissions.

A change in Congressional Budget Office (CBO) accounting methods made the reauthorization of these leases very difficult, but this important legislation will allow authorization while increasing transparency.

This legislation, however, is about so much more than leases and definitional changes. This legislation is about ensuring the care of our veterans, and paying them the debt of gratitude we owe them.

The VA facility in Cobb County served 6,634 unique patients outpatients in Fiscal Year 2013, providing services in outpatient treatment, mental health, and lab work. These services are critical, provide convenience, and reduce driving time for veterans, many of whom would otherwise be forced to travel 70 miles or more round-trip to visit the overcrowded Atlanta VA Medical Center. With passage of the legislation before us today, the VA could authorize a lease for an expanded facility in Cobb County, one that would serve an estimated 64,000 veterans and provide more access to a greater variety of care. While mental health services, lab work, and outpatient treatment would still be provided, the expanded facility is intended to have the capability to provide eye care, physical and occupational therapy, radiology, and more.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is a way forward for that facility and several more like it across the country. It seeks to expand access to care for veterans, not bureaucratic federal policies.

Our men and women in uniform—who put their lives on the line to protect our freedoms—deserve the best care that we can give them. They deserve quality care that is convenient and accessible. This legislation provides us with an opportunity today to show our veterans that we are committed to those goals. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 3521.

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. 3521, as amended.

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. MILLER of Florida. 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.

VA EXPIRING AUTHORITIES EXTENSION ACT OF 2013

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass

the bill (H.R. 1402) to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the authorization of appropriations for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay a monthly assistance allowance to disabled veterans training or competing for the Paralympic Team and the authorization of appropriations for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide assistance to the United States Paralympics, Inc., as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1402

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 “VA Expiring Authorities Extension Act of 2013”.

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

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. References to title 38, United States Code.
- Sec. 3. Scoring of budgetary effects.
- Sec. 4. Extension of authorization of appropriations for payment of a monthly assistance allowance to disabled veterans training or competing in large-scale adaptive sports programs.
- Sec. 5. Reauthorization and modification of adaptive sports assistance program.
- Sec. 6. Extension of authority to transport certain individuals to and from Department of Veterans Affairs facilities.
- Sec. 7. Extension of authority for operation of the Department of Veterans Affairs regional office in Manila, the Republic of the Philippines.
- Sec. 8. Extension of requirement to provide nursing home care to certain veterans with service-connected disabilities.
- Sec. 9. Extension of treatment and rehabilitation services for seriously mentally ill and homeless veterans.
- Sec. 10. Extension of authority to provide housing assistance for homeless veterans.
- Sec. 11. Extension of authority for the Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans.
- Sec. 12. Extension of authority for the Veterans’ Advisory Commission on Education.
- Sec. 13. Extension of requirements relating to vendee loans.
- Sec. 14. Extension of authority for the performance of medical disabilities examinations by contract physicians.

SEC. 2. REFERENCES TO TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE.

Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 3. 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 House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

SEC. 4. EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR PAYMENT OF A MONTHLY ASSISTANCE ALLOWANCE TO DISABLED VETERANS TRAINING OR COMPETING IN LARGE-SCALE ADAPTIVE SPORTS PROGRAMS.

(a) **REAUTHORIZATION AND USE OF CERTAIN FUNDS.**—Subsection (d)(4) of section 322 is amended by striking “through 2013” and all that follows and inserting “through 2015”.

(b) **COOPERATION WITH ORGANIZATION.**—Subsection (b)(4) of such section is amended by striking “cooperate with the United States Olympic Committee” and all that follows through “its partners;” and inserting “cooperate with entities with significant experience in managing large-scale adaptive sports programs;”.

(c) **APPLICABILITY TO COMMONWEALTHS AND TERRITORIES OF THE UNITED STATES.**—Such section is further amended by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (f) and inserting after subsection (d) the following new subsection (e):

“(e) **APPLICABILITY TO COMMONWEALTHS AND TERRITORIES OF THE UNITED STATES.**—The provisions of this subsection shall apply in the same manner and to the same degree as to the United States Olympic Committee to the Paralympic sport entities the Secretary considers appropriate to represent the interests of each of the following:

- “(1) American Samoa.
- “(2) Guam.
- “(3) Puerto Rico.
- “(4) The Northern Mariana Islands.
- “(5) The United States Virgin Islands.”.

SEC. 5. REAUTHORIZATION AND MODIFICATION OF ADAPTIVE SPORTS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) **REAUTHORIZATION.**—Subsection (a) of section 521A is amended to read as follows:

“(a) **ADAPTIVE SPORTS PROGRAM.**—(1) The Secretary may carry out a program under which the Secretary may make grants to eligible entities for planning, developing, managing, and implementing programs to provide adaptive sports opportunities for disabled veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces.

“(2) For purposes of this section, an eligible entity is an entity with significant experience in managing a large-scale adaptive sports program.”.

(b) **ADDITIONAL APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.**—Subsection (c)(2)(A) of such section is amended—

(1) by striking “of all partnerships” and all that follows through the end and inserting “of—”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new clauses:

“(i) all partnerships referred to in paragraph (3) at the national and local levels that will be participating in such activities and the amount of grant funds that the eligible entity proposes to make available for each of such partnerships;

“(ii) the anticipated personnel, travel, and administrative costs that will be paid for by the eligible entity using grant funds;

“(iii) the financial controls implemented by the eligible entity, including methods to track expenditures of grant funds;

“(iv) the performance metrics to be used by the eligible entity to evaluate the effectiveness of the activities to be carried out using grant funds; and

“(v) the anticipated personnel, travel, and administrative costs that will be paid for by grantees under this subsection using grant funds; and”.

(c) **USE OF FUNDS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.**—Paragraph (4) of subsection (d) of such section is amended to read as follows:

“(4)(A) At the discretion of the Secretary, an eligible entity that receives a grant under this section may use a portion of the grant for the administrative expenses and personnel expenses of the eligible entity. The amount that may be used for such expenses may not exceed—

“(i) in the case of a grant made for adaptive sports opportunities taking place during fiscal year 2014, 10 percent of the total amount of the grant;

“(ii) in the case of a grant made for adaptive sports opportunities taking place during fiscal year 2015, 7.5 percent of the total amount of the grant; and

“(iii) in the case of a grant made for adaptive sports opportunities taking place during any subsequent fiscal year, 5 percent of the total amount of the grant.

“(B) For purposes of this paragraph, personnel expenses include any costs associated with an employee of the eligible entity other than reimbursement for time spent by such an employee directly providing coaching or training for disabled veterans or members of the Armed Forces.”.

(d) **FUNDING.**—Subsection (g) of such section is amended—

(1) by striking “There is” and inserting “(1) There is”; and

(2) by striking “through 2013” and all that follows and inserting “through 2015.”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(2) Amounts appropriated pursuant to this subsection shall remain available without fiscal year limitation.”.

(e) **REAUTHORIZATION.**—Subsection (l) of such section is amended by striking “may not provide assistance under this section after December 31, 2013” and inserting “may only provide assistance under this section for adaptive sports opportunities occurring during fiscal years 2010 through 2016”.

(f) **COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT.**—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report on the use of the grants, if any, awarded under section 521A of title 38, United States Code, as amended by this section, during the first program year that begins after the date of the enactment of this Act. Such report shall include each of the following:

(1) An assessment of how the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, eligible entities that received grants under such section, and grantees under subsection (c) of such section have provided adaptive sports opportunities to veterans and members of the Armed Forces through grants awarded under such section.

(2) An assessment of how the Secretary oversees the use of funds provided under such section.

(3) A description of the benefit provided to veterans and members of the Armed Forces through programs and activities developed through grants awarded under such section.

(g) **TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—Section 521A, as amended by this section, is further amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in the first sentence, by striking “the United States Olympic Committee” and inserting “an eligible entity”; and

(B) in the second sentence, by striking “The United States Olympic Committee” and inserting “An eligible entity that receives a grant under this section”;

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking “the United States Olympic Committee” the first time it appears and inserting “an eligible entity”; and

(ii) by striking “the United States Olympic Committee” the second time it appears and inserting “the eligible entity”; and

(B) in paragraphs (2) and (3), by striking “the United States Olympic Committee” each place it appears and inserting “the eligible entity”;

(3) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking “The United States Olympic Committee” and inserting “An eligible entity that receives a grant under this section.”;

(ii) by striking “a grant under this section” and inserting “the grant”; and

(iii) by striking “the United States Olympic Committee” and inserting “the eligible entity”;

(B) in paragraph (5), by striking “the United States Olympic Committee” and inserting “an eligible entity that receives a grant under this section”;

(4) in subsection (e)—

(A) by striking “the United States Olympic Committee” and inserting “an eligible entity”; and

(B) by striking “the integrated adaptive sports program” and inserting “the adapted sports opportunities funded by the grant”;

(5) in subsection (f), by striking “the integrated adaptive sports program” and inserting “adapted sports opportunities funded under this section”; and

(6) in subsection (j)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking “the United States Olympic Committee” the first place it appears and inserting “an eligible entity”;

(ii) by striking “the United States Olympic Committee” the second place it appears and inserting “the eligible entity”;

(iii) by striking “the integrated adaptive sports program,” and inserting “the adapted sports opportunities funded by the grant,”; and

(iv) by striking “the integrated adaptive sports program.” and inserting “such opportunities and programs.”;

(B) by striking paragraph (3) and inserting the following new paragraph (3):

“(3) If an eligible entity that receives a grant under this section for any fiscal year does not submit the report required by paragraph (1) for such fiscal year, the entity shall not be eligible to receive a grant under this section for the subsequent fiscal year.”; and

(7) by striking subsection (m).

(h) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—

(1) SECTION HEADING.—The heading of such section is amended to read as follows:

“§521A. Adaptive sports programs for disabled veterans and members of the Armed Forces”.

(2) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 5 is amended by striking the item relating to section 521A and inserting the following new item:

“512A. Adaptive sports programs for disabled veterans and members of the Armed Forces.”.

(i) IMPLEMENTATION.—To ensure the uninterrupted provision of adaptive sports for disabled veterans and disabled members of the Armed Forces, any regulations that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines are necessary to implement the amendments made by this section may be promulgated by interim final rules to ensure the award of grants under section 521A of title 38, United States Code, as amended by this section, before the end of fiscal year 2014.

SEC. 6. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO TRANSPORT CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS TO AND FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FACILITIES.

Section 111A(a)(2) is amended by striking “the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this section” and inserting “December 31, 2014”.

SEC. 7. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR OPERATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS REGIONAL OFFICE IN MANILA, THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES.

Section 315(b) is amended by striking “December 31, 2013” and inserting “December 31, 2014”.

SEC. 8. EXTENSION OF REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE NURSING HOME CARE TO CERTAIN VETERANS WITH SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES.

Section 1710A(d) is amended by striking “December 31, 2013” and inserting “December 31, 2014”.

SEC. 9. EXTENSION OF TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR SERIOUSLY MENTALLY ILL AND HOMELESS VETERANS.

(a) GENERAL TREATMENT.—Section 2031(b) is amended by striking “December 31, 2013” and inserting “December 31, 2014”.

(b) ADDITIONAL SERVICES AT CERTAIN LOCATIONS.—Section 2033(d) is amended by striking “December 31, 2013” and inserting “December 31, 2014”.

SEC. 10. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR HOMELESS VETERANS.

Section 2041(c) is amended by striking “December 31, 2013” and inserting “December 31, 2014”.

SEC. 11. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS VETERANS.

Section 2066(d) is amended by striking “December 31, 2013” and inserting “December 31, 2014”.

SEC. 12. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR THE VETERANS’ ADVISORY COMMISSION ON EDUCATION.

Section 3692(c) is amended by striking “December 31, 2013” and inserting “December 31, 2014”.

SEC. 13. EXTENSION OF REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO VENDEE LOANS.

Section 3733(a)(7) is amended by striking “September 30, 2013” each place it appears and inserting “September 30, 2014”.

SEC. 14. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF MEDICAL DISABILITIES EXAMINATIONS BY CONTRACT PHYSICIANS.

Section 704(c) of the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-183; 38 U.S.C. 5101 note) is amended by striking “December 31, 2013” and inserting “December 31, 2014”.

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 may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and add any extraneous materials they may have on H.R. 1402, as amended.

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 may consume.

I rise today in support of H.R. 1402, as amended, the VA Expiring Authorities Act of 2013. Mr. Speaker, to put it simply, this bill extends the legal authorization for several VA authorities. Without enactment of this bill before

December 31, 2013, the authorization to run certain programs and exercise certain legal authorities would end. This would be very detrimental to veterans and their families.

For example, the bill extends VA’s authority to ensure that severely disabled veterans have priority access to nursing home care, to include those who require that level of care for service-connected disabilities. It also extends VA’s adaptive sports program, which is currently run through a partnership with the U.S. Paralympic committee. I have met with veterans who have benefited from this partnership and have seen firsthand the positive impact that the activities and events have had on them and their families.

H.R. 1402, as amended, would extend other legal authorities to help veterans, including the authorization for treatment and rehabilitative services for homeless and seriously mentally ill veterans, housing assistance for homeless veterans, authorization to permit the use of contract exam providers for disability claims, and several other important extensions.

I am pleased also to report that funding for these extensions was included in both the President’s budget request and appropriation bills passed by the House and pending in the Senate.

I thank my good friend and ranking member of the full committee, Mr. MICHAUD, for his assistance to bring this piece of legislation to the floor. And again, I want to thank all of my colleagues in the Senate for reaching an agreement with us on this language, especially the Senate VA chairman, Mr. SANDERS, and the ranking member, Mr. BURR of North Carolina.

Once again, I want to encourage all Members to support the bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in full support of H.R. 1402, as amended, the VA Expiring Authorities Extension Act of 2013.

Mr. Speaker, this bill, as amended, would extend a number of critical programs administered by the VA. It is a bipartisan measure. I appreciate the highly collaborative efforts of the committee staffs and the cooperative efforts of our colleagues in the other body.

H.R. 1402, as amended, would extend the authorization of appropriations for the VA to provide monthly stipends to athletes competing in large-scale adaptive sports programs and extend the authority of the VA to provide grants to entities that plan and carry out adaptive sports programs. This bill represents a bipartisan and bicameral agreement to modify the existing program and to provide more stringent oversight of the program.

H.R. 1402, as amended, would also extend to the end of next year the authority of the VA to transport certain individuals to and from VA facilities, to operate the regional office in the Philippines, and to contract with non-

VA physicians to conduct medical disability examinations.

H.R. 1402, as amended, would also extend the requirement that VA provide nursing home care to certain veterans, extend the authority to provide treatment and rehabilitation services for seriously mentally ill and homeless veterans, and extend the authority of the VA to provide housing assistance for homeless veterans.

Finally, this bill would extend the authority for two advisory committees—the Advisory Committee on Homeless Veterans and the Advisory Committee on Education—as well as extend the authority for requirements relating to the sale of vendee loans by the VA.

Mr. Speaker, we have passed many veterans bills out of the House this year. It is my hope that some of these bills will become law before the year is out. I look forward to working with our colleagues in the Senate to make sure that we get this bill passed. The job at hand today is to pass this extenders bill, send it over to the Senate for quick consideration, and get it to the President's desk before the end of the year before the authority to continue these vital programs lapses.

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that is necessary in order to bring a piece of legislation that has this many moving parts is somebody who has been involved very much in each of those pieces of legislation.

I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. COFFMAN), chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, earlier this year I introduced, along with Representative MARK TAKANO, H.R. 1402, the Veteran Paralympics Act, and I am happy to see that this legislation is now poised to pass the House floor along with other important programs for veterans.

My portion of this legislation will extend this joint program, operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Olympic Committee, that funds grants to adaptive sports programs for disabled veterans all across our country.

Paralympic programs are adaptive sports for physically disabled athletes, and research has shown that Paralympic sports and other forms of physical activity are an impactful aspect for the successful rehabilitation for these wounded warriors.

The Veterans Paralympics Act will ensure that disabled veterans in local communities throughout our country will continue to have opportunities for rehabilitation, stress relief, and higher achievement through adaptive sports. Currently, there are dozens of partnership organizations in Colorado and over 300 nationwide that are helping our veterans with their rehabilitation through adaptive sports.

During committee hearings, I discussed the Veterans Paralympics Act with Charlie Huebner, the U.S. Olympic Committee's Paralympics chief. He stated that this extension would help more than 16,000 disabled veterans in communities throughout America receive adaptive sports rehabilitation.

Mr. Huebner and I both emphatically agree that participation in adaptive sports and other athletic activities can help speed the rehabilitation process for disabled veterans, and this legislation, if passed, will ensure rehabilitative opportunities for disabled veterans in local communities throughout the country. I am proud to lead this effort to extend and support this important program.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO).

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maine, the ranking member, for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the Veterans Paralympic Act, a bipartisan piece of legislation that would extend the funding for adaptive sport programs for disabled veterans.

Through the Department of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Olympic Committee, this joint program has provided sports and other athletic activities that help speed up the rehabilitation process for our Nation's heroes. By extending the funding through 2018, and improving access to adaptive sports programs, this legislation would provide the greatest opportunity for rehabilitation through sports our veterans have ever had. The sacrifice of these heroes is immeasurable, and I believe that Congress should be doing all it can to help their rehabilitation process.

I thank the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. COFFMAN) for introducing this bill, and I look forward to its passage.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD).

Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1402 that extends VA housing programs for homeless veterans.

The California district which I represent is home to over 20,000 veterans. Like the Nation, homelessness among veterans is a serious problem in my district. It will take continued coordination between VA and local organizations to ensure that veterans are able to take advantage of housing assistance programs.

As a member of the House VA Subcommittee on Health, in August of this year I hosted a town hall with the VA and local organizations. Over 200 veterans attended and signed up for VA veterans benefits for the very first time. This is a great example of better coordination in helping our veterans.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to once again thank Chairman MILLER for his collaborative effort in bringing both of these bills before the House today and his continued support

to make sure that we do everything we can to pass legislation that will help our veterans. I also want to thank the staffs on both the majority and the minority side for working so well together to get these bills before the floor. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1402, as amended.

I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1430

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I, too, urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1402, as amended, 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 pass the bill, H.R. 1402, 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. MILLER of Florida. 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.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 4 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1600

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CHAFFETZ) at 4 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 3521, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 1402, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY LEASE AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2013

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3521) to authorize Department of Veterans Affairs major medical facility leases, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.