

I ask my colleagues to stand with me in support of this important bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I will advise my friend from New Mexico that I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague.

I just want to reiterate my gratitude to the entire New Mexico delegation; the Governor of Pueblo Sandia, Governor Paisano; the lieutenant governor; and the entire tribal council.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 611.

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.

#### COUNSELING AND TREATMENT FOR SEXUAL TRAUMA OCCURRING DURING INACTIVE DUTY TRAINING

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2527) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide veterans with counseling and treatment for sexual trauma that occurred during inactive duty training.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2527

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

#### SECTION 1. COUNSELING AND TREATMENT FOR SEXUAL TRAUMA OCCURRING DURING INACTIVE DUTY FOR TRAINING.

Section 1720D of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1), by striking “active duty or active duty for training” and inserting “active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training”; and

(2) in subsection (f)—

(A) by striking “this section, the” and inserting the following: “this section:

“(1) The”; and

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

“(2) The term ‘veteran’, with respect to inactive duty training described in subsection (a)(1), also includes an individual who—

“(A) is not otherwise eligible for the benefits of this chapter; and

“(B) while serving in the reserve components of the Armed Forces, performed such inactive duty training but did not serve on active duty.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentleman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS) 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 within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 2527.

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.

H.R. 2527 would extend VA’s program of counseling, care, and services for veterans who experience sexual trauma during inactive duty training.

Those servicemembers and veterans who experience sexual violence during military service, regardless of where or when such violence is inflicted, should have access to the counseling, care, and treatment they need to recover.

I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 2527, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in support of my legislation, H.R. 2527, the National Guard Military Sexual Trauma Parity Act.

Mr. Speaker, I want to first thank Mr. BENISHEK, the chairman of the Health Subcommittee; Ms. BROWNLEY, the ranking member of the Health Subcommittee; and especially Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member MICHAUD for working with me on this very important issue.

The bill before you is bipartisan legislation which addresses an unacceptable gap in the current law that effectively leaves some victims of military sexual assault without the support and treatment they need.

Members of the National Guard and other reserve components of our armed services have fought bravely for our country, many completing multiple tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. Since the attacks on September 11, more than 50,000 guardsmen and guardswomen have been called to service, both at home and abroad.

We recognize the value of the National Guard and other reserve components, and thank them for their service. Unfortunately, some, like members of the other Armed Forces, are victimized by sexual assault while on Active Duty. If that happens, they are provided all the VA resources and services they need to recover and heal, both physically and emotionally.

Such benefits, however, are not offered to members of the National Guard and other reserve components who experience sexual assault while on inactive training missions. Members of the Guard are required to participate in training missions one weekend a month and 2 weeks a year, but benefits and services, such as counseling and Medicare, do not extend to victims sexually assaulted during these mandatory training missions. This omission is simply unacceptable and leaves so many who have served our country

without any assistance or support during a devastating time.

The National Guard Military Sexual Trauma Parity Act would fix this problem and clarify that all victims of sexual trauma in the National Guard or other reserve components have access to the care they need, whether they are on Active Duty or on a required training mission.

We must make it a priority to change the culture of the military and put an end to acts of sexual trauma within our armed services. Until we do, however, we must be sure that we provide all victims the treatment they need and deserve.

I am proud that many veterans service organizations support this important legislation to ensure that all Guard members who are “always ready, always there” to protect our country receive the same support in return from their government.

So, Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, so I will reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I would just conclude my remarks and urge all my colleagues to support this legislation and, again, thank the chairman for working with me to bring it to the floor. We want to send it to the Senate and urge them to pass it quickly and on to the President for his signature.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support H.R. 2527, 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. 2527.

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.

#### REESTABLISHMENT OF PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION AND LICENSURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2942) to amend title 38, United States Code, to reestablish the Professional Certification and Licensure Advisory Committee of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2942

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

#### SECTION 1. REESTABLISHMENT OF PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION AND LICENSURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

(a) REESTABLISHMENT.—Section 3689(e)(5) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by

striking "December 31, 2006" and inserting "December 31, 2019".

(b) APPOINTMENT OF NEW MEMBERS.—In reestablishing the Professional Certification and Licensure Advisory Committee under subsection (e) of section 3689 of title 38, United States Code, pursuant to subsection (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may appoint new members of the Committee under paragraph (3)(A) of such subsection (e) without regard to the individuals who served as members before the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentlewoman from Arizona (Mrs. KIRKPATRICK) 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 would have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 2942.

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.

Mr. Speaker, I do rise today in support of H.R. 2942, that amends title 38 of the United States Code, reestablishing the Professional Certification and Licensure Advisory Committee at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

I know my colleague who introduced this bill, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, will go into greater detail as to the importance of this legislation, but I do believe that this bill is another step in the right direction to assist our veterans as they look for work in the civilian sector following their service to our great Nation.

The reestablishment of the Professional Certification and Licensure Advisory Committee would improve the quality of both the Department of Veterans Affairs' and State approving agencies' licensing and certification process and will ultimately benefit our servicemembers, as well as employers, and ease the process of placing veterans in civilian careers that match their skills.

Mr. Speaker, although the unemployment rate for veterans is lower than the national average for nonveterans, getting veterans into a job must remain an issue of national importance. Reestablishing this advisory committee will be yet another tool to help veterans get into a career in a timely fashion.

We have already made the investment to train our veterans during their military service for careers in the civilian sector, and by getting advice from industry experts on how to streamline and improve licensing and credentialing, we will make it easier for veterans to find meaningful and timely employment.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 2942, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my bill, H.R. 2942, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2942, a bill that will help transitioning servicemembers find employers who want to make a smart investment hiring a veteran.

This bill, to reestablish the Professional Certification and Licensure Advisory Committee of the Department of Veterans Affairs, will allow subject-matter experts to review State licenses and credentialing to certify that military men and women in specific career fields are able to transfer their skills to the private sector.

By the time most of our servicemen and -women leave the military, they have gained a wealth of experience that can translate into civilian career fields. In addition to teamwork, perseverance, loyalty, and leadership, our military servicemembers possess technical skills that are available to employers.

Unfortunately, many of our military servicemen and -women have difficulty finding jobs after leaving the military because they don't have a civilian license or certification.

They possess the same skills and have the same training, but can't obtain employment in their career field because they need a license.

In a tough job market, this creates one more barrier for our transitioning military men and women that can mean the difference between finding and not finding a job.

This bill addresses some of these barriers for our newest veterans. Under this bill, the VA's advisory committee on professional certification and licensure, which ended in 2006, will be reestablished through December 2019.

In addition to helping veterans transfer their skills toward civilian licenses, these subject-matter experts will advise the VA to recognize new licensing and certification programs, so that veterans can use their GI Bill benefits to pay for the cost of these training programs and licensing exams.

This advisory committee will also make it easier for veterans to comply with State licensing requirements that may differ from State to State. This will give veterans more options in their choice of training and certification programs, since veterans cannot use their GI Bill benefits toward programs that are not VA-approved, even though completion of many of these programs would give veterans the licenses they need.

When veterans are able to put their skills to work, they are able to support their families, businesses profit, and communities benefit.

Again, I urge your support for these men and women as they return home and ask you to ensure their valuable time in the military is not lost.

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers at this time, so I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO).

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Arizona (Mrs. KIRKPATRICK) for introducing H.R. 2942, which will have an important impact on the lives of our servicemen and -women separating from the military.

I also want to extend my thanks to Chairman MILLER for the bipartisan way in which he leads our committee.

During my time as ranking member of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, I have seen how transitioning servicemembers can struggle to find employment. Life beyond the military can be complicated, as we found out from employers who attended a March veterans employment roundtable hosted by myself and our committee's ranking member, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD).

These are men and woman who have real work experience, but are still struggling to find steady, meaningful employment. Meanwhile, when they return to their communities, people are shaking their hands and thanking them for their service, when what they really need is a job.

Many employers have recognized the skills veterans bring to the table, but there is still so much more work to be done. By passing this legislation, we will be sending a clear message of our respect for military members' service and their experience as professionals.

Reestablishing the advisory committee on professional certification and licensure will ensure veterans get the broadest and most comprehensive support to acknowledge the skills they have earned and the experience they have gained while in the military.

By supporting this legislation, we will help ensure these men and women can be our next nurse, electrician, or plumber or engineer or any other professional they are qualified to be.

Please, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I just want to thank Chairman MILLER, Ranking Member MICHAUD, and the committee staff for working with me on this legislation.

I urge my colleagues to pass this. Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to visit some military bases, talking to our men and women who will soon transition out of the military and become veterans, and the number one concern they had was: Where am I going to find a job? How am I going to find a job?

So this bill is critically important to our veterans. They deserve to know that they are going to find meaningful work when they come back and especially in the areas that they have been trained in the military.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the committee and the staff for helping me with this.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I don't have any further speakers, so I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the gentlelady for her fine work, and I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 2942.

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. 2942.

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.

#### GULF WAR HEALTH RESEARCH REFORM ACT OF 2014

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4261) to improve the research of Gulf War Illness, the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4261

*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 "Gulf War Health Research Reform Act of 2014".

#### SEC. 2. IMPROVEMENTS TO RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON GULF WAR VET- ERANS' ILLNESSES.

(a) INDEPENDENCE OF COMMITTEE.—Subsection (b) of section 707 of the Veterans Health Care Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-585; 38 U.S.C. 527 note) is amended—

(1) by striking "Not later than" and inserting "(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than"; and

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

"(2) INDEPENDENCE.—(A) The Committee established under paragraph (1) shall be an independent advisory committee which shall provide advice and counsel to the congressional veterans committees and to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (as the head of the department designated under subsection (a) that established the Committee under paragraph (1)).

"(B) In carrying out the functions, powers, and duties of the Committee, the Committee shall be independent of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. The Committee shall exert independent control of the budget allocations, staffing levels and expenditures, personnel decisions and processes, procurements, and other administrative and management functions of the Committee. The administration and management of the Committee shall be subject to the usual and customary Federal audit procedures.

"(3) DUTIES.—(A) The Committee shall provide to Congress, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and the heads of other departments and agencies of the Federal Government that conduct research on illnesses in Gulf War veterans advice with respect to proposed research studies, research plans, or research strategies relating to the health con-

sequences of military service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during the Gulf War.

"(B) The Committee may not conduct scientific research or review research proposals submitted to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs prior to funding. The Secretary shall appoint three members from the Committee who have appropriate scientific expertise to the committee designated to review such research proposals relating to illnesses in Gulf War veterans.

"(C) The guiding principle for the Committee shall be the premise that the fundamental goal of Gulf War health-related research, either basic or applied, conducted by the Federal Government is to ultimately improve the health of ill Gulf War veterans, and that the choice and success of research efforts shall be judged accordingly. The Committee shall assess the overall effectiveness of such research conducted by the Federal Government to answer central questions on the nature, causes, and treatments for health consequences of military service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during the Gulf War.

"(D) The Committee shall meet in public session to review research funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs relevant to understanding and treating the health consequences of military service in the Gulf War, and the processes conducted to solicit, review, and select such funded research to assess methods, results, and implications of such research. The Committee may review research plans, initiatives, and activities from other departments and agencies of the Federal Government supporting research relating to the health consequences of military service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during the Gulf War.

"(4) REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—(A) Not later than December 1 of each year, the Committee shall submit to the congressional veterans committees and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs an annual report summarizing the activities of the Committee during the period covered by the report.

"(B) The Committee shall submit to the congressional veterans committees, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and the head of any other department or agency of the Federal Government that conducts research on illnesses in Gulf War veterans any other reports and recommendations of the Committee regarding Gulf War-related research.

"(C) Reports, recommendations, publications, and other documents of the Committee shall not be subject to review or approval by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

"(D) The Committee may submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs proposed recommendations of the Committee for comment for a period not to exceed 30 days.

"(E) Each report submitted by the Committee shall be approved by the Committee meeting in public session prior to such submission.

"(5) MEMBERSHIP.—(A) The Committee shall be composed of 12 members appointed as follows:

"(i) One member appointed jointly by the chairman of the congressional veterans committees, who shall serve as chairman of the Committee.

"(ii) Two members appointed by the chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

"(iii) Two members appointed by the chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate.

"(iv) Two members appointed by the ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

"(v) Two members appointed by the ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate.

"(vi) Three members appointed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, of whom not less than one shall be a veteran.

"(B)(i) The first 11 vacancies from among the members of the Committee (not including a member serving as chairman of the Committee) occurring on or after the date of the enactment of the Gulf War Health Research Reform Act of 2014 shall be filled by—

"(I) the chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives appointing a member for the first and sixth vacancy;

"(II) the chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate appointing a member for the second and seventh vacancy;

"(III) the ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives appointing a member for the third and eighth vacancy;

"(IV) the ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate appointing a member for the fourth and ninth vacancy; and

"(V) the Secretary of Veterans Affairs appointing a member for the fifth, tenth, and eleventh vacancy.

"(ii) A vacancy in the Committee of a member serving as chairman shall be filled jointly by the chairmen of the congressional veterans committees.

"(iii) Except as provided by clause (i) or (ii), a vacancy in the Committee of a member shall be filled in the manner in which the appointment of such member was made. A member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring before the expiration of the term for which the member's predecessor was appointed shall be appointed only for the remainder of that term.

"(C) Of the members of the Committee who are appointed on or after the date of the enactment of the Gulf War Health Research Reform Act of 2014—

"(i) not fewer than three members shall be veterans;

"(ii) not fewer than eight members shall be scientists or physicians who have experience in biomedicine, epidemiology, immunology, environmental health, neurology, toxicology, or other appropriate disciplines; and

"(iii) the chairman shall be a veteran or an expert described in clause (ii), or both.

"(D) Each member of the Committee who is appointed on or after the date of the enactment of the Gulf War Health Research Reform Act of 2014 shall be appointed for a three-year term. Except as provided by section 2(c)(3) of such Act, a member may be reappointed once (not including the initial appointment of a member made before the date of the enactment of such Act).

"(6) MEETINGS.—(A) The Committee shall meet at the call of the chairman, but not less than twice annually.

"(B) A majority of the members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number of members may hold hearings.

"(C)(i) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the head of the Office of Research and Development of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the head of the Office of Public Health of the Department shall attend each meeting of the Committee.

"(ii) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may delegate the attendance of the Secretary under clause (i) to a level not below the Deputy Under Secretary for Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs, but the Secretary shall attend at least one meeting each year without making such delegation.

"(D) Each meeting of the Committee shall be open to the public.

"(7) COMPENSATION AND STAFF.—(A) Except with respect to a member who serves a scientific director under subparagraph (C)(ii) and is treated as staff for purposes of compensation, each member of the Committee