

Cornyn	Johnson (SD)	Reed
Donnelly	Kaine	Reid
Durbin	King	Rockefeller
Feinstein	Kirk	Rubio
Fischer	Klobuchar	Sanders
Franken	Landrieu	Schatz
Gillibrand	Leahy	Schumer
Grassley	Levin	Shaheen
Hagan	Manchin	Stabenow
Harkin	Markey	Tester
Hatch	McCain	Toomey
Heinrich	McConnell	Udall (CO)
Heitkamp	Menendez	Udall (NM)
Heller	Mikulski	Vitter
Hirono	Murkowski	Walsh
Hoeven	Murphy	Warner
Inhofe	Murray	Warren
Isakson	Nelson	Whitehouse
Johanns	Pryor	Wyden

NAYS—19

Barrasso	Enzi	Roberts
Blunt	Flake	Sessions
Coats	Johnson (WI)	Shelby
Coburn	Lee	Thune
Corker	Paul	Wicker
Crapo	Portman	
Cruz	Risch	

NOT VOTING—6

Cochran	McCaskill	Moran
Graham	Merkley	Scott

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 75, the nays are 19.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to. The point of order falls.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall it pass?

Mr. PORTMAN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) are necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUMENTHAL). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 93, nays 3, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 187 Leg.]

YEAS—93

Alexander	Collins	Heller
Ayotte	Coons	Hirono
Baldwin	Cornyn	Hoeven
Barrasso	Crapo	Inhofe
Begich	Cruz	Isakson
Bennet	Donnelly	Johanns
Blumenthal	Durbin	Johnson (SD)
Blunt	Enzi	Kaine
Booker	Feinstein	King
Boozman	Fischer	Kirk
Boxer	Flake	Klobuchar
Brown	Franken	Landrieu
Burr	Gillibrand	Leahy
Cantwell	Graham	Lee
Cardin	Grassley	Levin
Carper	Hagan	Manchin
Casey	Harkin	Markey
Chambliss	Hatch	McCain
Coats	Heinrich	McConnell
Coburn	Heitkamp	Menendez

Mikulski	Roberts	Thune
Murkowski	Rockefeller	Toomey
Murphy	Rubio	Udall (CO)
Murray	Sanders	Udall (NM)
Nelson	Schatz	Vitter
Paul	Schumer	Walsh
Portman	Scott	Warner
Pryor	Shaheen	Warren
Reed	Shelby	Whitehouse
Reid	Stabenow	Wicker
Risch	Tester	Wyden

NAYS—3

Corker	Johnson (WI)	Sessions
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NOT VOTING—4

Cochran	Merkley
McCaskill	Moran

The bill (H.R. 3230), as amended, was passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. I ask unanimous consent that the title amendment to H.R. 3230, which is at the desk, be agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. INHOFE. Reserving the right to object, let me inquire of the Senator if it is his intent to speak on that tonight.

Mr. TESTER. In a moment I am going to ask unanimous consent to go into morning business, and I am going to speak on the veterans bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. If the Senator from Montana would yield for a question, is there any kind of order established regarding whom would be recognized at this point?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is not.

Mr. LEVIN. The Senator from Oklahoma and I thought we would be recognized 1 hour ago. We understood the exigency that there would be some delay.

If we could establish an order—apparently Senator GRASSLEY is waiting to be recognized as well.

May I ask the Senator from Montana how long he would be speaking? Would it be in order?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. How long am I speaking?

Mr. LEVIN. Yes.

Mr. TESTER. About 7 minutes.

Through the Chair to the Senator from Michigan, it was my understanding that I was going to speak, the Senator would have his colloquy with Senator INHOFE, and then Senator GRASSLEY would speak.

Mr. LEVIN. I thank the Senator.

Mr. GRASSLEY. May I ask the Senator a question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. How much time is the colloquy going to take?

Mr. LEVIN. I would say about 7 or 8 minutes.

Mr. INHOFE. I think I had the floor, and I was objecting to the UC.

Let me just share that we would—we could—do ours probably in about 12 minutes, and then we could have more time tomorrow, if that would work out.

I withdraw my objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 3237) was agreed to, as follows:

Amend the title so as to read:

“To improve the access of veterans to medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.”

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. TESTER. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time previously agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Montana.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Mr. TESTER. I rise to speak about the care this Nation provides to veterans—care that they have earned, the care that we owe them, the care that we promised them, and the care that we should never stop working to improve.

I joined the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee when I came to the Senate in January of 2007. Soon thereafter I launched a listening tour around the great State of Montana to hear what veterans thought about the health care they receive.

Montana has the second-most veterans per capita. We serve our country at some of the highest rates in the Nation. We are home to a large Native-American population that serves more often than any other minority in this country.

In 2007, the surge in Iraq was in full swing. Veterans had many concerns on their minds. But in rural Montana I heard over and over from the veterans about how the mileage reimbursement that disabled veterans receive to see their doctor at the VA was far too low. In fact, it was at 11 cents a mile, hardly enough to even pay for the gas, much less the tires, the oil, and the automobile itself.

That number matters in a State where folks have to drive a couple hundred miles across the State to see their doctor.

So when I came back to Washington I worked with then-Senator Byrd to raise that reimbursement rate for the first time in decades. Now more veterans can afford to see their doctor, and that is how a representative of government should work—identify a problem, write a bill to fix it, work with colleagues, hear their concerns, and pass a solution into law. That is what we have done here today.

Today's bill is a good bill that gets at some of the VA's most pressing problems. Today's bill addresses many of the transparency, accountability, and access-to-care issues that are plaguing

the VA. By getting rid of incentives to falsify wait times and make it easier to remove bad managers, we will hold more folks accountable for the care veterans receive. By making it easier to hire medical professionals and allowing more veterans to seek care from outside providers, we will reduce the bottleneck that forces veterans to wait too long for care.

I want to be clear about one issue. Once veterans get in the door at the VA, they receive incredibly good health care. As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I continue to travel around Montana to talk to veterans. I speak to veterans' groups around the country as well.

They tell me that VA care is some of the best in the Nation. I have had wives, husbands, daughters, and sons seek me out to tell me what VA is doing right. Additionally, 9 out of 10 veterans report they are happy with the care they receive at the VA. That is important to remember.

It isn't all bad news, but the fact is that while the war in Afghanistan is winding down, and the war in Iraq has come to a close, the struggle for many service men and women continues here at home.

We went to war after 9/11 to fight against terror, to fight for the freedoms that we value in this country, but we didn't think far enough down the road. We didn't think about how we could care for our fighting men and women when they returned from battle.

When I joined the Veterans' Affairs Committee, the VA was starting to recover from years of neglect. In 2007, as Americans fought in the streets of Baghdad, Congress had to pass an emergency budget bill to keep the lights on in the VA. Imagine that—fighting two wars, but we didn't properly fund the department that cares for our troops when they come home.

With better planning and advance appropriations, we have come a long way, but attention spans and new cycles are short.

The bill we passed today is a good start, but it can't be the end of the story. Moving forward, we must make sure that we have all the facts because you can't fix a problem if you don't understand it.

That is why I have already worked with my colleagues to help pass legislation out of committee that will free up more resources for the inspector general's office of the VA to do its job and to make reports from the VA inspector general public and transparent.

The bill also prohibits the payment of bonuses to VA medical directors and senior VA employees until investigations are complete and reforms are made. Our message is clear; that is, that veterans come first.

In the 7 years since I held that first veterans listening session across Montana, since then we have worked with veterans groups to open new veterans centers and community-based outpa-

tient clinics across the State of Montana.

I have helped more veterans get transportation to get to their doctor appointments, and I have helped lead the way to expand the use of telehealth for rural veterans. We did this while working with the VA secretaries from both parties by working across the aisle to write commonsense legislation that meets the needs of veterans and their families. Not only should improving veterans care be an unrelenting focus for this body but it must be a nonpartisan one.

Improving mental health care for veterans is not a partisan issue. Improving veterans' ability to get a good job is not a partisan issue. Making sure that veterans get the care they have earned, the care that we promised them when they signed up to fight should never be a partisan issue.

Let's keep working together to honor the sacrifices made by our fighting men and women, as well as the families who anxiously wait for them back home.

On Saturday morning I will be in Anaconda, MT, kicking off my latest veterans listening tour to get more ideas about how we can improve the services and care for veterans.

I know that many of my colleagues are holding similar sessions in their States, and I look forward to hearing what ideas they bring back so that we can work together to improve veterans health care.

If this bill is the end of this Congress's work on veterans issues, it will be disappointing to me and it will be disappointing to the veterans out there who put their lives on the line to defend our freedom.

We have more work to do, and I hope it doesn't require another crisis to get it done.

I wish to thank BERNIE SANDERS for his great work on this bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. LEVIN. Before the Memorial Day recess, the Armed Services Committee voted 25 to 1 to favorably report out S. 2410, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015.

The bill is on the calendar, and both it and the committee report have been filed and are available online and in print.

As the chairman and ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, Senator INHOFE and I hope to bring the bill to the Senate floor as soon as the Senate schedule allows. I have talked with the majority leader about it, and he says he is going to do his best, but there are a number of things that we can do to be helpful on this effort.

Neither of us wants to be in the position that we were in last year when Senators were unable to take up the

bill and vote on any amendments to this important legislation because of how close it was to the end of the session when it was brought up.

Both of us are on the floor today urging Senators who are considering amendments to the bill to file them before the July recess.

We would then be in a position—both of us, with our staffs—to work with Senators to clear as many amendments as possible for inclusion in a manager's package and to begin identifying relevant amendments that would be likely to be contested.

Now, we believe if we can develop a list of a few relevant amendments that would require votes to start with when we first take up the bill, it would help us in getting to the floor. I believe that is the case, given the circumstances the Senate is in.

We have an awful lot of work ahead of us. We don't have a long time to do it. If we were able to put together a proposal to the leaders, that we have not only the bill, which is obviously on the calendar we have worked on a bipartisan basis to pass with the 25-vote majority—which is minus 1 vote in the Senate—it would be our belief this would have greater practical appeal to our leaders.

We think this approach would enable us to reach unanimous consent as to an initial set of relevant amendments to be considered so we could then move forward expeditiously when the Senate returns to the bill. I hope our colleagues will help us in this matter.

I think it is in everybody's interest and it is in the national security interest that we have a bill before us. We have to pass a bill in order to go to conference with the House or else we are put in the same kind of position we were in last year, where we simply present what amounted to a conference report before a bill had ever been truly debated and sent. We and our staff, working with colleagues, put together what amounted to a conference report, which was not a conference report in technical terms but was in effect the work product of both the Senate and the House and our committees by process of negotiation.

So our colleagues can be very helpful in getting this bill to the floor, meeting the concerns of our Nation and doing what we should be doing for our troops and our families.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I first say and express my appreciation to Chairman LEVIN. We hear a lot of talk about bipartisanship and people getting along. That is usually just talk. In this case, it is real.

We have a committee of Democrats and Republicans concerned about defending our Nation with totally inadequate resources. Chairman LEVIN has responded every time we have had some kind of a controversial matter come up. Then our staff—Peter Levine