

the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 280, 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, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

□ 1715

#### LONG-TERM CARE VETERANS CHOICE ACT

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 294) to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts and agreements for the transfer of veterans to non-Department medical foster homes for certain veterans who are unable to live independently, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 294

*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 “Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act”.

#### SEC. 2. SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CONTRACT AUTHORITY FOR PLACEMENT OF VETERANS IN NON-DEPARTMENT MEDICAL FOSTER HOMES.

(a) AUTHORITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1720 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(h)(1) During the three-year period beginning on October 1, 2015, and subject to paragraph (2), at the request of a veteran for whom the Secretary is required to provide nursing home care under section 1710A of this title, the Secretary may place the veteran in a medical foster home that meets Department standards, at the expense of the United States, pursuant to a contract or agreement entered into between the Secretary and the medical foster home for such purpose. A veteran who is placed in a medical foster home under this subsection shall agree, as a condition of such placement, to accept home health services furnished by the Secretary under section 1717 of this title.

“(2) Not more than 900 veterans placed in a medical foster home, whether placed before or after the enactment of the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act, may have their care covered at the expense of the United States under subsection (a).

“(3) In this subsection, the term ‘medical foster home’ means a home designed to provide non-institutional, long-term, supportive care for veterans who are unable to live independently and prefer a family setting.”.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subsection (h) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall take effect on October 1, 2015.

(b) LIMITATIONS ON AWARDS AND BONUSES.—Section 705 of the Veterans Access, Choice,

and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-146; 38 U.S.C. 703 note) is amended to read as follows:

#### “SEC. 705. LIMITATION ON AWARDS AND BONUSES PAID TO EMPLOYEES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

“The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that the aggregate amount of awards and bonuses paid by the Secretary in a fiscal year under chapter 45 or 53 of title 5, United States Code, or any other awards or bonuses authorized under such title or title 38, United States Code, does not exceed the following amounts:

“(1) With respect to each of fiscal years 2015 through 2018, \$300,000,000.

“(2) With respect to each of fiscal years 2019 through 2024, \$360,000,000.”.

Amend the title so as to read: “A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts and agreements for the placement of veterans in non-Department medical foster homes for certain veterans who are unable to live independently.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentleman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 294, as amended, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act, would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs for 3 years, beginning October 1 of 2015, to enter into a contract or agreement with a certified medical foster home to pay for long-term care for not more than 900 eligible veterans.

An eligible veteran is defined as one who is eligible for VA-paid nursing home care and would agree to receive VA home health services. The bill would also limit the amount of awards and bonuses paid to VA employees at \$300 million for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2018.

Medical foster home care is a non-institutional, long-term care alternative for those who prefer a smaller, more homelike, and familial care setting than many traditional nursing homes are able to provide.

VA has been helping to place veterans in medical foster homes for over a decade and providing the oversight and the safeguards needed to ensure that veterans receive safe, high-quality care.

According to VA, over 900 veterans currently receive medical foster home care. However, VA does not currently have the authority to pay for the cost of medical foster home care, regardless of whether or not the veteran who chooses medical foster home care is eligible for more costly VA-paid nursing home care.

This creates a situation, Mr. Speaker, where many service-connected veterans are limited with their financial resources and are unable to access the medical foster home care that they desire because of limited financial resources; instead, these veterans often move into nursing homes at a much greater expense to VA.

With the creation of the choice program last August, Congress, on an overwhelmingly bipartisan basis, agreed that our veterans deserve the right to choose for themselves where and how they receive health care that they have earned.

With today’s passage of H.R. 294, as amended, we will reaffirm that right to choose for the growing population of veterans in need of long-term care services.

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

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 294, as amended.

Providing high-quality health care to our Nation’s veterans has always been a number one priority for this committee. Ensuring that the VA is a leader in the provision of long-term care to our veterans has also been a priority.

We must work to make sure that VA provides a full range of long-term care programs, and H.R. 294, as amended, is a valuable improvement in providing veterans the choice of obtaining long-term care in a medical foster home.

H.R. 294 gives VA the authority to pay for veterans’ long-term care in VA-approved medical foster homes. These homes provide care in a private home at much lower cost than nursing home care. Medical foster homes are safe, and we know through experience that many veterans prefer them to the traditional nursing home.

Older veterans also indicated that they prefer to receive care closer to home. The Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act would provide the opportunity for more veterans to take advantage of this home care setting.

I fully support this legislation and thank the chairman for introducing it.

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.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 294, as amended.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Once again, Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Members to support H.R. 294, as amended.

#### 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 and include extraneous material on both H.R. 280, as amended, and H.R. 294, 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 back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 203, the “Long-Term Care Veteran Choice Act”, which will help expand access to healthcare for our nation’s veterans.

In 2014, it was found that some VA Department employees were responsible for deliberately falsifying wait-time records for veteran's medical appointments in order to create the appearance of reaching wait-time targets.

This falsification of records even resulted in the unfortunate death of several veterans who were forced to wait unreasonably long periods of time before receiving the healthcare they unquestionably earned.

H.R. 294 is intended to prevent another unacceptable incident and to ensure our veterans receive the healthcare they deserve.

H.R. 294 allows veterans to obtain health care at non-VA health care facilities if they live more than 40 miles from a VA clinic or cannot be scheduled for an appointment at a VA clinic within 30 days.

Further, the bill increases the VA's capacity to provide health care services by providing expedited authority to hire more doctors and nurses and by providing for leases for the opening of 27 additional VA health facilities across the nation.

This bill will also propose a three year pilot program which will transfer certain veterans to non-department medical foster homes if they are unable to live independently at the cost of the VA.

It is our duty to make available only the best health care to our veterans, and I cite as an example the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center in Houston.

The DeBakey VA Medical Center provides world-class services to almost 130,000 veterans in southeast Texas and employs over 4,000 health care professionals.

The DeBakey VA Medical Center has earned prestigious awards and accreditations for the quality of care provided, including:

Accreditation from Joint Commission for hospital, long-term care, behavioral health care, home care, and substance abuse;

Re-designation for Magnet Recognition for Excellence in Nursing Services by the American Nurses Credentialing Center;

Gold Seal of Approval in 2011 from the Joint Commission as an Advanced Primary Stroke Center; and

Specialty accreditation by the American Psychological Association Commission on Accreditation for its Clinical Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Program.

Mr. Speaker, our veterans have given this country so much and we owe it to them and to ourselves that they have the best and most accessible health care services.

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. 294, 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 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 23 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

## AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BYRNE) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes 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. 294, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 280, de novo.

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

## LONG-TERM CARE VETERANS CHOICE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 294) to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts and agreements for the transfer of veterans to non-Department medical foster homes for certain veterans who are unable to live independently, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 405, nays 0, not voting 27, as follows:

[Roll No. 107]

YEAS—405

Abraham	Bost	Carter (TX)
Adams	Boustany	Cartwright
Aderholt	Boyle, Brendan	Castro (TX)
Aguilar	F.	Chabot
Allen	Brady (PA)	Chaffetz
Amash	Brady (TX)	Chu, Judy
Amodei	Brat	Cicilline
Ashford	Bridenstine	Clark (MA)
Babin	Brooks (AL)	Clarke (NY)
Barletta	Brooks (IN)	Clawson (FL)
Barr	Brown (FL)	Clay
Barton	Brownley (CA)	Cleaver
Beatty	Buchanan	Clyburn
Becerra	Buck	Coffman
Benishek	Bucshon	Cohen
Bera	Burgess	Cole
Beyer	Bustos	Collins (GA)
Bilirakis	Butterfield	Collins (NY)
Bishop (GA)	Byrne	Comstock
Bishop (MI)	Calvert	Conaway
Bishop (UT)	Capps	Connolly
Black	Capuano	Cook
Blackburn	Cardenas	Cooper
Blum	Carney	Costa
Blumenauer	Carson (IN)	Costello (PA)
Bonamici	Carter (GA)	Courtney

Cramer	Jackson Lee	Nunes
Crowley	Jeffries	O'Rourke
Cuellar	Jenkins (KS)	Olson
Culberson	Jenkins (WV)	Pallazzo
Cummings	Johnson (GA)	Pallone
Curbelo (FL)	Johnson (OH)	Palmer
Davis (CA)	Johnson, E. B.	Pascarell
Davis, Danny	Johnson, Sam	Paulsen
Davis, Rodney	Jolly	Payne
DeFazio	Jones	Pearce
DeGette	Jordan	Pelosi
Delaney	Joyce	Perlmutter
DeLauro	Kaptur	Perry
DelBene	Katko	Peters
Denham	Keating	Peterson
Dent	Kelly (IL)	Pingree
DeSantis	Kelly (PA)	Pittenger
DeSaulnier	Kennedy	Pitts
DesJarlais	Kildee	Pocan
Deutch	Kilmer	Poe (TX)
Diaz-Balart	Kind	Poliquin
Dingell	King (IA)	Polis
Doggett	King (NY)	Pompeo
Dold	Kinziger (IL)	Posey
Doyle, Michael	Kirkpatrick	Price (NC)
F.	Kline	Price, Tom
Duckworth	Kuster	Quigley
Duffy	Labrador	Rangel
Duncan (SC)	LaMalfa	Ratcliffe
Duncan (TN)	Lamborn	Reed
Edwards	Lance	Reichert
Ellison	Langevin	Renacci
Ellmers (NC)	Larsen (WA)	Ribble
Emmer (MN)	Larson (CT)	Rice (NY)
Eshoo	Latta	Rice (SC)
Esty	Lawrence	Rigell
Farenthold	Lee	Roby
Farr	Levin	Rogers (AL)
Fattah	Lewis	Rogers (KY)
Fitzpatrick	Lieu, Ted	Rokita
Fleischmann	Lipinski	Rooney (FL)
Fleming	LoBiondo	Ros-Lehtinen
Forbes	Loebuck	Roskam
Fortenberry	Loftgren	Ross
Foster	Loudermilk	Rothfus
Fox	Love	Rouzer
Frankel (FL)	Lowenthal	Roybal-Allard
Franks (AZ)	Lowe	Royce
Frelinghuysen	Lucas	Ruiz
Fudge	Luetkemeyer	Ruppersberger
Gabbard	Lujan Grisham	Russell
Gallego	(NM)	Ryan (OH)
Garamendi	Lujan, Ben Ray	Ryan (WI)
Garrett	(NM)	Salmon
Gibbs	Lummis	Sánchez, Linda
Gibson	Lynch	T.
Gohmert	MacArthur	Sanford
Goodlatte	Maloney,	Sarbanes
Gosar	Carolyn	Scalise
Gowdy	Maloney, Sean	Schakowsky
Graham	Marchant	Schiff
Granger	Marino	Schock
Graves (GA)	Massie	Schrader
Graves (LA)	Matsui	Schweikert
Graves (MO)	McCarthy	Scott (VA)
Grayson	McCaul	Scott, Austin
Green, Al	McClintock	Scott, David
Green, Gene	McCollum	Sensenbrenner
Griffith	McDermott	Serrano
Grijalva	McGovern	Sessions
Grothman	McHenry	Sewell (AL)
Guinta	McKinley	Sherman
Guthrie	McMorris	Shimkus
Hahn	Rodgers	Shuster
Hanna	McNerney	Simpson
Hardy	McSally	Sinema
Harper	Meadows	Sires
Harris	Meehan	Slaughter
Hastings	Meng	Smith (MO)
Heck (NV)	Messer	Smith (NE)
Heck (WA)	Mica	Smith (NJ)
Hensarling	Miller (FL)	Smith (TX)
Herrera Beutler	Miller (MI)	Smith (WA)
Hice, Jody B.	Moolenaar	Stefanik
Higgins	Mooney (WV)	Stewart
Hill	Moore	Stivers
Himes	Moulton	Swalwell (CA)
Holding	Mullin	Takai
Honda	Mulvaney	Takano
Hoyer	Murphy (FL)	Thompson (CA)
Hudson	Murphy (PA)	Thompson (MS)
Huelskamp	Napolitano	Thompson (PA)
Huffman	Neal	Thornberry
Huizenga (MI)	Neugebauer	Tiberi
Hunter	Newhouse	Tipton
Hurd (TX)	Noem	Titus
Hurt (VA)	Nolan	Torres
Israel	Norcross	Trott
Issa	Nugent	Tsongas