

where the Rockets play, the Houston Astros are playing. A few years ago, we had the worst team in baseball, but they have been leading their division and just swept another home stand.

So I want to congratulate the Houston Rockets for moving forward in the playoffs and also the Houston Astros because it is a long season. We need to keep it up. But they are bringing sports history into Houston again.

SIXTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF SRI LANKA'S CIVIL WAR

(Mr. CHABOT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the sixth anniversary of the end of the civil war in Sri Lanka. In a brutal war that lasted 37 years, we saw nearly 100,000 people killed—many of them civilians—as a result of the tensions between the country's Buddhist majority and Hindu minority.

Since the war ended, however, corruption and ongoing human rights abuses have prevented Sri Lanka from reaching a national reconciliation.

Then in January of this year, we saw President Sirisena democratically elected with significant support from the Sinhalese, Tamil, and Muslim communities.

Mr. Speaker, on this fortuitous occasion, I call on the new government to release the 200 detained political prisoners, account for the nearly 20,000 missing civilians from the war, and end oppressive restrictions on the Tamil provinces.

This sixth anniversary serves as a reminder of Sri Lanka's war-torn past and a chance to move it toward a future of democracy, justice, and equality for all its people because only then can Sri Lanka finally achieve the stability, peace, and prosperity that it deserves.

PROTECTING NORTH CAROLINA FARMERS AND LANDOWNERS

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, in 2014, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued a rule that would significantly broaden the Federal Government's power to regulate waters and adjacent lands under the Clean Water Act.

The Waters of the United States rule would give the Federal Government jurisdiction over puddles, roadside ditches, irrigation ditches, and storm and wastewater systems. Federal agencies frequently place burdensome regulations on the American public, and this rule is no exception.

Fortunately, last week, the House passed H.R. 1732, the Regulatory Integrity Protection Act, which would require the agencies to start over and develop a new rule in consultation with

State and local governments and other stakeholders. This commonsense legislation prevents an out-of-touch administration from threatening the livelihood of North Carolina's farmers and saddling local governments with exorbitant compliance costs.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 15, 2015.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
*The Speaker, The Capitol,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, I have the honor to transmit a sealed envelope received from the White House on May 15, 2015, at 3:33 p.m., and said to contain a message from the President whereby he submits a copy of a notice filed earlier with the Federal Register continuing the emergency with Burma first declared in Executive Order 13047 of May 20, 1997.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

ROBERT F. REEVES,
Deputy Clerk.

CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO BURMA—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 114-39)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to Burma that was declared on May 20, 1997, is to continue in effect beyond May 20, 2015. The Government of Burma has made significant progress across a number of important areas, including the release of over 1,300 political prisoners, continued progress toward a nationwide cease-fire, the discharge of hundreds of child soldiers from the military, steps to improve labor standards, and expanding political space for civil society to have a greater voice in shaping issues critical to Burma's future. In addition, Burma

has become a signatory of the International Atomic Energy Agency's Additional Protocol and ratified the Biological Weapons Convention, significant steps towards supporting global nonproliferation. Despite these strides, the situation in the country continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.

Concerns persist regarding the ongoing conflict and human rights abuses in the country, particularly in ethnic minority areas and Rakhine State. In addition, Burma's military operates with little oversight from the civilian government and often acts with impunity. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to Burma.

Despite this action, the United States remains committed to supporting and strengthening Burma's reform efforts and to continue working both with the Burmese government and people to ensure that the democratic transition is sustained and irreversible.

BARACK OBAMA.
THE WHITE HOUSE, May 15, 2015.

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 9 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1605

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ROTHFUS) at 4 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

HOMELESS VETERANS' RE-INTEGRATION PROGRAMS REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 474) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for a five-year extension to the homeless veterans reintegration programs and to provide clarification regarding eligibility for services under such programs.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 474

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 “Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Programs Reauthorization Act of 2015”.

SEC. 2. FIVE-YEAR EXTENSION OF HOMELESS VETERANS REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS.

Section 2021(e)(F) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “2015” and inserting “2020”.

SEC. 3. CLARIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICES UNDER HOMELESS VETERANS REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS.

Subsection (a) of section 2021 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “reintegration of homeless veterans into the labor force.” and inserting the following: “reintegration into the labor force of—”

“(1) homeless veterans;

“(2) veterans participating in the Department of Veterans Affairs supported housing program for which rental assistance provided pursuant to section 8(o)(19) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(19)); and

“(3) veterans who are transitioning from being incarcerated.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP) and the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and add extraneous material on H.R. 474.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 474, the Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Programs Reauthorization Act of 2015 would extend this very good job training and placement program for homeless veterans.

This bill would also make some commonsense changes to the program’s eligibility rules by making veterans housed under the HUD-VA supported housing program and formerly incarcerated veterans eligible for HVRP.

Mr. Speaker, by making those eligibility changes, we will be offering training and placement services to groups of veterans who are largely unemployed and have significant barriers to employment. The program’s history of a job placement rate of 70 percent has been recognized by many as among the best in the Federal Government and I believe warrants its continuation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise in support of H.R. 474, the Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Programs Reauthorization Act of 2015. This bipartisan bill reauthorizes the highly successful Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program, HVRP, which provides grants to train and reintegrate homeless veterans into meaningful employment.

H.R. 474 also clarifies that in addition to homeless veterans, those participating in the HUD-VASH voucher program and those transitioning from being incarcerated are also eligible to participate in HVRP. HVRP is unique among Federal programs, as it is dedicated to providing employment assistance to homeless veterans. Other programs that we hear much about focus on needs such as emergency shelter, food, and abuse treatment.

Homeless veterans often face a variety of problems that can bar them from traditional employment pathways, including severe PTSD, histories of substance abuse, and encounters with the criminal justice system. HVRP service providers give our homeless veterans specialized intensive counseling and services to help them find a positive pathway forward, resulting in gainful employment.

This bill will not incur any direct spending costs, nor will discretionary costs be beyond the minimal.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman WENSTRUP for his hard work on this bill, as well as Ranking Member TAKANO for his efforts to advance this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, once again, I encourage all Members to support my bill, H.R. 474. I have no further speakers at this time, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I, too, urge my colleagues to support H.R. 474. It is a good bill that will reauthorize and clarify the Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WENSTRUP. Again, Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Members to support my bill, H.R. 474, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 474.

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.

ENSURING VA EMPLOYEE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1038) to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to retain a copy of any reprimand or admonishment received by an employee of the Department in the permanent record of the employee.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1038

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 “Ensuring VA Employee Accountability Act”.

SEC. 2. RETENTION OF RECORDS OF REPRIMANDS AND ADMONISHMENTS RECEIVED BY EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 7 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 714. Record of reprimands and admonishments

“If any employee of the Department receives a reprimand or admonishment, the Secretary shall retain a copy of such reprimand or admonishment in the permanent record of the employee as long as the employee is employed by the Department.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“714. Record of reprimands and admonishments.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP) and the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and add extraneous material on H.R. 1038.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, currently, if a VA employee is either reprimanded or admonished for their performance, all records of those administrative punishments are removed from the employee’s personnel file within 3 years and 2 years, respectively. Subsequent to the removal of these personnel actions, there is no record of their poor performance or acts regardless of how many different jobs they hold within the VA or how long they remain a VA employee.

Mr. Speaker, personnel policies and rules such as we are addressing today are part of the culture of no accountability at the Department of Veterans Affairs that have contributed significantly to the recent public scandals. The list of scandals now includes the abuse of the purchase card program where some VA employees were spending \$5 billion annually on goods and services without contracts, which was exposed at the Veterans’ Affairs Committee hearings last Thursday.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to ensure that only the most ethical and most qualified employees who benefit from the tax dollars that support them move up through the ranks at VA. One way to assist that is to retain an employee’s entire history in their personnel file. Now, no one is saying that employees can’t improve their performance after being reprimanded or admonished, but managers should know the complete history of their staff or potential staff members.

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