

promotions and discounts offered by many businesses around the country.

The bill, as amended, would also require the Secretary to determine a fee to be charged that would cover all costs of producing the cards and managing the program. The bill also specifies that the card does not entitle the holder to any VA benefits.

H.R. 91 passed the House by a vote of 402-0 on May 18. The Senate passed it by unanimous consent on June 22, with an amendment that would authorize VA to provide this card to any person who meets the statutory definition of a veteran.

Under current law, a veteran is defined as "a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable."

I thank my colleague Mr. BUCHANAN for his efforts on this commonsense legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

H.R. 91 passed the House 402-0, as my good friend mentioned, in May. It was amended by the Senate and passed 2 weeks ago. Today, we are taking up the Senate amendment to H.R. 91. This measure will assist veterans in proving that they are indeed veterans.

In most instances, a veteran must be enrolled with the VA to receive a VA ID card or utilize their DD-214 to prove their military service, which may contain personal health information.

Veterans who retire from the armed services are issued a Department of Defense ID card that serves this purpose. However, the majority of servicemembers do not retire in service, leaving millions of veterans sometimes challenged to provide proof of their honorable military service.

Extending the option of a veterans ID is a simple way to resolve this issue and honor America's veterans.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BUCHANAN).

Mr. BUCHANAN. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, today is a good day for our Nation's veterans.

My legislation will allow all veterans to receive official ID cards through the VA. No longer will veterans be forced to carry around documents that contain sensitive information that puts them at needless risk of identity theft, and it does all this at no cost to the taxpayer.

Madam Speaker, this bill is a prime example of what can be accomplished when we put partisanship aside and the needs of our country first.

Thank you, and God bless our men and women in uniform.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I join Vietnam Veterans of America, the As-

sociation of the U.S. Navy, American Veterans, and others in wholehearted support of the Senate amendment to H.R. 91, the Veterans I.D. Card Act of 2015.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

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

Mr. ABRAHAM. Madam Speaker, once again, I encourage all Members to support the Senate amendment to H.R. 91, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. ABRAHAM) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 91.

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. ABRAHAM. Madam 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.

LAND MANAGEMENT WORKFORCE FLEXIBILITY ACT

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1531) to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide a pathway for temporary seasonal employees in Federal land management agencies to compete for vacant permanent positions under internal merit promotion procedures, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1531

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 "Land Management Workforce Flexibility Act".

SEC. 2. PERSONNEL FLEXIBILITIES RELATING TO LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subpart I of part III of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after chapter 95 the following:

"CHAPTER 96—PERSONNEL FLEXIBILITIES RELATING TO LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCIES

"Sec.

"9601. Definitions.

"9602. Competitive service; time-limited appointments.

"§ 9601. Definitions

"For purposes of this chapter—

"(1) the term 'land management agency' means—

"(A) the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture;

"(B) the Bureau of Land Management of the Department of the Interior;

"(C) the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior;

"(D) the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior;

"(E) the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the Department of the Interior; and

"(F) the Bureau of Reclamation of the Department of the Interior; and

"(2) the term 'time-limited appointment' includes a temporary appointment and a term appointment, as defined by the Office of Personnel Management.

"§ 9602. Competitive service; time-limited appointments

"(a) Notwithstanding chapter 33 or any other provision of law relating to the examination, certification, and appointment of individuals in the competitive service, an employee of a land management agency serving under a time-limited appointment in the competitive service is eligible to compete for a permanent appointment in the competitive service at any land management agency or any other agency (as defined in section 101 of title 31) under the internal merit promotion procedures of the applicable agency if—

"(1) the employee was appointed initially under open, competitive examination under subchapter I of chapter 33 to the time-limited appointment;

"(2) the employee has served under 1 or more time-limited appointments by a land management agency for a period or periods totaling more than 24 months without a break of 2 or more years; and

"(3) the employee's performance has been at an acceptable level of performance throughout the period or periods (as the case may be) referred to in paragraph (2).

"(b) In determining the eligibility of a time-limited employee under this section to be examined for or appointed in the competitive service, the Office of Personnel Management or other examining agency shall waive requirements as to age, unless the requirement is essential to the performance of the duties of the position.

"(c) An individual appointed under this section—

"(1) becomes a career-conditional employee, unless the employee has otherwise completed the service requirements for career tenure; and

"(2) acquires competitive status upon appointment.

"(d) A former employee of a land management agency who served under a time-limited appointment and who otherwise meets the requirements of this section shall be deemed a time-limited employee for purposes of this section if—

"(1) such employee applies for a position covered by this section within the period of 2 years after the most recent date of separation; and

"(2) such employee's most recent separation was for reasons other than misconduct or performance.

"(e) The Office of Personnel Management shall prescribe such regulations as may be necessary to carry out this section."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis for part III of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item for chapter 95 the following:

"96. Personnel flexibilities relating to land management agencies 9601".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1531, introduced by our colleague from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY). The Land Management Workforce Flexibility Act allows certain temporary workers to compete for full-time positions when vacancies arise.

Many of the Federal Government's firefighters work on a temporary basis and gain valuable experience as they return year after year to battle Western wildfires. Current law prevents these experienced employees from competing for full-time jobs under internal merit promotion procedures.

This commonsense bill will allow Federal land agencies to fully consider the applications of experienced workers when they identify the need for a full-time employee.

Covered agencies include the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Bureau of Reclamation.

The bill does not change the total number of Federal jobs available or the salaries paid to Federal employees; rather, it expands the pool of individuals eligible for Federal land management positions.

Of course, the bill does impose a few conditions to be eligible to compete for a full-time position, including length of service and adherence to performance standards.

I urge support for this bipartisan legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I thank my friend from Georgia (Mr. CARTER) for being here today on the floor.

Madam Speaker, obviously, I rise in strong support of our bipartisan Land Management Workforce Flexibility Act. I want to take a moment to recognize our colleagues, Congressman DON YOUNG of Alaska and Congressman ROB BISHOP of Utah, two of this Chamber's most dedicated advocates for the men and women who comprise America's hard-working temporary civil service, particularly our Nation's courageous temporary seasonal wildland firefighters.

It was an honor to join my esteemed colleagues, who have each served as chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, to develop and introduce this good government legislation. The spirit of bipartisanship that went into creating it is reflected in the equal number of Democratic and Republican cosponsors.

Further, I was pleased that the entire Committee on Oversight and Government Reform joined us in unanimously

supporting this much-needed reform to remove arbitrary barriers that prevent talented, long-term temporary seasonal employees from just competing for vacant permanent positions, as my friend from Georgia described.

As the committee noted favorably in reporting the bill, our legislation will improve government effectiveness by enhancing the quality of the pool of applicants for Federal positions.

Our commonsense legislation provides long-serving, temporary seasonal wildland firefighters and other seasonal employees with the same career advancement opportunities available to all other Federal employees.

Specifically, the Land Management Workforce Flexibility Act authorizes qualifying land management agency employees serving under time-limited appointments to compete for vacant permanent positions under internal merit promotion procedures, just as any permanent Federal employee is eligible to do.

Our bill is deficit neutral, as my friend from Georgia indicated, because it only strengthens the pool of individuals eligible to compete for vacant Federal permanent positions. It does not create new positions.

As the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office noted, "CBO estimates that implementing the legislation would have no significant effect on the Federal budget. Enacting the bill would not affect direct spending or revenues because our bipartisan bill would," to quote CBO, "not change the total number of Federal jobs available."

As many of my colleagues understand, particularly those Members who represent Western constituencies in America, many Federal land management employees, including wildland firefighters, are often hired under temporary appointments that amount to less than 6 months or 1,040 hours. These individuals, so often called temporary appointments, repeatedly are extended on an annual basis.

As Congressman STEPHEN LYNCH, my friend from Massachusetts, the former chairman of the Federal Workforce Subcommittee, observed at a 2010 hearing: "Oftentimes, seasonal temporary employees have worked in the same capacity year after year, decade after decade."

Despite those years of service and putting themselves often in harm's way, career advancement and opportunities are severely limited. It is difficult to overstate the adverse impact the unfair policy of precluding their ability to compete for the same jobs as full-time Federal employees has on Americans serving under term-limited appointments since many agencies utilize merit promotion to competitively fill nonentry-level jobs.

Indeed, bipartisan concerns have been raised over a status quo where, no matter how long an individual may serve under a term-limited appointment, even one that is originally ob-

tained under open, competitive examination, he or she never can acquire the status that would enable him or her to compete for vacant permanent positions.

For example, a former chairman of the House Civil Service Subcommittee addressed the illogical inequity of this position at a 1993 hearing, stating:

Furthermore, there needs to be better access for all temporary employees, not just term employees, to apply for permanent positions within the Federal Government. It is simply unfair that, after years of employment, a temporary employee applying for a permanent position job is no better off than someone off the street applying for a job. Agencies could save large sums of money on education and training by hiring more temporary employees for permanent positions.

At the same hearing, former Congressman Dan Burton submitted a statement for the RECORD, expressing the view: "One of the best things we can do for temporary employees is to increase their opportunities to compete for permanent positions."

The current barrier to competition placed on our Nation's temporary seasonal employees demoralizes the dedicated and courageous corps of temporary civil servants that serve in land management agencies, and it contributes to increased attrition and, ultimately, leads to higher training costs and a less-experienced and capable workforce.

As the devastating 2014 California wildfires demonstrated, our country cannot afford to degrade its wildland firefighting and emergency response capabilities that put themselves in harm's way. Our bipartisan bill is consistent with the Office of Personnel Management's support for the concept.

In closing, I strongly urge all my colleagues to support this bipartisan Land Management Workforce Flexibility Act.

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

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Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Madam 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 Georgia (Mr. CARTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1531.

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.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED
AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS
ACT, 2016

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to