

and the fulfillment of its mission to serve and to provide for veterans in need throughout the Greater Los Angeles area.

I am grateful to my friend and colleague, Congressman TED LIEU, from California, for joining me in sponsoring this legislation, and I urge all of my colleagues to join us in supporting this piece of legislation.

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

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

I rise in support of H.R. 5936. This legislation would provide a model for how VA campuses can provide services to homeless veterans and those at risk of homelessness.

It would authorize VA to carry out certain leases on the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System West L.A. Medical Center Campus, and would prohibit VA from entering into any land-sharing agreements unless the agreements provide additional healthcare resources and also benefit veterans and their families in ways other than generating additional revenue.

Mr. Speaker, there is a long history here with the West L.A. Campus. Without going into too much detail, this provision would ensure that the VA West L.A. Campus is used for the betterment of veterans, the original intent of the legacy when the land was donated decades ago. It is an important step forward for the veterans community in southern California.

I would like to thank the chairman for introducing this bill and Representative TED LIEU of California for his hard work.

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers at this time, so we are prepared to close.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I strongly support this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 5936, as amended. And I want to express, again, my deep appreciation in working with the majority to get this bill done. It is really important to those of us in southern California, and I cannot overstate how much this means to the veterans community in California.

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support this piece of legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TOM PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today, the House will consider H.R. 5936, the Veterans Care Agreement and West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016. H.R. 5936 authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to lease underused Federal property at the Department's medical campus in Los Angeles to developers who would construct supportive housing and rehabilitation facilities for homeless veterans.

Congressional Budget Office [CBO] estimates of the budgetary effects of VA's en-

hanced-use leases have evolved over time. Dating back to the first VA enhanced-use lease in 1999, CBO believed that VA enhanced-use leasing arrangements were a quid pro quo exchange of equal value which would not have any scoring implications. As CBO continued to gather more information on these leases, in addition to monitoring and evaluating VA's behavior regarding these lease agreements, it changed its scoring practices and today scores enhanced-use leases with an upfront, direct spending cost. The evolution of CBO's VA enhanced-use lease scoring came about from agreements and contracts that assured non-Federal lessees would be able to recover their capital costs invested in leased facilities through guaranteed payments from the Federal Government.

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 5936 would provide borrowing authority of \$44 million over fiscal years 2017 through 2026, which would result in new direct spending. Notwithstanding CBO's conclusion, the House Committee on the Budget believes new mandatory spending will not be provided by H.R. 5936 as amended. The Committee, working closely with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, has included section 4 in H.R. 5936 that would do the following: (1) ensure the Department of Veterans Affairs and third-party enhanced-use leasing agreements do not include either an explicit or implicit Federal Government loan guarantee; (2) prevent the Federal government from abrogating its sovereign immunity with respect to any loan, or other financial agreement; and, (3) require greater transparency, accountability, and congressional oversight of VA's enhanced-use lease program. If the Department of Veterans Affairs fails to faithfully execute the requirements in H.R. 5936, the House Committee on the Budget will revisit this issue in the context of future requests for enhanced-use leasing authority.

With these fiscal protections in place, I support H.R. 5936, the Veterans Care Agreement and West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016, which ensures America's homeless veterans are provided quality access to care and services, and brings our Nation one step closer to ending veteran homelessness.

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. 5936, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into certain leases at the Department of Veterans Affairs West Los Angeles Campus in Los Angeles, California, to make certain improvements to the enhanced-use lease authority of the Department, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VETERANS MOBILITY SAFETY ACT OF 2016

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass

the bill (H.R. 3471) to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements in the provision of automobiles and adaptive equipment by the Department of Veterans Affairs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3471

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 "Veterans Mobility Safety Act of 2016".

SEC. 2. PERSONAL SELECTIONS OF AUTOMOBILES AND ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT.

Section 3903(b) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking "Except" and inserting "(1) Except"; and

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

"(2) The Secretary shall ensure that to the extent practicable an eligible person who is provided an automobile or other conveyance under this chapter is given the opportunity to make personal selections relating to such automobile or other conveyance."

SEC. 3. COMPREHENSIVE POLICY FOR THE AUTOMOBILES ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT PROGRAM.

(a) COMPREHENSIVE POLICY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall develop a comprehensive policy regarding quality standards for providers who provide modification services to veterans under the automobile adaptive equipment program.

(b) SCOPE.—The policy developed under subsection (a) shall cover each of the following:

(1) The Department of Veterans Affairs-wide management of the automobile adaptive equipment program.

(2) The development of standards for safety and quality of equipment and installation of equipment through the automobile adaptive equipment program, including with respect to the defined differentiations in levels of modification complexity.

(3) The consistent application of standards for safety and quality of both equipment and installation throughout the Department.

(4) The certification of a provider by a third party organization or manufacturer if the Secretary designates the quality standards of such organization or manufacturer as meeting or exceeding the standards developed under this section.

(5) The education and training of personnel of the Department who administer the automobile adaptive equipment program.

(6) The compliance of the provider with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) when furnishing automobile adaptive equipment at the facility of the provider.

(7) The allowance, where technically appropriate, for veterans to receive modifications at their residence or location of choice.

(c) UPDATES.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall update Veterans Health Administration Handbook 1173.4, or any successor handbook or directive, in accordance with the policy developed under subsection (a). Not less frequently than once every six years thereafter, the Secretary shall update such handbook, or any successor handbook or directive.

(d) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary shall develop the policy under subsection (a), and revise such policy under subsection (c), in consultation with veterans service organizations, the National Highway Transportation Administration, industry representatives, manufacturers of automobile adaptive equipment, and other entities with expertise in installing, repairing, replacing, or manufacturing mobility equipment

or developing mobility accreditation standards for automobile adaptive equipment.

(e) **CONFLICTS.**—In developing and implementing the policy under subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

(1) minimize the possibility of conflicts of interest, to the extent practicable; and

(2) establish procedures that ensure against the use of a certifying entity referred to in subsection (b)(4) that has a financial conflict of interest regarding the certification of an eligible provider.

(f) **BIENNIAL REPORT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than one year after the date on which the Secretary updates Veterans Health Administration Handbook 1173.4, or any successor handbook or directive, under subsection (c), and biennially thereafter through 2022, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on the implementation and facility compliance with the policy developed under subsection (a).

(2) **CONTENTS.**—The report required by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) A description of the implementation plan for the policy developed under subsection (a) and any revisions to such policy under subsection (c).

(B) A description of the performance measures used to determine the effectiveness of such policy in ensuring the safety of veterans enrolled in the automobile adaptive equipment program.

(C) An assessment of safety issues due to improper installations based on a survey of recipients of adaptive equipment from the Department.

(D) An assessment of the adequacy of the adaptive equipment services of the Department based on a survey of recipients of adaptive equipment from the Department.

(E) An assessment of the training provided to the personnel of the Department with respect to administering the program.

(F) An assessment of the certified providers of the Department of adaptive equipment with respect to meeting the minimum standards developed under subsection (b)(2).

(g) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) The term “automobile adaptive equipment program” means the program administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs pursuant to chapter 39 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term “veterans service organization” means any organization recognized by the Secretary for the representation of veterans under section 5902 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 4. APPOINTMENT OF LICENSED HEARING AID SPECIALISTS IN VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION.

(a) **LICENSED HEARING AID SPECIALISTS.**—

(1) **APPOINTMENT.**—Section 7401(3) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting “licensed hearing aid specialists,” after “Audiologists.”

(2) **QUALIFICATIONS.**—Section 7402(b)(14) of such title is amended by inserting “, hearing aid specialist” after “dental technologist”.

(b) **REQUIREMENTS.**—With respect to appointing hearing aid specialists under sections 7401 and 7402 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by subsection (a), and providing services furnished by such specialists, the Secretary shall ensure that—

(1) a hearing aid specialist may only perform hearing services consistent with the hearing aid specialist's State license related to the practice of fitting and dispensing hearing aids without excluding other qualified professionals, including audiologists, from rendering services in overlapping practice areas;

(2) services provided to veterans by hearing aid specialists shall be provided as part of the non-medical treatment plan developed by an audiologist; and

(3) the medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs provide to veterans access to the full range of professional services provided by an audiologist.

(c) **CONSULTATION.**—In determining the qualifications required for hearing aid specialists and in carrying out subsection (b), the Secretary shall consult with veterans service organizations, audiologists, otolaryngologists, hearing aid specialists, and other stakeholder and industry groups as the Secretary determines appropriate.

(d) **ANNUAL REPORT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter during the five-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report on the following:

(A) Timely access of veterans to hearing health services through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(B) Contracting policies of the Department with respect to providing hearing health services to veterans in facilities that are not facilities of the Department.

(2) **TIMELY ACCESS TO SERVICES.**—Each report shall, with respect to the matter specified in paragraph (1)(A) for the one-year period preceding the submittal of such report, include the following:

(A) The staffing levels of audiologists, hearing aid specialists, and health technicians in audiology in the Veterans Health Administration.

(B) A description of the metrics used by the Secretary in measuring performance with respect to appointments and care relating to hearing health.

(C) The average time that a veteran waits to receive an appointment, beginning on the date on which the veteran makes the request, for the following:

(i) A disability rating evaluation for a hearing-related disability.

(ii) A hearing aid evaluation.

(iii) Dispensing of hearing aids.

(iv) Any follow-up hearing health appointment.

(D) The percentage of veterans whose total wait time for appointments described in subparagraph (C), including an initial and follow-up appointment, if applicable, is more than 30 days.

(3) **CONTRACTING POLICIES.**—Each report shall, with respect to the matter specified in paragraph (1)(B) for the one-year period preceding the submittal of such report, include the following:

(A) The number of veterans that the Secretary refers to non-Department audiologists for hearing health care appointments.

(B) The number of veterans that the Secretary refers to non-Department hearing aid specialists for follow-up appointments for a hearing aid evaluation, the dispensing of hearing aids, or any other purpose relating to hearing health.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) 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 and add extraneous material.

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 rise today in support of H.R. 3471, as amended, the Veterans Mobility Safety Act of 2016.

This bill is sponsored by my friend and committee member, Congresswoman JACKIE WALORSKI from Indiana, and includes a provision from H.R. 353, the Veterans' Access to Hearing Health Act of 2015, which is sponsored by Congressman SEAN DUFFY from Wisconsin. I am very grateful to both of them for their efforts.

H.R. 3471, as amended, would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop a comprehensive policy regarding quality standards for providers who dispense modification services to veterans under the Automobile Adaptive Equipment program.

VA's current handbook governing the Automobile Adaptive Equipment program has not been updated since it was released in 2000, despite being scheduled for recertification in 2005. Allowing the handbook for this important program to get so outdated is troublesome to me, given that improperly installed automobile adaptive equipment carries risks for our disabled veterans and for all those sharing America's roads.

The bill would also authorize VA to hire and prescribe qualified qualifications for hiring hearing aid specialists. One of my highest priorities as chairman has been ensuring that our Nation's veterans receive timely access to quality care.

That is why I was so frustrated by an audit issued by the VA inspector general in 2014 which found that VA took 17 to 24 days to complete hearing aid repair services and that, nationally, 30 percent of veterans waited more than 30 days from the estimated date that the VA medical facility had received the hearing aid from a vendor to the date the medical facility actually issued the hearing aid to the veteran themselves.

Too many veterans relying on hearing aids cannot wait for weeks or months for VA to make repairs, and I am hopeful that, by authorizing VA to hire hearing aid specialists to assist with basic hearing aid repairs, they will no longer have to wait.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this legislation brought forward by my colleague, Representative WALORSKI.

This bill directs VA to ensure that an eligible disabled veteran who has been provided with an automobile is given the opportunity to make personal selections relating to the automobile. The provider of any adaptive equipment modification services must be certified by a certification organization or the manufacturer of the adaptive equipment.

In addition, the provider of the automobile or adaptive equipment or the

provider of the modification services must adhere to specific requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards.

Mr. Speaker, I think these are important protections for those veterans who need to personalize the vehicles they drive.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI). She represents the Second Congressional District of Indiana, "Gin Town."

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support the Veterans Mobility Safety Act. This legislation will improve veterans' care and ensure the quality of the automobile adaptive equipment and hearing aids disabled veterans depend on.

Automotive mobility plays a vital role in helping our disabled veterans live a normal life after being wounded on the battlefield. The VA's Automobile Adaptive Equipment, or AAE, program provides eligible disabled veterans with an automobile or modification, such as wheelchair lifts and reduced-effort steering and braking, to existing vehicles to improve their quality of life.

Under the current AAE program, local VA facilities operate based upon their own interpretations of VA procedures that haven't been updated since 2000. It lacks quality standards for providers as well. As you can imagine, this fragmented and outdated system has resulted in cases of improperly installed equipment that caused serious safety issues for both the veteran and the driving public.

My legislation requires the VA to develop a comprehensive policy regarding quality standards for providers that participate in the AAE program in close consultation with a host of stakeholders, including veterans service organizations, the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, and industry representatives. The result will be a veteran-centric policy that ensures access to safe, quality equipment. Lastly, it would require VA to update the AAE program handbook to reflect the new policy, along with biennial reports on implementation and compliance.

This legislation also includes Congressman DUFFY's bill that would allow the VA to utilize hearing aid specialists to help fill the need for certain hearing aid services. This legislation will decrease audiologists' workload and allow them to focus on special cases and complex conditions while also decreasing the wait time for a veteran who just needs a quick tweak to their hearing aid.

I want to thank the chairman for all his work on veterans' issues. I want to also thank Representatives BROWNLEY

and RUIZ for their work on this legislation. Lastly, I want to thank Paralyzed Veterans of America for all of their help and all other veterans service organizations for all of their hard work advocating for veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense bill.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I urge my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 3471, as amended.

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, once again, I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting this piece of legislation.

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. 3471, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING THE AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION TO ACQUIRE, OPERATE, AND MAINTAIN THE LAFAYETTE ESCADRILLE MEMORIAL

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5937) to amend title 36, United States Code, to authorize the American Battle Monuments Commission to acquire, operate, and maintain the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial in Marnes-la-Coquette, France, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5937

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

SECTION 1. AUTHORITY OF THE AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION TO ACQUIRE, OPERATE, AND MAINTAIN THE LAFAYETTE ESCADRILLE MEMORIAL.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 21 of title 36, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§ 2115. Acquisition, operation, and maintenance of Lafayette Escadrille Memorial.

"The American Battle Monuments Commission may enter into an agreement with the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial Foundation to acquire, operate, and maintain the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial in Marnes-la-Coquette, France. Under such an agreement, the Commission shall make necessary arrangements to ensure the ongoing maintenance of the memorial, including the cemetery at the memorial that contains the remains of 49 aviators of the United States who died during World War I."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 21 of such title is amended by adding at the end of the following new item:

"2115. Acquisition, operation, and maintenance of Lafayette Escadrille Memorial."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) 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 have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and add extraneous materials to H.R. 5937, 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 myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5937, as amended. I want to thank Chairman ED ROYCE of the Foreign Affairs Committee and his staff for their assistance in expeditiously scheduling this bill.

My bill would ensure that the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial located outside of Paris, France, will continue to be cared for in a manner that honors America's servicemembers who fought in World War I.

Before the United States entered World War I, 269 brave American volunteers flew in combat missions in the French Air Service. These Americans were referred to as the Lafayette Escadrille after Marquis de Lafayette, the Frenchman who was instrumental to America's victory during the Revolutionary War. Unfortunately, 68 members of the Lafayette Escadrille lost their lives during the war, and the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial contains a crypt that serves as the final resting place for 49 of these brave Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Since 1928, the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial has been operated by the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial Foundation. The foundation is running out of funds that are needed to maintain the memorial.

H.R. 5937, as amended, would authorize the American Battle Monuments Commission to acquire, operate, and maintain the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial, which would guarantee that the memorial receives the care it deserves as a final resting place for Americans.

The ABMC, a Federal agency, currently operates numerous American military cemeteries and memorials in foreign countries. The ABMC is well equipped to ensure that the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial continues to stand as a reminder that Americans fought all around the world in the name of freedom. So I would urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5937, as amended.

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

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