

increases our investment in cybersecurity through a Cybersecurity National Action Plan. This Plan includes retiring outdated Federal information technology (IT) systems that were designed in a different age and increasingly are vulnerable to attack, reforming the way that the Federal Government manages and responds to cyber threats, and recruiting the best cyber talent. It will also help strengthen cybersecurity in the private sector and the digital ecosystem as a whole, enhancing cyber education and making sure companies and consumers have the tools they need to protect themselves. But many of our challenges in cybersecurity require bold, long-term commitments to change the way we operate in an increasingly digital world. That is why, to complement these steps, I am also creating a commission of experts to make recommendations for enhancing cybersecurity awareness and protections inside and outside of Government, protecting privacy, and empowering Americans to take better control of their digital security.

To ensure security at home, we must also demonstrate leadership around the world. Strong leadership means not only a wise application of military power, but also rallying other nations behind causes that are right. It means viewing our diplomacy and development efforts around the world as an essential instrument of our national security strategy, and mobilizing the private sector and other donors alongside our foreign assistance to help achieve our global development and climate priorities. The Budget supports this vision with funding for effective global health programs to fight HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other illnesses; assistance for displaced persons and refugees, including from Syria; and expanding educational opportunities for girls, among many other critical development initiatives.

As we make these investments to meet our greatest challenges, we are also working to build a 21st Century Government that delivers for the American people. The Budget supports efforts to make the Federal Government more efficient and effective, through smarter IT delivery and procurement, improving digital services, eliminating outdated regulations, and recruiting and retaining the best talent. It also invests in a new approach to working in local communities, one that disrupts an outdated, top-down approach, and makes our efforts more responsive to the ideas and concerns of local citizens. The Budget supports the use of data and evidence to drive policymaking, so the Federal Government can do more of what works and stop doing what does not.

The Budget is a roadmap to a future that embodies America's values and aspirations: a future of opportunity and security for all of our families; a rising standard of living; and a sustainable, peaceful planet for our kids. This future is within our reach. But just as it

took the collective efforts of the American people to rise from the recession and rebuild an even stronger economy, so will it take all of us working together to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

It will not be easy. But I have never been more optimistic about America's future than I am today. Over the past seven years, I have seen the strength, resilience, and commitment of the American people. I know that when we are united in the face of challenges, our Nation emerges stronger and better than before. I know that when we work together, there are no limits to what we can achieve. Together, we will move forward to innovate, to expand opportunity and security, and to make our Nation safer and stronger than ever before.

BARACK OBAMA.
THE WHITE HOUSE, February 9, 2016.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 3 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 25 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1503

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. RIBBLE) at 3 o'clock and 3 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.

COMMISSION ON CARE FINAL REPORT DEADLINE EXTENSION

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4437) to extend the deadline for the submittal of the final report required by the Commission on Care.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4437

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

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTAL OF FINAL REPORT BY COMMISSION ON CARE.

Section 202(b)(3)(B) of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-146; 128 Stat. 1773) is amended by striking "Not later than 180 days after the

date of the initial meeting of the Commission" and inserting "Not later than June 30, 2016".

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.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to add any extraneous material on H.R. 4437.

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. 4437, a bill that I am honored to sponsor, to extend the deadline for the submittal of the final report that is required by the Commission on Care.

The Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act, which Congress passed in 2014 in response to the Department of Veterans Affairs' crisis that saw far too many veterans waiting too long for the care that they needed, required the establishment of a Commission on Care to examine veteran access to care and recommend how to best organize the VA healthcare system over the next 20 years.

The law required the Commission to develop a final report 180 days after their first meeting, or by February 20, 2016.

However, the Commission has requested that Congress extend the reporting deadline to June in order to provide the commissioners more time to develop their findings and recommendations. As such, H.R. 4437 would extend the Commission's final reporting deadline to June 30 of this year.

The Commission's work is vitally important to determining the future of the VA healthcare system, and I am proud to sponsor this bill to allow the commissioners more time to carry out their mission on behalf of our Nation's veterans.

I urge all my colleagues to support H.R. 4437, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4437, of which I am an original cosponsor.

When the Congress passed and the President signed into law the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014, we included a section requiring an independent assessment of the hospital care, medical services, and other health care furnished in medical facilities of the VA. We also established a Commission on Care to examine the access of veterans to health care from the

Department of Veterans Affairs and strategically examine how best to organize the Veterans Health Administration, local health care resources, and deliver health care to veterans over the next 20 years.

The Commission has contacted us to explain that they will not be able to meet the statutory deadline of presenting their report to us in time, and would like an extension until June of 2016.

I feel this is a very important report, and I am willing to extend the authorization for the Commission on Care in order to receive this information.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support H.R. 4437.

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. 4437.

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.

CONSTRUCTION REFORM ACT OF 2016

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3106) to authorize Department major medical facility construction projects for fiscal year 2015, to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements in the administration of Department medical facility construction projects, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3106

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 "Construction Reform Act of 2016".

SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CONSTRUCTION REFORMS.

(a) APPLICATION OF INDUSTRY STANDARDS; ASSISTANCE.—Section 8103 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsections:

"(f) To the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary shall use industry standards, standard designs, and best practices in carrying out the construction of medical facilities.

"(g)(1) The Secretary shall provide to a non-Department Federal entity with which the Secretary has entered into an agreement under subsection (e)—

"(A) design, planning, and construction assistance before the entity issues a request for proposals for the design or construction of the super construction project covered by the agreement;

"(B) any documents or information needed for the entity to carry out the responsibilities

of the entity with respect to the super construction project; and

"(C) upon the request of the entity, any other assistance that the entity determines necessary to carry out such responsibilities.

"(2) Any assistance provided under paragraph (1) shall be provided to the non-Department Federal entity on a non-reimbursable basis.

"(h)(1) With respect to a proposed change to a contract entered into by a non-Department Federal entity with which the Secretary has entered into an agreement under subsection (e) that is estimated at a value of less than \$250,000, the non-Department Federal entity shall issue a final decision regarding such change not later than 30 days after the date on which the change is proposed.

"(2) With respect to a proposed change to such a contract that is estimated at a value of \$250,000 or more—

"(A) the Secretary may provide to the entity the recommendations of the Secretary regarding such change;

"(B) during the 30-day period beginning on the date on which the entity furnishes to the Secretary information regarding such change, the Secretary may issue the final decision regarding such change; and

"(C) if the Secretary does not issue a final decision under subparagraph (B), during the 30-day period following the period described in such paragraph, the entity shall issue a final decision regarding such a change not later than 90 days from when the entity furnished information regarding such a change to the Secretary.

"(i) The Secretary shall ensure that each employee of the Department with responsibilities relating to the construction or alteration of medical facilities, including such construction or alteration carried out pursuant to contracts or agreements, undergoes a program of ongoing professional training and development. Such program shall be designed to ensure that employees maintain adequate expertise relating to industry standards and best practices for the acquisition of design and construction services. The Secretary may provide the program under this subsection through a contract or agreement with a non-Federal entity or with a non-Department Federal entity."

(b) LIMITATION ON PLANNING AND DESIGN FOR SUPER CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 8104(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (4);

(B) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following new paragraph (3):

"(3) The Secretary may not obligate or expend funds for advance planning or design for any super construction project, until the date that is 60 days after the date on which the Secretary submits to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives notice of such obligation or expenditure."; and

(C) in paragraph (4), as redesignated by paragraph (1) of this subsection, by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(C) The term 'super construction project' means a project for the construction, alteration, or acquisition of a medical facility involving a total expenditure of more than \$100,000,000, but such term does not include an acquisition by exchange."

(2) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by paragraph (1) shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act and shall apply with respect to a construction project that is initiated on or after that date.

(c) CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL OF CERTAIN PROJECTS.—

(1) PROJECTS THAT EXCEED SPECIFIED AMOUNT.—Subsection (c) of section 8104 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"(c)(1) The Secretary may not obligate funds for a major medical facility project or a super construction project approved by a law described in subsection (a)(2) in an amount that would cause the total amount obligated for that project to exceed the amount specified in the law for that project (or would add to total obligations exceeding such specified amount) by more than 10 percent unless the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives each approve in writing the obligation of those funds.

"(2) The Secretary shall—

"(A) enter into a contract with an appropriate non-department Federal entity with the ability to conduct forensic audits on medical facility projects for the conduct of an external forensic audit of the expenditures relating to any major medical facility or super construction project for which the total expenditures exceed the amount specified in the law for the project by more than 25 percent; and

"(B) enter into a contract with an appropriate non-department Federal entity with the ability to conduct forensic audits on medical facility projects for the conduct of an external audit of the medical center construction project in Aurora, Colorado."

(2) USE OF EXTRA AMOUNTS.—Subsection (d) of such section is amended—

(A) in paragraph (2)(B), in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking "Whenever" and inserting "Before"; and

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

"(3) The Secretary may not obligate any funds described in paragraph (1) or amounts described in paragraph (2) before the date that is 30 days after the notification submitted under paragraph (1) or paragraph (2)(B), as the case may be, unless the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives each approve in writing the obligation of those funds or amounts."

(3) NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.—

(A) COMMITTEES REQUIRED.—Subsection (d)(1) of such section is amended by striking "each committee" and inserting "the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives".

(B) USE OF AMOUNTS FROM BID SAVINGS.—Subsection (d)(2)(B) of such section is amended by adding at the end the following new clause:

"(iv) With respect to the major construction project that is the source of the bid savings—

"(I) the amounts already obligated or available in the project reserve for such project;

"(II) the percentage of such project that has been completed; and

"(III) the amount of such bid savings that is already obligated or otherwise being used for a purpose other than such project."

(d) QUARTERLY REPORT ON SUPER CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—At the end of subchapter I of chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, add the following new section: