

(1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking “for burial in a national cemetery of a deceased veteran” and inserting “for burial of a deceased veteran in a national cemetery or in a veterans cemetery of a State or tribal organization for which the Department has provided a grant under section 2408 of this title”; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking “the burial of the veteran in a national cemetery” and inserting “such burial”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to add extraneous material on S. 3076.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise to urge all Members to support S. 3076, the Charles Duncan Buried with Honor Act of 2016.

S. 3076, which passed the Senate by unanimous consent on September 20, 2016, would provide indigent families of deceased veterans with more choices as they make the difficult decision about where to lay their loved ones to rest without being financially penalized. This legislation is a practical solution for a common challenge that is faced by too many veterans' families. Dr. Wenstrup, my colleague and a valued member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, has sponsored H.R. 6114, the House companion to this bill.

Under current law, if a family does not have sufficient resources to buy a casket or an urn for a deceased loved one, the VA can provide one if the veteran is buried in a national cemetery, but not if the veteran is buried in a State or a tribal cemetery. However, for some families, interring a veteran in a national cemetery is not always the best option. For example, a national cemetery may be too far away for families to attend burial services or to regularly visit their loved ones.

To better serve the families of all veterans, S. 3076 allows the VA to furnish a casket or an urn if the deceased veteran is laid to rest in a national or in a State or a tribal cemetery. It is appropriate to honor the service of veterans who have passed by providing a casket or an urn regardless of where the veteran is interred.

I urge my colleagues to support S. 3076.

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 S. 3076, the Charles Duncan Buried with Honor Act, which expands the cemetery bur-

ial options offered by the VA to the families of financially insolvent veterans and to those with no identifiable next of kin.

I thank my friend, the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee chairman, Dr. Wenstrup, for sponsoring this bill in the House.

We who serve on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee hear over and over how important it is to the families of many veterans that they be buried near loved ones and near home. This is particularly true in rural areas where the option of burial in a national veterans' cemetery within a manageable travel distance is frequently not an option.

Under current law, indigent veterans and those with no next of kin are eligible for reimbursement rates of \$2,421 for caskets or \$244 for urns when buried in a national cemetery. However, if a State or a tribal cemetery that is supported by grants from the VA is geographically closer to the veteran's home and is preferable to the veteran or to the family, burial there is not currently allowed.

The bill before us today provides that choice by broadening the scope of the Dignified Burial and other Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act to include the option of burial in a State or a tribal cemetery for which the Department of Veterans Affairs has provided a grant.

Mr. Speaker, this bill enjoys the support of the American Legion. It makes good sense and ensures that we are doing everything in our power to provide the greatest honor and comfort for veterans and their families. I urge my colleagues to support it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP), an active member of the committee.

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of S. 3076, the Charles Duncan Buried with Honor Act.

This bill will have a direct and personal impact on the families of many of our veterans. I am pleased that it is being considered today, and I was proud to sponsor the House companion bill, H.R. 6114.

Under current law, if a veteran dies without the resources to pay for a casket, the VA will provide one, but only as long as the veteran is buried in a national cemetery. That means that, in my district and throughout the country, the families in need of this service may be transported to a national cemetery, which is often far from home and far from family. This has caused heartache for many families in my district in Ohio and across the country. It can mean that their loved ones must be buried nowhere near their homes. It can prevent friends and family from attending the funerals or from regularly visiting the grave sites.

S. 3076 would amend current law to allow veterans who receive caskets that are purchased by the VA to be

buried at a State or a tribal cemetery for which the VA has provided a grant. By expanding the burial options available to veterans, we can better ensure that they are laid to rest close to their loved ones. Let's provide this peace of mind to our veterans and their families. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation and join me in passing S. 3076.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL).

Mr. HILL. I thank the distinguished incoming chairman of the committee. I appreciate the time. I also thank my colleague in the Arkansas delegation, Senator COTTON, for his important work on S. 3076, which we are discussing today. I support it enthusiastically.

Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, July 25, 2015, U.S. Navy veteran and Little Rock resident Charles Duncan passed away at the age of 66, leaving behind a daughter, three grandsons, three great-grandsons, a brother, and a sister, along with many grieving family members, friends, and loved ones.

Sadly, like too many of our veterans, Mr. DUNCAN was financially insolvent and could not afford the cost of his funeral. Thankfully, he was eligible for essential VA benefits to cover these costs. However, these benefits required that he be buried at the national cemetery in Fort Smith instead of close to his home and his family in Little Rock. By expanding the cemetery burial options that are offered by the VA to our veterans in need, we can provide families with the solace that they deserve.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and support the peaceful rest of the veterans we have lost.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, once again, I encourage all Members to support S. 3076.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 3076.

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.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5143, TRANSPARENT INSURANCE STANDARDS ACT OF 2016; PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 9, 2016, THROUGH JANUARY 3, 2017; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mr. BYRNE, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114-846) on the resolution (H.

Res. 944) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5143) to provide greater transparency and congressional oversight of international insurance standards setting processes, and for other purposes; providing for proceedings during the period from December 9, 2016, through January 3, 2017; and providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS EMERGENCY MEDICAL STAFFING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION ACT

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4150) to amend title 38, United States Code, to allow the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to modify the hours of employment of physicians employed on a full-time basis 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. 4150

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 “Department of Veterans Affairs Emergency Medical Staffing Recruitment and Retention Act”.

SEC. 2. MODIFICATION OF HOURS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR PHYSICIANS EMPLOYED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

Section 7423(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking “(a) The hours” and inserting “(a)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), the hours”; and

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

“(2)(A) Upon the advance written request of a covered physician, the Secretary may modify the hours of employment for a physician appointed in the Administration under any provision of this chapter on a full-time basis to be more or less than 80 hours in a biweekly pay period, subject to the requirements in subparagraph (B). For the purpose of determining pay, such a physician shall be deemed to have a biweekly schedule of 80 hours of employment.

“(B) A physician with an irregular work schedule established under subparagraph (A) shall be obligated to account for at least 2,080 hours of employment (through performance of work or use of leave or paid time off) in a calendar year.

“(C) The Secretary may prescribe regulations to implement this paragraph, including regulations making adjustments to address the annual hours requirement for physicians who are covered by this paragraph for only a portion of a calendar year.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Mem-

bers have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to add extraneous material on H.R. 4150, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 4150, as amended, the Department of Veterans Affairs Emergency Medical Staffing Recruitment and Retention Act, would authorize the VA, upon written request, to modify the hours of employment for full-time physicians to be more than or less than 80 hours in a biweekly pay period, as agreed to by the physician and hospital management.

Earlier this year, the VA testified that there are nearly 4,000 physician vacancies across the VA healthcare system. The VA's ability to effectively recruit and retain high-quality medical professionals to care for our veterans is threatened by the Nation's worsening physician shortage, which the Association of American Medical Colleges has stated could grow to just under 100,000 physicians by 2025. In light of this, it is imperative that we provide the VA with every available tool to improve physician recruitment and to make efficient use of the current physician workforce.

Currently, the VA's ability in both regards is hampered by a rigid 80-hour, biweekly work schedule that is at odds with private sector industry standards. Typically, emergency room, ER, providers in non-VA hospitals across the country work flexible schedules to accommodate the irregular hours that emergency medicine demands. However, ER doctors in VA medical facilities are not afforded the opportunity to adopt the flexible schedules that their private sector colleagues enjoy. This bill would correct that discrepancy and improve the VA's ability to recruit and retain ER physicians.

H.R. 4150, as amended, which has my full support, originated as a VA legislative proposal and is sponsored by Congressman RAUL RUIZ of California, who is an emergency medical physician. I am grateful to him for his efforts in addressing this issue, and I urge all of my colleagues to support this needed legislation.

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. 4150, as amended, introduced by my very good friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. RUIZ). This legislation will improve the recruitment and retention of medical professionals at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

H.R. 4150, as amended, allows the VA to arrange flexible physician work schedules to allow for the staffing and full implementation of a hospitalist physician system and to accommodate the unusual work schedule require-

ments for emergency medicine physicians. We all recognize the need for flexibility when working the rigorous and irregular hours that are routinely required of emergency medicine doctors. Giving the VA the ability to have flexible working hours that best suit the demand for delivering health care to the veterans who rely on those doctors just makes sense.

The current 80-hour, biweekly pay period limitation for these doctors creates challenges at the VA medical centers to adequately and sensibly staff the emergency rooms. Generally, most healthcare providers work a traditional 40-hour workweek. However, for hospitalists and emergency room physicians, they may need to work more than that in a week to provide safe, quality health care to veterans who seek services at the VA.

Ensuring access to care for veterans has been a major focus of this committee's, and this bill will help to eliminate the access barrier and provide a more efficient and effective way to ensure that the emergency rooms across the VA healthcare system are ready to take care of our veterans. Importantly, the bill also includes protections for physicians by requiring their consent before they can move to the flexible schedule.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I, too, am strongly in favor of this bill. I don't know where Dr. RUIZ was with regard to this 40-hour week, but I wish he had been around when I was in training and in practice because it would have been a joy to have worked just 40 hours. This particular bill allows the flexibility that every other hospital in the world has for staffing, and this is with the consent of the physicians and the hospital. It just makes sense.

I am so glad that Dr. RUIZ brought this up. As a practicing ER physician, he knows about this, and he knows exactly what it is.

I appreciate Dr. RUIZ bringing this up and making the committee aware of it. This will become a new law.

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

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Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. RUIZ), my good friend who is an emergency room physician and a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Mr. RUIZ. I would like to thank the chairman and the ranking member.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that I too had 100-, 120-hour workweeks and months; and I was the scut, of course, during my internships and residency; so I understand the words that you have spoken.

I rise in support of my bill, H.R. 4150, the Department of Veterans Affairs