

## 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.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 28, the Biological Implant Tracking and Veteran Safety Act of 2017.

Two years ago this month, the Government Accountability Office, GAO, released a startling report detailing a failure on the part of the Department of Veterans Affairs to follow requirements for documenting open-market purchases of surgical implants and the lack of a standardized process for tracking biological tissue from cadaver donors to living veteran recipients.

Currently, there is no requirement for VA to systematically identify or track biological implants used in the VA medical facilities. Due to this oversight, if a given biological implant was identified as potentially contaminated or made the subject of a recall, it would be impossible for VA to identify which patients receive the impacted material and, therefore, take steps to inform at-risk patients and address contamination concerns.

That same GAO report also found that VA did not consistently ensure that the vendors that the Department purchases biological implants from are registered with the Food and Drug Administration, and that VA did not maintain an inventory system to prevent expired tissues from remaining in storage alongside unexpired tissues. Needless to say, each of these findings poses a serious and unacceptable risk to veterans' health and safety.

Veterans seeking care through the VA healthcare system deserve a quality standard that is second to none, especially within a system which prides itself on data collection and its electronic health record. The Biological Implant Tracking and Veteran Safety Act would provide a high-quality standard for surgical implants that is now sorely missing.

By requiring VA to implement a standard identification tracking system for biological implants used in the VA medical facilities and requiring VA to procure biological implants only from approved vendors, H.R. 28 would address the deficiencies GAO identified and provide VA a necessary tool to ensure accountability and patient safety. Mr. Speaker, I would say the VA just should do this for quality of care for patients.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this important 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 today in support of the Biological Implant Tracking and Veteran Safety Act. This bill will require the VA to implement a standard identification system for biological implants that is consistent with the Food and Drug Administration's unique device identification system. This system will allow for the tracking of implants from donor to recipients. This bill will also require VA to procure biological implants only from vendors using the system and only through competitive procurement processes.

The GAO has testified that the Veterans Health Administration is one of the largest purchasers of surgical implants, which include biological implants such as skin and bone grafts, and nonbiological implants such as cardiac pacemakers and artificial joints. The GAO has raised valid concerns regarding VA medical centers complying with VHA requirements for documenting surgical implants purchased from the open market and VHA's ability to identify veterans who received an implant that is being recalled by the manufacturer or the Food and Drug Administration.

Patient safety is our number one concern. We all want to ensure that VA policies are fully followed in this regard. The legislation will continue to protect veterans while they receive the best care available.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I would like to extend my public congratulations to my good friend, Dr. PHIL ROE, for being named by the majority as the chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. I can tell you that Members on my side of the aisle are looking very much forward to working with Dr. ROE. He has a splendid reputation.

I don't want to ruin his reputation by saying that we absolutely embrace him because that would make his side of the aisle, I think, a little worried, but the fact is we believe that Chairman ROE is someone that we can work with and who has a genuine, sincere concern for veterans. He is a veteran himself. He is a medical doctor. As we try to gain the trust of veterans and gain the trust of Americans in VA health care and the veterans department, we are very much looking forward to working with him. I offer him my congratulations.

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

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Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate those kind words. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, this particular committee is a bipartisan committee. For the veterans out there who are watching this and for the American citizens who are watching this, this is truly a committee where we check our political affiliations at the door and try to do what is right and best for America's heroes. I am not talking about the committee, but I am saying in the country that has not always been done. I am a Vietnam-era veteran, and that

wasn't done for my generation to begin with.

There is a real commitment on both sides of the aisle, the staffs of both committees and the members of both committees. I am excited to get to work with my friend, Mr. TAKANO. We have been to Afghanistan together and gotten to know each other very well and worked on many issues together. I look forward to doing this. I appreciate his kind comments and also his support for this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Members to support this legislation.

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, H.R. 28.

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.

#### APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO THE JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 15 U.S.C. 1024(a), and the order of the House of today, of the following Member on the part of the House to the Joint Economic Committee:

Mr. TIBERI, Ohio

#### APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO THE PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to clause 11 of rule X, clause 11 of rule I, and the order of the House of today, of the following Member to the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence:

Mr. NUNES, California, Chairman

#### APPOINTMENT—HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING COMMISSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 2 U.S.C. 2001, and the order of the House of today, of the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) as Members of the House Office Building Commission to serve with the Speaker.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces that the Speaker has delivered to the Clerk a letter dated January 3, 2017, listing Members in the order in which each shall act as Speaker pro tempore under clause 8(b)(3) of rule I.

## RECALL DESIGNEE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

THE SPEAKER'S ROOMS,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, January 3, 2017.

Hon. KAREN L. HAAS,  
Clerk of the House of Representatives,  
The Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM CLERK: I hereby designate Representative Kevin McCarthy of California to exercise any authority regarding assembly, reassembly, convening, or reconvening of the House pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution 1, clause 12 of rule I, and any concurrent resolutions of the current Congress as may contemplate my designation of Members to exercise similar authority.

In the event of the death or inability of that designee, the alternate Members of the House listed in the letter bearing this date that I have placed with the Clerk are designated, in turn, for the same purposes.

Sincerely,

PAUL D. RYAN,  
Speaker.

#### APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO ACT AS SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE TO SIGN ENROLLED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS DURING THE 115TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

THE SPEAKER'S ROOMS,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, January 3, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable Jeff Denham, the Honorable Mac Thornberry, the Honorable Fred Upton, the Honorable Andy Harris, the Honorable Barbara Comstock, and the Honorable Luke Messer to act as Speaker pro tempore to sign enrolled bills and joint resolutions through the remainder of the One Hundred Fifteenth Congress.

PAUL D. RYAN,  
Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the appointments are approved.

There was no objection.

#### 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, January 3, 2017.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,  
Speaker, House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Under Clause 2(g) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, I herewith designate Mr. Robert Reeves, Deputy Clerk, and Mr. Robert Borden, Legal Counsel, to sign any and all papers and do all other acts for me under the name of the Clerk of the House which they would be authorized to do by virtue of this designation, except such as are provided by statute, in case of my temporary absence or disability.

This designation shall remain in effect for the 115th Congress or until modified by me. With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,  
Clerk of the House.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair customarily takes this occasion at the outset of a Congress to announce his policies with respect to particular aspects of the legislative process. The Chair will insert in the RECORD announcements concerning:

- first, privileges of the floor;
- second, introduction of bills and resolutions;
- third, unanimous-consent requests for the consideration of legislation;
- fourth, recognition for 1-minute speeches;
- fifth, recognition for Special Order speeches;
- sixth, decorum in debate;
- seventh, conduct of votes by electronic device;
- eighth, use of handouts on the House floor;
- ninth, use of electronic equipment on the House floor; and
- tenth, use of the Chamber.

These announcements, where appropriate, will reiterate the origins of the stated policies. The Chair intends to continue in the 115th Congress the policies reflected in these statements. The policy announced in the 102nd Congress with respect to jurisdictional concepts related to clauses 5(a) of rule XXI—tax and tariff measures—will continue to govern but need not be reiterated, as it is adequately documented as precedent in the House Rules and Manual.

Without objection, the announcements will be printed in the RECORD.

There was no objection.

#### 1. Privileges of the Floor

The Chair will make the following announcements regarding floor privileges, which will apply during the 115th Congress.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER WITH RESPECT TO STAFF

Rule IV strictly limits those persons to whom the privileges of the floor during sessions of the House are extended, and that rule prohibits the Chair from entertaining requests for suspension or waiver of that rule. As reiterated by the Chair on January 21, 1986, January 3, 1985, January 25, 1983, and August 22, 1974, and as stated in Chapter 10, section 2, of House Practice, the rule strictly limits the number of committee staff on the floor at one time during the consideration of measures reported from their committees. This permission does not extend to Members' personal staff except when a Member's amendment is actually pending during the five-minute rule. It also does not extend to personal staff of Members who are sponsors of pending bills. The Chair requests the cooperation of all Members and committee staff to assure that only the proper number of staff are on the floor, and then only during the consideration of measures within the jurisdiction of their committees. The Chair is making this statement and reiterating this policy because of Members' past insistence upon strict enforcement of the rule. The Chair requests each committee chair, and each ranking minority member, to submit to the Speaker a list of those staff who are allowed on the floor during the consideration of a measure in the jurisdiction of their committee. The Sergeant-at-Arms, who has been directed to assure proper enforcement of rule IV, will keep the list. Each staff person

should exchange his or her ID for a "committee staff" badge, which is to be worn while on the floor. The Chair has consulted with the Minority Leader and will continue to consult with her.

Furthermore, as the Chair announced on January 7, 2003, in accordance with the change in the 108th Congress of clause 2(a) of rule IV regarding leadership staff floor access, only designated staff approved by the Speaker shall be granted the privilege of the floor. The Speaker intends that his approval be narrowly granted on a bipartisan basis to staff from the majority and minority side and only to those staff essential to floor activities.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER WITH RESPECT TO FORMER MEMBERS

The Speaker's policy announced on February 1, 2006, will continue to apply in the 115th Congress.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER, FEBRUARY 1, 2006

The SPEAKER. The House has adopted a revision to the rule regarding the admission to the floor and the rooms leading thereto. Clause 4 of rule IV provides that a former Member, Delegate or Resident Commissioner or a former Parliamentarian of the House, or a former elected officer of the House or a former minority employee nominated as an elected officer of the House shall not be entitled to the privilege of admission to the Hall of the House and the rooms extending thereto if he or she is a registered lobbyist or an agent of a foreign principal; has any direct personal pecuniary interest in any legislative measure pending before the House, or reported by a committee; or is in the employ of or represents any party or organization for the purpose of influencing, directly or indirectly, the passage, defeat, or amendment of any legislative proposal.

This restriction extends not only to the House floor but adjacent rooms, the cloak-rooms and the Speaker's lobby.

Clause 4 of rule IV also allows the Speaker to exempt ceremonial and educational functions from the restrictions of this clause. These restrictions shall not apply to attendance at joint meetings or joint sessions, Former Members' Day proceedings, educational tours, and other occasions as the Speaker may designate.

Members who have reason to know that a person is on the floor inconsistent with clause 4 of rule IV should notify the Sergeant-at-Arms promptly.

#### 2. Introduction of Bills and Resolutions

The policy that the Chair announced on January 3, 1983, with respect to the introduction and reference of bills and resolutions will continue to apply in the 115th Congress. The Chair has advised all officers and employees of the House who are involved in the processing of bills that every bill, resolution, memorial, petition or other material that is placed in the hopper must bear the signature of a Member. Where a bill or resolution is jointly sponsored, the signature must be that of the Member first named thereon. The bill clerk is instructed to return to the Member any bill which appears in the hopper without an original signature. This procedure was inaugurated in the 92d Congress. It has worked well, and the Chair thinks that it is essential to continue this practice to insure the integrity of the process by which legislation is introduced in the House.

The Chair has noted a need for increased attention to detail regarding the addition of cosponsors to measures to ensure accuracy. To that end, Members are encouraged to use the template provided by the Office of the Clerk, which requests Members seeking to be added as cosponsors to include their printed