

has done a good job creating an alternative process that will eventually allow more VA doctors to become certified medical examiners, while maintaining the safety and integrity of the certification system. Allowing VA medical professionals to utilize online training and testing will make it easier for them to obtain certification, while ensuring they are familiar with the specific medical standards required for commercial drivers.

Though the FAST Act used the word “physicians,” the process that FMCSA has outlined should also be available for use by VA-employed nurse practitioners, chiropractors, physician assistants, and other qualified medical professionals. This bill ensures that they are eligible to use that process.

Madam Speaker, I support this legislation and strongly urge its adoption, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL).

Mr. WOODALL. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the chairman for yielding me the time, and I want to thank him for his leadership.

Madam Speaker, the amendment that you mentioned, the bill as amended, was actually an amendment from the chairman to perfect the bill. I want to thank the ranking member for her support on the committee, and I want to thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BROWNLEY) for her work on the amendment.

Madam Speaker, I wish more high schoolers were in the Capitol today. I wish there were more American Government students in the Capitol today, because this amendment is exactly the way that the American people expect the process to work.

As the ranking member pointed out, we made a great step in the FAST Act to try to put more veterans to work, to try to fill more empty spots in commercial truck driving. We did a great job together in a bipartisan way.

A lot of folks do a job, and then they are embarrassed to admit that they didn't get it done 100 percent. We have had folks come into our offices who said: Listen, you have made a great step to help our veterans access these certifications, but you could do more, and let us tell you how.

As the ranking member pointed out, as the chairman pointed out, before the FMCSA has even finished the original regulations, we are back at work perfecting this, adding more healthcare providers to the rolls so that more veterans can get to work faster—not because we are particularly brilliant folks up here, but because folks who do this every single day as a job back home noticed it, told us how we could do it better, and then we created the partnerships up here to make it happen.

Madam Speaker, it makes me so proud to be associated with folks like the chairman, like the ranking member, the Transportation Committee in

general, showing up every single day to see what we can do to make a difference. It is not a difference for 300 million Americans at the time, but if you were that one veteran who is trying to feed your family, who is trying to get your certification, who is trying to get yourself back to work, this bill could make all the difference; this amendment could make all the difference. I am grateful to the entire committee team of members and team of staff for making that possible.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Seldom do we get to do two good things at one time, and that is exactly what this bill does. Anything we can do for our veterans is not enough. This bill focuses on them.

Remember, they have been in the armed services driving trucks. When they come home, they probably have had the best training in the entire universe. Our country will gain much not only by putting them to work, but by using their training.

On our committee, we have long struggled with an issue that we still have not, indeed, conquered, and that is the difficulty of getting people to drive commercial trucks. This is one of the hardest jobs in America. You are spending time away from your family. You sometimes are gone not only overnight, but more than that.

It has been difficult to get people to do this indispensable job for our country and for the trucking industry. Madam Speaker, I am particularly pleased that Mr. GRAVES and I have been able to find this new way to both aid the industry and help out veterans.

Madam Speaker, I do not have any more speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, with that, I would urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important 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 Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2547, as amended.

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. GRAVES of Missouri. 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.

#### DISASTER ASSISTANCE SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITIES AND HOMEOWNERS ACT OF 2017

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1684) to direct

the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide technical assistance to common interest communities regarding eligibility for disaster assistance, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1684

*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 “Disaster Assistance Support for Communities and Homeowners Act of 2017”.*

#### SEC. 2. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

(a) *TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.*—The Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall provide technical assistance to a common interest community that provides essential services of a governmental nature on actions that a common interest community may take in order to be eligible to receive reimbursement from a grantee that receives funds from the Agency for certain activities performed after an event that results in a disaster declaration.

(b) *RECOMMENDATIONS.*—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall provide to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a legislative proposal on how to provide eligibility for disaster assistance with respect to common areas of condominiums and housing cooperatives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1684, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, the Disaster Assistance Support for Communities and Homeowners Act of 2017 would allow FEMA to provide technical assistance to some community associations regarding their application for disaster assistance. The bill also seeks recommendations from FEMA on how condos and co-ops may be eligible for disaster funds to repair common areas which are affected by these disasters.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) for working with the committee on this issue. The House passed similar language last year as part of the FEMA Disaster Assistance Reform Act.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1684, the Disaster Assistance Support for Communities and Homeowners Act of 2017, introduced by the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER), my good friend and colleague. This bill will assist common interest communities such as condos, co-ops, and community associations after disaster strikes.

Hurricane Sandy caused severe impacts to New York City and the surrounding areas, inflicting billions of dollars of damage.

While condominiums and cooperative associations are not common in large parts of the country, they are common in dense areas such as New York City and Washington, D.C.

FEMA's Individual Assistance Program does not consider these types of housing units which share common areas such as entryways, stairwells, and elevators. As a result, FEMA determined that disaster damage to common areas is the responsibility of the condominium or cooperative association board and, therefore, not eligible for disaster assistance. That cannot be what Congress intended.

The bill also addresses another type of housing common in certain parts of the Nation: community associations. Community associations provide essential services of a governmental nature such as trash collection and maintaining roads and waterways. After disaster strikes, however, FEMA may deny reimbursement to community associations for performing the same types of essential services that FEMA reimburses local governments for performing.

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In many cases, these common interest communities may have been eligible for FEMA assistance if they had entered into agreements with their local governments before the disaster occurred. Unfortunately, many common interest communities are not aware of these opportunities. This bill directs FEMA to provide technical assistance so that these common interest communities know what actions they can take before disaster strikes so that they may be eligible to receive reimbursement from FEMA after the fact.

I strongly support this bill, and I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER), the author of the bill.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

In the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, thousands of New Yorkers and other Americans learned that they were ineligible for FEMA assistance because of the type of home in which

they lived. Families who lived in condos were eligible for assistance for their individual units, but could not get any assistance to repair ground floor entryways, boilers, or other common areas. Those who lived in cooperative housing, or co-ops, were ineligible for any disaster assistance to repair the walls or floors of their units, let alone their common areas.

This was not a small problem for my constituents. In the storm surge area in New York, nearly 20 percent of housing units are in co-op buildings and an additional 8 percent are in condominiums.

Seniors in high-rise condo buildings were able to get assistance to repair their floors and repaint their floors, but nothing to fix the elevators they needed to reach their units. Families in co-ops could replace their furnishings and make some repairs, but the halls of the buildings remained covered with mold and uninhabitable. Almost every district in the country has condos, and homeowners in these condo communities will continue to face the same terrible realization that FEMA can give them no help in the wake of new disasters.

Community associations, or common interest communities, around the country have experienced similar roadblocks when they seek FEMA disaster assistance. Many of these associations own and operate their own roads, canals, bridges, and water systems. In the aftermath of a disaster, however, they are not eligible for FEMA assistance for basic essential government services, such as removing trees and debris from communal roads. Residents cannot get out of their neighborhoods and emergency vehicles cannot get in.

This bill would address these eligibility problems in two ways:

First, it would direct FEMA to provide common interest communities with technical assistance to identify options for public assistance eligibility. Many of these communities are unaware that they could already be eligible for assistance if, prior to a disaster, they entered into agreements with their local governments on issues like debris removal.

Second, my colleagues and I have communicated several times with FEMA about the issue of condo and co-op eligibility for disaster assistance. FEMA has studied this issue for several years, and this bill directs FEMA to take the next step in this process by providing the House and Senate committees legislative proposals to address these issues and to make condos and co-ops eligible for disaster assistance.

Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman SHUSTER and Ranking Member DEFAZIO for bringing this bipartisan legislation to the floor today, and I thank Mr. SANFORD and Mr. ENGEL for cosponsoring it.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, my good friend is from New York, so it may be clear why he, with a city full of condominiums and co-ops, would want this bill. But I just want to alert Congress that increasingly what Mr. NADLER sees in New York is what we are seeing all over the country.

After Hurricane Sandy, with climate change already here, we have to do all we can before the fact, having seen what that disaster did to New York City, New Jersey, and the surrounding community.

When people have gone through a disaster, they have suffered enough. So to find that your resident is covered, but your way to get in the residence or in the elevator is certainly not what Congress intended.

My own jurisdiction, the District of Columbia, was built with single family homes, but that is not what we are building in the District of Columbia and cities and counties throughout the United States now. In our own city, there is a limited area. There is no way to go but up.

Mr. NADLER speaks not only for New York City, but his bill speaks for what is happening in the United States of America. I think we may have caught this problem just in time. We do not know when the next disaster will occur. We don't want to be caught flat-footed on it.

I very much appreciate that my good friends have worked with us to bring this bill forward.

Madam Speaker, I have no more speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to please support H.R. 1684, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, after Hurricane Sandy, thousands of homeowners throughout the New York region learned that they were ineligible for federal disaster assistance because they lived in a co-op or a condo; not in a single family home.

According to the FEMA's policy, co-ops and condo associations are "business entities"—not eligible for federal assistance that can reach up to \$30,000 per household.

As a result, community associations are often faced with the daunting task of cleaning up and rebuilding after a major natural disaster—without the help or resources that other homeowners receive from the federal government.

To help bring fairness to the federal disaster relief process, my colleague JERRY NADLER and I introduced H.R. 1684, the Disaster Assistance Support for Communities and Homeowners Act.

Our bill directs FEMA to provide technical assistance to help community associations qualify for disaster assistance grants.

It also directs FEMA to provide recommendations to Congress, within 12 months, on additional ways that co-ops and condos can become eligible for assistance.

I encourage swift passage of H.R. 1684 to help ensure that all community association

homeowners have access to federal disaster benefits.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1684, the Disaster Assistance Support for Communities and Homeowners Act of 2017.

This bill directs the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide technical assistance to Common Interest Communities to ensure they are eligible to apply for public assistance.

H.R. 1684 also instructs FEMA to provide legislative proposals to Congress in order to make condominiums and housing cooperatives eligible for disaster assistance in the future.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 1684 addresses an outstanding issue many Americans face in the aftermath of natural disasters because they are ineligible for FEMA assistance based on the type of home they live in.

The glaring discrepancy and inequity in FEMA's policy were revealed as communities struggled to recover and rebuild from the ravaging effects of Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

In addition to causing the deaths of 72 U.S. citizens, Hurricane Sandy was the second-costliest hurricane in United States history, destroying 651,000 housing units in New York and New Jersey and exacting a staggering \$19 billion in damages for New York City alone.

However, due to FEMA's unfair policy towards community associations, thousands of New Yorkers found themselves ineligible for federal recovery assistance needed to repair their homes because under current federal law, condominiums, housing cooperatives, and homeowners associations are classified as businesses.

H.R. 1684 corrects this unfairness by authorizing FEMA to provide direct disaster relief to these communities in the form of technical assistance and monetary reimbursements.

Further, the legislation directs FEMA to submit to Congress within 90 days of enactment a plan to make common areas of condos and co-ops eligible for disaster assistance.

Madam Speaker, this legislation is particularly beneficial to my congressional district since Houston ranks among the most disaster-prone cities in the country.

Many of my constituents can recall with horror the devastating effects of Hurricane Ike in 2008, which killed 37 people and destroyed 100,000 homes in Texas.

Over the course of this massive natural disaster, FEMA played a vital role in responding to the needs of impacted areas and victims.

Unfortunately, FEMA's response to Hurricane Ike was also beset by a lack of clear communication between appointed officials and regional emergency managers on the ground.

Improving federal policy for disaster relief is a bipartisan issue and H.R. 1684 is endorsed by the Community Associations Institute, a leading membership organization with more than 34,000 members and 70 chapters nationwide.

Madam Speaker, legislation like H.R. 1684 is crucial to ensuring that all Americans receive the relief and assistance they deserve in the wake of natural disasters like Hurricane Sandy that destroy lives and leave local economies in tatters.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1684.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1684, 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.

#### ACTIVE DUTY VOLUNTARY ACQUISITION OF NECESSARY CREDENTIALS FOR EMPLOYMENT ACT

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2258) to require that certain standards for commercial driver's licenses applicable to former members of the armed services or reserves also apply to current members of the armed services or reserves, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2258

*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 "Active Duty Voluntary Acquisition of Necessary Credentials for Employment Act" or the "ADVANCE Act".*

#### SEC. 2. COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE STANDARDS FOR SERVICE MEMBERS AND VETERANS.

*Section 31305(d) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—*

*(1) in the subsection heading, by striking "VETERAN OPERATORS" and inserting "SERVICE MEMBERS, RESERVISTS, AND VETERANS";*

*(2) in paragraph (1)(B), by striking "subparagraph (A) during" and inserting "subparagraph (A)—*

*“(i) while serving in the armed forces or reserve components; and*

*“(ii) during”; and*

*(3) in paragraph (2)(B), by inserting “current or” before “former” each place the term appears.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) and the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. 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 H.R. 2258.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, or FAST Act, authorized the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

to exempt veterans from certain requirements in order to obtain a commercial driver's license if they had qualified experience while serving in the armed services or Reserve components.

H.R. 2258 would extend this exemption to individuals who are currently serving in either the armed services or Reserve components.

This is a bipartisan bill that will help current members of the armed services or Reserve components find employment in the private sector.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2258, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2258, as amended, which will allow current servicemembers who have military experience operating commercial motor vehicles to more easily obtain a commercial driver's license.

In 2015, Congress included a provision in the FAST Act to allow States to waive the written CDL knowledge test for drivers with military commercial motor vehicle driving experience, but it restricts the waiver to former members of the military. There are a significant number of current reservists and members of the National Guard with military commercial motor vehicle experience who could benefit from the waiver. This legislation allows them to more easily use the skills they learned serving our country to earn a decent wage and feed their families.

These servicemen and servicewomen receive from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, or FMCSA, what they describe as thorough and comprehensive training, including many hours of behind-the-wheel training—something that we have long advocated for as a requirement for civilian drivers. There is a shortage of commercial truck drivers, and these well-trained military drivers are exactly the type of individuals that we would want to help enter the trucking profession.

Using its existing exemption authority, FMCSA has already taken action to make current servicemembers eligible for the knowledge test waiver on a temporary basis. Last October, FMCSA issued an exemption that allows States to waive the CDL knowledge test for trained military truck drivers, whether they are current members of the military or veterans.

FMCSA cited the fact that training these drivers receive in the military includes “many hours of classroom training, practical skills training, and on-the-road training that are essential for safe driving.” However, FMCSA's temporary exemption expires in October 2018. This bill would make permanent the ability for current members of the military to utilize the FAST Act waiver.

Madam Speaker, I strongly support this legislation, and I urge its adoption.