

really bad information 2 months ago. We thought this was going to last for 6 more—8 more months before we ran out of money in this vital program for veterans.

This is going to get passed. For all veterans or people out there, citizens of this country watching this, we are going to provide this for our veterans.

And I might add that not all VSOs do oppose this. Many were mentioned, but many others do not oppose this legislation.

I think it is critical that we get this done, Madam Speaker, get this off the table this week, signed into law, work the other part of the agreement that we had agreed to out in the next coming weeks. I will be willing to work as expeditiously as possible to get this done.

Once again, I encourage all Members to support this legislation, and 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. 114, 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. WALZ. 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.

REPORT ON H.R. 3358, DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2018

Mr. COLE, from the Committee on Appropriations, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-244) on the bill (H.R. 3358) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, and for other purposes, which was referred to the Union Calendar and ordered to be printed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 1, rule XXI, all points of order are reserved on the bill.

HARRY W. COLMERY VETERANS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2017

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3218) to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3218

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. References to title 38, United States Code.

TITLE I—POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Sec. 101. Consideration of certain time spent receiving medical care from Secretary of Defense as active duty for purposes of eligibility for Post-9/11 Educational Assistance.

Sec. 102. Educational assistance under Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program for members of the Armed Forces awarded the Purple Heart.

Sec. 103. Inclusion of Fry Scholarship recipients and Purple Heart recipients in Yellow Ribbon G.I. Education Enhancement Program.

Sec. 104. Inclusion of certain members of the Armed Forces serving on active duty in Yellow Ribbon G.I. Education Enhancement Program.

Sec. 105. Consolidation of certain eligibility tiers under Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 106. Eligibility for Post-9/11 Educational Assistance for certain members of reserve components of Armed Forces who lost entitlement to educational assistance under Reserve Educational Assistance Program.

Sec. 107. Calculation of monthly housing stipend under Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program based on location of campus where classes are attended.

Sec. 108. Charge to entitlement for certain licensure and certification tests and national tests under Department of Veterans Affairs Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program.

Sec. 109. Restoration of entitlement to educational assistance and other relief for veterans affected by school closure or disapproval.

Sec. 110. Additional authorized transfer of unused Post-9/11 Educational Assistance benefits to dependents upon death of originally designated dependent.

Sec. 111. Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship.

Sec. 112. Honoring the national service of members of the Armed Forces by elimination of time limitation for use of entitlement.

Sec. 113. Monthly stipend for certain members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces receiving Post-9/11 Educational Assistance.

Sec. 114. Annual reports to Congress on information on student progress submitted by educational institutions.

Sec. 115. Improvement of information technology of the veterans benefits administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 116. Department of Veterans Affairs high technology pilot program.

TITLE II—OTHER EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Sec. 201. Work-study allowance.

Sec. 202. Duration of educational assistance under Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program.

Sec. 203. Olin E. Teague increase in amounts of educational assistance payable under Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program.

TITLE III—ADMINISTRATION OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Sec. 301. State approving agency funding.

Sec. 302. Authorization for use of Post-9/11 Educational Assistance to pursue independent study programs at certain educational institutions that are not institutions of higher learning.

Sec. 303. Provision of information on priority enrollment for veterans in certain courses of education.

Sec. 304. Limitation on use of reporting fees payable to educational institutions and sponsors of programs of apprenticeship.

Sec. 305. Training for school certifying officials.

Sec. 306. Extension of authority for Advisory Committee on Education.

Sec. 307. Department of Veterans Affairs provision of on-campus educational and vocational counseling for veterans.

Sec. 308. Provision of information regarding veteran entitlement to educational assistance.

Sec. 309. Treatment, for purposes of educational assistance administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, of educational courses that begin seven or fewer days after the first day of an academic term.

Sec. 310. Inclusion of risk-based reviews in State approving agency oversight activities.

Sec. 311. Comptroller General study of State approving agency performance.

TITLE IV—RESERVE COMPONENT BENEFITS

Sec. 401. Eligibility of reserve component members for Post-9/11 Educational Assistance.

Sec. 402. Time limitation for training and rehabilitation for veterans with service-connected disabilities.

TITLE V—OTHER MATTERS

Sec. 501. Repeal inapplicability of modification of basic allowance for housing to benefits under laws administered by Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 502. Reconsideration of previously denied claims for disability compensation for veterans who allege full-body exposure to nitrogen mustard gas, sulfur mustard gas, or Lewisite during World War II.

SEC. 2. REFERENCES TO TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE.

Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of title 38, United States Code.

TITLE I—POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

SEC. 101. CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN TIME SPENT RECEIVING MEDICAL CARE FROM SECRETARY OF DEFENSE AS ACTIVE DUTY FOR PURPOSES OF ELIGIBILITY FOR POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3301(1)(B) is amended by inserting “12301(h),” after “12301(g),”.

(b) RETROACTIVE APPLICATION.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to service in the Armed Forces occurring on or after September 11, 2001.

(c) APPLICATION WITH RESPECT TO USE OF ENTITLEMENT.—An individual who is entitled to educational assistance by reason of the amendment made by subsection (a) may use such entitlement to pursue a course of education beginning on or after August 1, 2018.

SEC. 102. EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE UNDER POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AWARDED THE PURPLE HEART.

(a) ELIGIBILITY.—Section 3311(b) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(10) An individual who is awarded the Purple Heart for service in the Armed Forces occurring on or after September 11, 2001, and continues to serve on active duty in the Armed Forces or is discharged or released from active duty as described in subsection (c).”.

(b) AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE.—Section 3313(c)(1) is amended by striking “or (9)” and inserting “(9), or (10)”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on August 1, 2018.

SEC. 103. INCLUSION OF FRY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS AND PURPLE HEART RECIPIENTS IN YELLOW RIBBON G.I. EDUCATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3317(a) is amended, in the second sentence, by striking “paragraphs (1) and (2)” and inserting “paragraphs (1), (2), (9), and (10)”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2018.

SEC. 104. INCLUSION OF CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES SERVING ON ACTIVE DUTY IN YELLOW RIBBON G.I. EDUCATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3317(a) is amended, in the first sentence, by striking “section 3313(c)(1)(A)” and inserting “subsection (c)(1)(A) or (e)(2)(A) of section 3313 of this title”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2022.

SEC. 105. CONSOLIDATION OF CERTAIN ELIGIBILITY TIERS UNDER POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) ENTITLEMENT.—Section 3311(b), as amended by section 102, is further amended—

(1) in paragraph (6)(A), by striking “12 months” and inserting “6 months”;

(2) by striking paragraph (7); and

(3) by redesignating paragraphs (8), (9), and (10) as paragraphs (7), (8), and (9), respectively.

(b) AMOUNT OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.—Section 3313(c) is amended by striking paragraph (7).

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Chapter 33 is further amended as follows:

(1) In section 3311(f), by striking “paragraph (9)” each place it appears and inserting “paragraph (8)”.

(2) In section 3313, as amended by section 102—

(A) in subsection (c)(1), by striking “(9), or (10)” and inserting “(8), or (9)”;

(B) in subsection (d), by striking “paragraphs (2) through (7)” each place it appears and inserting “paragraphs (2) through (6)”;

(C) in subsection (e)(2)(C)—

(i) by striking “paragraphs (3) through (8)” and inserting “paragraphs (3) through (7)”;

and

(ii) by striking “paragraphs (2) through (7)” and inserting “paragraphs (2) through (6)”.

(D) in subsection (f)(2)(A)(ii), by striking “paragraphs (2) through (7)” and inserting “paragraphs (2) through (6)”;

(E) in subsection (g)(3)—

(i) in subparagraph (A)(iv)—

(I) by striking “paragraphs (3) through (8)” and inserting “paragraphs (3) through (7)”;

and

(II) by striking “paragraphs (2) through (7)” and inserting “paragraphs (2) through (6)”;

(ii) in subparagraph (B)(iii)—

(I) by striking “paragraphs (3) through (8)” and inserting “paragraphs (3) through (7)”;

and

(II) by striking “paragraphs (2) through (7)” and inserting “paragraphs (2) through (6)”;

(iii) in subparagraph (C)(ii)—

(I) in subclause (I), by striking “(9)” and inserting “(8)”;

(II) in subclause (II)—

(aa) by striking “paragraphs (3) through (8)” and inserting “paragraphs (3) through (7)”;

(bb) by striking “paragraphs (2) through (7)” and inserting “paragraphs (2) through (6)”;

(iv) in subparagraph (D)(ii)—

(I) in subclause (I), by striking “(9)” and inserting “(8)”;

(II) in subclause (II)—

(aa) by striking “paragraphs (3) through (8)” and inserting “paragraphs (3) through (7)”;

(bb) by striking “paragraphs (2) through (7)” and inserting “paragraphs (2) through (6)”;

(F) in subsection (h), by striking “paragraphs (2) through (7)” and inserting “paragraphs (2) through (6)”;

(3) In section 3316—

(A) in subsection (a)(1), by striking “paragraphs (2) through (7)” and inserting “paragraphs (2) through (6)”;

(B) in subsection (b)(1), by striking “paragraphs (2) through (7)” and inserting “paragraphs (2) through (6)”.

(4) In section 3317(a), in the second sentence, as amended by section 103, by striking “paragraphs (1), (2), (9), and (10)” and inserting “paragraphs (1), (2), (8), and (9)”.

(5) In section 3321(b)(4), as amended by section 112, by striking “section 3311(b)(9)” and inserting “section 3311(b)(8)”.

(6) In section 3322—

(A) in subsection (e), by striking “3311(b)(9)” and inserting “3311(b)(8)”;

(B) in subsection (f), by striking “3311(b)(9)” and inserting “3311(b)(8)”;

(C) in subsection (h)(2), by striking “3311(b)(9)” and inserting “3311(b)(8)”.

(7) In section 3679(c)(2)(B), by striking “3311(b)(9)” and inserting “3311(b)(8)”.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on August 1, 2020.

SEC. 106. ELIGIBILITY FOR POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR CERTAIN MEMBERS OF RESERVE COMPONENTS OF ARMED FORCES WHO LOST ENTITLEMENT TO EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE UNDER RESERVE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) ELECTION.—Section 16167 of title 10, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c) ELIGIBILITY FOR POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.—A member who loses eligibility for benefits under this chapter pursuant to subsection (b) shall be allowed to elect (in such form and manner as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may prescribe) to have such service previously credited toward this chapter credited towards establishing eligibility for educational assistance under chapter 33 of title 38, notwithstanding the provisions of section 16163(e) of this title or section 3322(h)(1) of title 38.”.

(b) QUALIFICATION OF SERVICE.—Section 3301(1) of title 38, United States Code, shall be construed to include, in the case of a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces who, before November 25, 2015, established eligibility for educational assistance under chapter 1607 of title 10, United States Code, pursuant to section 16163(a)(1) of such title, but lost eligibility for such educational assistance pursuant to section 16167(b) of such title, service on active duty (as defined in section 101 of such title) that satisfies the requirements of section 16163(a)(1) of such title.

(c) ENTITLEMENT.—Section 3311(b)(6) of title 38, United States Code, shall be construed to include an individual who, before November 25, 2015, established eligibility for educational assistance under chapter 1607 of title 10, United States Code, pursuant to section 16163(b) of such title, but lost such eligibility pursuant to section 16167(b) of such title.

(d) DURATION.—Notwithstanding section 3312 of title 38, United States Code, an individual who establishes eligibility for educational assistance under chapter 33 of such title by crediting towards such chapter service previously credited towards chapter 1607 of title 10, United States Code, is only entitled to a number of months of educational assistance under section 3313 of title 38, United States Code, equal to the number of months of entitlement remaining under chapter 1607 of title 10, United States Code, at the time of conversion to chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 107. CALCULATION OF MONTHLY HOUSING STIPEND UNDER POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BASED ON LOCATION OF CAMPUS WHERE CLASSES ARE ATTENDED.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3313(c)(1)(B)(i)(I) is amended by striking “the institution of higher learning at which the individual is enrolled” and inserting “the campus of the institution of higher learning where the individual physically participates in a majority of classes”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to initial enrollment in a program of education on or after August 1, 2018.

SEC. 108. CHARGE TO ENTITLEMENT FOR CERTAIN LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION TESTS AND NATIONAL TESTS UNDER DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION TESTS.—Subsection (c) of section 3315 is amended—

(1) by striking “shall be determined at the rate of one month (rounded to the nearest whole month)” and inserting “shall be pro-rated based on the actual amount of the fee charged for the test relative to the rate for one month”; and

(2) by striking “for each amount paid that equals” and inserting “payable”.

(b) NATIONAL TESTS.—Section 3315A is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(3) A national test that evaluates prior learning and knowledge and provides an opportunity for course credit at an institution of higher learning as so described.”; and

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) by striking “shall be determined at the rate of one month (rounded to the nearest whole month)” and inserting “shall be prorated based on the actual amount of the fee charged for the test relative to the rate for one month”; and

(B) by striking “for each amount paid that equals” and inserting “payable”.

(c) TESTS INCLUDED.—Section 3452(b) is amended in the last sentence—

(1) by striking “and national tests providing” and inserting “, national tests providing”; and

(2) by inserting before the period at the end the following: “, and national tests that evaluate prior learning and knowledge and provides an opportunity for course credit at an institution of higher learning”.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this Act shall apply to a test taken on or after August 1, 2018.

SEC. 109. RESTORATION OF ENTITLEMENT TO EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE AND OTHER RELIEF FOR VETERANS AFFECTED BY SCHOOL CLOSURE OR DISAPPROVAL.

(a) SCHOOL CLOSURE OR DISAPPROVAL.—

(1) RESTORATION OF ENTITLEMENT.—Chapter 36 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§3699. Effects of closure or disapproval of educational institution

“(a) CLOSURE OR DISAPPROVAL.—Any payment of educational assistance described in subsection (b) shall not—

“(1) be charged against any entitlement to educational assistance of the individual concerned; or

“(2) be counted against the aggregate period for which section 3695 of this title limits the receipt of educational assistance by such individual.

“(b) EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE DESCRIBED.—Subject to subsection (c), the payment of educational assistance described in this paragraph is the payment of such assistance to an individual for pursuit of a course or program of education at an educational institution under chapters 30, 32, 33, or 35 of this title, or chapters 1606 or 1607 of title 10, if the Secretary determines that the individual—

“(1) was unable to complete such course or program as a result of—

“(A) the closure of the educational institution; or

“(B) the disapproval of the course or a course that is a necessary part of that program under this chapter by reason of—

“(i) a provision of law enacted after the date on which the individual enrolls at such institution affecting the approval or disapproval of courses under this chapter; or

“(ii) after the date on which the individual enrolls at such institution, the Secretary prescribing or modifying regulations or policies of the Department affecting such approval or disapproval; and

“(2) did not receive credit or lost training time, toward completion of the program of education being so pursued.

“(c) PERIOD NOT CHARGED.—The period for which, by reason of this subsection, educational assistance is not charged against entitlement or counted toward the applicable aggregate period under section 3695 of this title shall not exceed the aggregate of—

“(1) the portion of the period of enrollment in the course from which the individual did not receive credit or with respect to which the individual lost training time, as determined under subsection (b)(2), and

“(2) the period by which a monthly stipend is extended under section 3680(a)(2)(B) of this title.

(d) CONTINUING PURSUIT OF DISAPPROVED COURSES.—(1) The Secretary may treat a course of education that is disapproved under this chapter as being approved under this chapter with respect to an individual described in paragraph (2) if the Secretary determines, on a case-by-case basis, that—

“(A) such disapproval is the result of an action described in clause (i) or (ii) of subsection (b)(1)(B); and

“(B) continuing pursuing such course is in the best interest of the individual.

(2) An individual described in this paragraph is an individual who is pursuing a course of education at an educational institution under chapters 30, 32, 33, or 35 of this title, or chapters 1606 or 1607 of title 10, as of the date on which the course is disapproved under this chapter.

(e) NOTICE OF CLOSURES.—Not later than five business days after the date on which the Secretary receives notice that an educational institution will close or is closed, the Secretary shall provide to each individual who is enrolled in a course or program or education at such educational institution using entitlement to educational assistance under chapter 30, 32, 33, or 35 of this title, or chapter 1606 or 1607 of title 10, notice of—

“(1) such closure and the date of such closure; and

“(2) the effect of such closure on the individual's entitlement to educational assistance pursuant to this section.”.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3698 the following new item:

“3699. Effects of closure or disapproval of educational institution.”.

(b) MONTHLY HOUSING STIPEND.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) section 3680 is amended—

(A) by striking the matter after paragraph (3)(B);

(B) in paragraph (3), by redesignating subparagraphs (A) and (B) as clauses (i) and (ii), respectively;

(C) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (3) as subparagraphs (A) through (C), respectively;

(D) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), as redesignated, in the first sentence, by striking “Payment of” and inserting “(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), payment of”; and

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

“(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), the Secretary may, pursuant to such regulations as the Secretary shall prescribe, continue to pay allowances to eligible veterans and eligible persons enrolled in courses set forth in paragraph (1)(A)—

“(A) during periods when educational institutions are temporarily closed under an established policy based on an Executive order of the President or due to an emergency situation, except that the total number of weeks for which allowances may continue to be so payable in any 12-month period may not exceed four weeks; or

“(B) solely for the purpose of awarding a monthly housing stipend described in section 3313 of this title, during periods following a permanent closure of an educational institution, or following the disapproval of a course of study described in section 3699(b)(1)(B) of this title, except that payment of such a sti-

pend may only be continued until the earlier of—

“(i) the date of the end of the term, quarter, or semester during which the closure or disapproval occurred; and

“(ii) the date that is 120 days after the date of the closure or disapproval.”.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Paragraph (1)(C)(ii) of such subsection, as redesignated, is amended by striking “described in subclause (A) of this clause” and inserting “described in clause (i)”.

(c) APPLICABILITY.—

(1) SCHOOL CLOSURE OR DISAPPROVAL.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date that is 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and shall apply with respect to courses and programs of education discontinued as described in section 3699 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a)(1), after January 1, 2015.

(B) SPECIAL APPLICATION.—With respect to courses and programs of education discontinued as described in section 3699 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a)(1), during the period beginning January 1, 2015, and ending on the date of the enactment of this Act, an individual who does not transfer credits from such program of education shall be deemed to be an individual who did not receive such credits, as described in subsection (b)(2) of such section, except that the period for which the individual's entitlement is not charged shall be the entire period of the individual's enrollment in the program of education. In carrying out this paragraph, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, shall establish procedures to determine whether the individual transferred credits to a comparable course or program of education.

(2) MONTHLY HOUSING STIPEND.—The amendments made by subsection (b) shall take effect on August 1, 2018, and shall apply with respect to courses and programs of education discontinued as described in section 3699 of title 38, United States Code, as added by such subsection, on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 110. ADDITIONAL AUTHORIZED TRANSFER OF UNUSED POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS TO DEPENDENTS UPON DEATH OF ORIGINALLY DESIGNATED DEPENDENT.

(a) TRANSFER UPON DEATH OF DEPENDENT.—Section 3319 is amended—

(1) in subsection (f)(1), by inserting after “section 3321” the following: “, and except as provided in subsection (k) or (l).”; and

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

“(k) ADDITIONAL TRANSFER UPON DEATH OF DEPENDENT.—In the case of a dependent to whom entitlement to educational assistance is transferred under this section who dies before using all of such entitlement, the individual who transferred the entitlement to the dependent may transfer any remaining entitlement to a different eligible dependent, notwithstanding whether the individual is serving as a member of the Armed Forces when such transfer is executed.

“(l) TRANSFER BY DEPENDENT.—In the case of an individual who transfers entitlement to educational assistance under this section who dies before the dependent to whom entitlement to educational assistance is so transferred has used all of such entitlement, such dependent may transfer such entitlement to another eligible dependent in accordance with the provisions of this section.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATES.—

(1) ELIGIBLE DEATHS.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to deaths occurring on or after August 1, 2009.

(2) USE OF ENTITLEMENT.—A dependent to whom entitlement to educational assistance is transferred under subsection (k) or (l) of section 3319 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), may use such entitlement to pursue a course of education beginning on or after August 1, 2018.

SEC. 111. EDITH NOURSE ROGERS STEM SCHOLARSHIP.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 33 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 3320. Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the limitation under subsection (f), the Secretary shall provide additional benefits to eligible individuals selected by the Secretary under this section. Such benefits shall be known as the ‘Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship’.

“(b) ELIGIBILITY.—For purposes of this section, an eligible individual is an individual—

“(1) who is or was entitled to educational assistance under section 3311 of this title;

“(2) who has used all of the educational assistance to which the individual is entitled under this chapter or will, based on the individual’s rate of usage, use all of such assistance within 180 days of applying for benefits under this section;

“(3) who applies for assistance under this section; and

“(4) who—

“(A) is an individual who—

“(i) is enrolled in a program of education leading to a post-secondary degree that, in accordance with the guidelines of the applicable regional or national accrediting agency, requires more than the standard 128 semester (or 192 quarter) credit hours for completion in a standard, undergraduate college degree in—

“(I) biological or biomedical science;

“(II) physical science;

“(III) science technologies or technicians;

“(IV) computer and information science and support services;

“(V) mathematics or statistics;

“(VI) engineering;

“(VII) engineering technologies or an engineering-related field;

“(VIII) a health profession or related program;

“(IX) a medical residency program;

“(X) an agriculture science program or a natural resources science program; or

“(XI) other subjects and fields identified by the Secretary as meeting national needs;

“(ii) has completed at least 60 standard semester (or 90 quarter) credit hours in a field referred to in clause (i); or

“(B) is an individual who has earned a post-secondary degree in a field referred to in subparagraph (A)(i) and is enrolled in a program of education leading to a teaching certification.

“(c) PRIORITY.—In selecting eligible individuals to receive additional benefits under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to the following individuals:

“(1) Individuals who require the most credit hours described in subsection (b)(4).

“(2) Individuals who are entitled to educational assistance under this chapter by reason of paragraph (1), (2), (8), or (9) of section 3311(b) of this title.

“(d) AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE.—(1) The Secretary shall pay to each eligible individual who receives additional benefits under this section the monthly amount payable under section 3313 of this title for not more than nine months of the program of education in which the individual is enrolled (adjusted with respect to the individual pursuant to section 3313(c), as appropriate), except that the aggregate amount paid to an individual under this section may not exceed \$30,000.

“(2) The Secretary may not pay to such an individual an amount in addition to the amount payable under paragraph (1) by reason of section 3317 of this title.

“(3) An individual who receives additional benefits under this section may also receive amounts payable by a college or university pursuant to section 3317 of this title.

“(e) PROHIBITION ON TRANSFER.—An individual who receives additional benefits under this section may not transfer any amount of such additional benefits under section 3319 of this title.

“(f) MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF TOTAL ASSISTANCE.—The total amount of benefits paid to all eligible individuals under this section may not exceed—

“(1) \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2019;

“(2) \$75,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2020 through 2022; and

“(3) \$100,000,000 for fiscal year 2023 and each subsequent fiscal year.

“(g) CONGRESSIONAL NOTICE.—If the Secretary identifies a new subject or field pursuant to subsection (b)(4)(A)(i)(XI) as meeting a national need, the Secretary shall submit to Congress notice of such identification at least 90 days before conferring eligibility on any individual for purposes of this section on the basis of such identification, including any analysis of labor market supply and demand used in identifying the new subject or field, as applicable.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3319 the following new item:

“3320. Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship.”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 3320 of title 38, United States Code, shall take effect on August 1, 2019.

(d) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT.—

(1) INTERIM REPORT.—Not later than August 1, 2022, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report containing the results of an interim assessment of the Comptroller General of the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship program under section 3320 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a). Such report shall include the recommendations of the Comptroller General for improving the scholarship program and an assessment of each of the following, using rigorous, systematic, and objective methodology, and including comparisons to eligible veterans who did not participate in the program:

(A) An explanation of the identification of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs of subjects and fields meeting national needs under subsection (b)(4)(A)(i)(XI) of such section, including any analysis of labor market supply and demand, as applicable.

(B) An evaluation of the types of educational institutions and programs where beneficiaries use the educational assistance provided under the scholarship program.

(C) The completion rate of students participating in the program.

(D) The job placement rate for individuals who completed a program of education using educational assistance provided under the scholarship program in the field of study of the program of education.

(E) The median annual earnings of individuals who completed a program of education using educational assistance provided under the scholarship program.

(F) The average age of the individuals who received educational assistance under the scholarship program.

(G) An assessment of the extent to which any educational institutions made changes to degrees or programs of education offered by the institution for which the scholarship program may be used after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than August 1, 2024, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress an assessment of such scholarship program that includes each of the following:

(A) Each item described in subparagraph (A) through (G) of paragraph (1).

(B) The percentage of individuals who completed a program of education using educational assistance provided under the scholarship program who were subsequently employed for a period of six months or longer in the field of study of the program of education.

(C) The percentage of individuals who completed a program of education using educational assistance provided under the scholarship program who were subsequently employed for a period of less than six months in the field of study of the program of education.

SEC. 112. HONORING THE NATIONAL SERVICE OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES BY ELIMINATION OF TIME LIMITATION FOR USE OF ENTITLEMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) of section 3321 is amended—

(1) by striking “individual’s entitlement” and all that follows through the period and inserting “individual’s entitlement—”; and

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

“(1) in the case of an individual whose last discharge or release from active duty is before January 1, 2013, expires at the end of the 15-year period beginning on the date of such discharge or release; or

“(2) in the case of an individual whose last discharge or release from active duty is on or after January 1, 2013, shall not expire.”.

(b) CHILDREN OF DECEASED MEMBERS.—Subsection (b)(4) of such section is amended—

(1) by inserting “of this title” after “3311(b)(9)”; and

(2) by striking “child’s entitlement” and all that follows through the period and inserting “child’s entitlement—”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

“(A) in the case of a child who first becomes entitled to such entitlement before January 1, 2013, expires at the end of the 15-year period beginning on the date of such child’s eighteenth birthday; or

“(B) in the case of a child who first becomes entitled to such entitlement on or after January 1, 2013, shall not expire.”.

(c) SPOUSES OF DECEASED MEMBERS.—Subsection (b) of such section is further amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(5) APPLICABILITY TO SPOUSES OF DECEASED MEMBERS.—The period during which a spouse entitled to educational assistance by reason of section 3311(b)(9) may use such spouse’s entitlement—

“(A) in the case of a spouse who first becomes entitled to such entitlement before January 1, 2013, expires at the end of the 15-year period beginning on the date on which the spouse first becomes entitled to such entitlement; or

“(B) in the case of a spouse who first becomes entitled to such entitlement on or after January 1, 2013, shall not expire.”.

SEC. 113. MONTHLY STIPEND FOR CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE RESERVE COMPONENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES RECEIVING POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3313 is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(j) DETERMINATION OF MONTHLY STIPENDS DURING CERTAIN ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE.—

“(1) PRO RATA BASIS.—In any month in which an individual described in paragraph (2) is performing active duty service described in section 3301(1)(B) of this title, the

Secretary shall determine the amount of monthly stipends payable under this section for such month on a pro rata basis for the period of such month in which the covered individual is not performing such active duty service.

“(2) INDIVIDUAL DESCRIBED.—An individual described in this paragraph is an individual who is—

“(A) a member of the reserve components of the Armed Forces; and

“(B) pursuing a program of education using educational assistance under this chapter.”.

(b) APPLICATION.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to a quarter, semester, or term, as applicable, commencing on or after August 1, 2018.

SEC. 114. ANNUAL REPORTS TO CONGRESS ON INFORMATION ON STUDENT PROGRESS SUBMITTED BY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

Section 3326 is amended—

(1) by striking “As a condition” and inserting “(a) SUBMITTAL OF INFORMATION BY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.—As a condition”; and

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

“(b) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than March 1 of each year, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report that includes a summary of the information provided by educational institutions under subsection (a) for the calendar year preceding the year during which such report is submitted.”.

SEC. 115. IMPROVEMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OF THE VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) PROCESSING OF CERTAIN EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE CLAIMS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, to the maximum extent possible, make such changes and improvements to the information technology system of the Veterans Benefits Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that—

(1) to the maximum extent possible, all original and supplemental claims for educational assistance under chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code, are adjudicated electronically; and

(2) rules-based processing is used to make decisions with respect to such claims with little human intervention.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a plan to implement the changes and improvements described in subsection (a).

(c) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report on the implementation of the changes and improvements described in subsection (a).

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs \$30,000,000 to carry out this section during fiscal years 2018 and 2019.

SEC. 116. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HIGH TECHNOLOGY PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) PILOT PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program under which the Secretary shall provide eligible veterans with the opportunity to enroll in high technology programs of education that the Secretary determines provide training or skills sought by employers in a relevant field or industry.

(b) ELIGIBILITY.—For purposes of the pilot program under this section, an eligible veteran is a veteran who is entitled to educational assistance under chapter 30, 32, 33,

34, or 35 of title 38, United States Code, or chapter 1606 or 1607 of title 10, United States Code.

(c) CONTRACTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of carrying out subsection (a), by not later than 180 days after August 1, 2018, the Secretary shall seek to enter into contracts with any number of qualified providers of high technology programs of education for the provision of such programs to eligible veterans under the pilot program. Each such contract shall provide for the conditions under which the Secretary may terminate the contract with the provider and the procedures for providing for the completion of the instruction of students who were enrolled in a program provided by such provider in the case of such a termination.

(2) PAYMENT OF CONTRACTORS.—A contract under this subsection shall provide that the Secretary shall pay to a provider—

(A) upon the enrollment of an eligible veteran in the program, 25 percent of the cost of the tuition and other fees for the program of education for the veteran;

(B) upon the completion of the program by the veteran, 25 percent of such cost; and

(C) upon the employment of the veteran in the field of study of the program following completion of the program, 50 percent of such cost.

(3) QUALIFIED PROVIDERS.—For purposes of the pilot program, a provider of a high technology program of education is qualified if—

(A) the provider has been operational for at least two years;

(B) the provider has successfully provided the high technology program for at least one year; and

(C) the provider meets the approval criteria developed by the Secretary under paragraph (4).

(4) APPROVAL CRITERIA.—The Secretary shall develop criteria for approving providers for purposes of the pilot program. In developing such criteria, the Secretary may consult with State approving agencies. Such criteria is not required to meet the requirements of section 3672 of title 38, United States Code.

(5) TUITION REIMBURSEMENT.—In entering into contracts to carry out the pilot program, the Secretary shall give preference to a qualified provider that offers tuition reimbursement for any student who—

(A) completes a program of education offered by the provider; and

(B) does not find full-time meaningful employment in the field of study of the program within the 180-day period beginning on the date the student completes the program.

(d) HOUSING STIPEND.—The Secretary shall pay to each eligible veteran who is enrolled in a high technology program of education under the pilot program on a full-time basis a monthly housing stipend equal to the product—

(1) of—

(A) in the case of a veteran pursuing resident training, the monthly amount of the basic allowance for housing payable under section 403 of title 37, United States Code, for a member with dependents in pay grade E-5 residing in the military housing area that encompasses all or the majority portion of the ZIP code area in which is located the institution at which the individual is enrolled; or

(B) in the case of a veteran pursuing a program of education through distance learning, a monthly amount equal to 50 percent of the amount payable under subparagraph (A), multiplied by

(2) the lesser of—

(A) 1.0; or

(B) the number of course hours borne by the individual in pursuit of the program of

education involved, divided by the minimum number of course hours required for full-time pursuit of such program of education, rounded to the nearest multiple of 10.

(e) HIGH TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM OF EDUCATION DEFINED.—In this section, the term “high technology program of education” means a program of education that—

(1) is offered by an entity other than an institution of higher learning;

(2) does not lead to a degree; and

(3) provides instruction in computer programming, computer software, media application, data processing, or information sciences.

(f) REPORTS.—

(1) SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the pilot program under this section.

(2) COMPTROLLER GENERAL.—

(A) INTERIM REPORT.—Not later than three years after the date on which the Secretary first enters into a contract under this section, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report containing the results of the interim assessment of the Comptroller General. Such report shall include the recommendations of the Comptroller General for improving the pilot program and an assessment of each of the following:

(i) The technology experience of the directors and instructors of the providers of high technology programs of education under the pilot program.

(ii) Whether the providers cooperated with the technology industry to create the curriculum for the program of education.

(iii) Whether the providers use an open source curriculum for the program of education.

(iv) The admittance rate into the pilot program.

(v) The job placement and retention rate for veterans who completed a program of education under the pilot program in the field of study of the program.

(vi) The percentage of veterans who completed a program of education under the pilot program who were subsequently employed for a period of six months or longer in a field of study of the program.

(vii) The percentage of veterans who completed a program of education under the pilot program who were subsequently employed for a period of less than six months in a field of study of the program.

(viii) The median annual salary of veterans who completed a program of education under the pilot program and were subsequently employed.

(ix) As applicable, the transfer rates to other academic or vocational programs and certifications and licensure exam passage rates.

(x) The average age of veterans who participated in the pilot program.

(B) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than five years after the date on which the Secretary first enters into a contract under this section, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a final report on the pilot program. Such report shall include the recommendation of the Comptroller General with respect to whether the program should be extended and an assessment of each item described in clauses (i) through (x) of subparagraph (A).

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For each fiscal year during which the Secretary carries out a pilot program under this section, \$15,000,000 shall be made available for such purpose from funds appropriated to, or otherwise made available to, the Department for the payment of readjustment benefits.

(h) TERMINATION.—The authority to carry out a pilot program under this section shall terminate on the date that is five years after the date on which the Secretary first enters into a contract under this section.

TITLE II—OTHER EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

SEC. 201. WORK-STUDY ALLOWANCE.

Section 3485(a)(4) is amended by striking “the period beginning on June 30, 2017, and ending on June 30, 2022,” each place it appears and inserting “any time on or after June 30, 2017,”.

SEC. 202. DURATION OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE UNDER SURVIVORS' AND DEPENDENTS' EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Section 3511(a)(1) is amended—

(1) by striking “chapter for” and all that follows through the period and inserting “chapter—”; and

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

“(A) in the case of a person who first enrolls in a program of education using such entitlement before August 1, 2018, for an aggregate period not in excess of 45 months (or to the equivalent thereof in part-time training); or

“(B) in the case of a person who first enrolls in a program of education using such entitlement on or after August 1, 2018, for an aggregate period not in excess of 36 months (or to the equivalent thereof in part-time training).”.

SEC. 203. OLIN E. TEAGUE INCREASE IN AMOUNTS OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PAYABLE UNDER SURVIVORS' AND DEPENDENTS' EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) INCREASE.—Section 3532 is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking “\$788” and inserting “\$1,224”; and

(ii) by striking “\$592” and inserting “\$967”; and

(iii) by striking “\$394” and inserting “\$710”; and

(B) in paragraph (2)(B), by striking “\$788” and inserting “\$1,224”; and

(2) in subsection (b), by striking “\$788” and inserting “\$1,224”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to a month that begins on or after October 1, 2018.

TITLE III—ADMINISTRATION OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

SEC. 301. STATE APPROVING AGENCY FUNDING.

(a) INCREASE.—Section 3674(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking “out of amounts available for the payment of readjustment benefits” and inserting “out of amounts in the Department of Veterans Affairs readjustment benefits account and amounts appropriated to the Secretary”; and

(2) by redesignating paragraph (4) as paragraph (5);

(3) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following new paragraph (4):

“(4) In addition to amounts made available under paragraph (5), there is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$3,000,000 for fiscal year 2019 and each subsequent fiscal year.”; and

(4) in paragraph (5), as so redesignated—

(A) by striking “The total” and inserting “(A) The total”; and

(B) by striking “for any fiscal year shall be \$19,000,000” and inserting “for fiscal year 2018 shall be \$21,000,000 and for fiscal year 2019 and thereafter shall be \$23,000,000”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(B) Beginning in fiscal year 2019, whenever there is an increase in benefit amounts

payable under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) as a result of a determination made under section 215(i) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)), the Secretary shall, effective on the date of such increase in benefit amounts, increase the amount in effect under subparagraph (A), as in effect immediately prior to the date of such increase in benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act, by the same percentage as the percentage by which such benefit amounts are increased.”.

SEC. 302. AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO PURSUE INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAMS AT CERTAIN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS THAT ARE NOT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING.

Section 3680A is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking “in—” and inserting “in any of the following:”; and

(B) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking “any” and inserting “Any”; and

(ii) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting a period;

(C) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by striking “any” and inserting “Any”; and

(ii) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting a period;

(D) in paragraph (3)—

(i) by striking “any” and inserting “Any”; and

(ii) by striking “; or” and inserting a period; and

(E) by striking paragraph (4) and inserting the following new paragraph (4):

“(4) Any independent study program (including such a program taken over open circuit television) that—

“(A) is accredited by an accrediting agency or association recognized by the Secretary of Education under subpart 2 of part H of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1099b);

“(B) leads to—

“(i) a standard college degree;

“(ii) a certificate that reflects educational attainment offered by an institution of higher learning; or

“(iii) a certificate that reflects completion of a course of study offered by—

“(I) an area career and technical education school (as defined in subparagraphs (C) and (D) of section 3(3) of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302(3))) that provides education at the postsecondary level; or

“(II) a postsecondary vocational institution (as defined in section 102(c) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002(c))) that provides education at the postsecondary level; and

“(C) in the case of a program described in subparagraph (B)(iii)—

“(i) provides training aligned with the requirements of employers in the State or local area where the program is located, which may include in-demand industry sectors or occupations; and

“(ii) provides a student, upon completion of the program, with a recognized postsecondary credential that is recognized by employers in the relevant industry, which may include a credential recognized by industry or sector partnerships in the State or local area where the industry is located; and

“(iii) meets such content and instructional standards as may be required to comply with the criteria under section 3676(c)(14) and (15) of this title.”; and

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

“(h) In this section, the terms ‘State or local area’, ‘recognized postsecondary cre-

dential’, ‘industry or sector partnership’, and ‘in-demand industry sector or occupation’ have the meaning given such terms in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102).”.

SEC. 303. PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON PRIORITY ENROLLMENT FOR VETERANS IN CERTAIN COURSES OF EDUCATION.

Section 3698(c)(1)(C) is amended—

(1) in clause (ix), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in clause (x), by striking the period and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new clause:

“(xi) information on whether the institution administers a priority enrollment system that allows certain student veterans to enroll in courses earlier than other students.”.

SEC. 304. LIMITATION ON USE OF REPORTING FEES PAYABLE TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND SPONSORS OF PROGRAMS OF APPRENTICESHIP.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (c) of section 3684 is amended to read as follows:

“(c)(1) The Secretary may pay to any educational institution, or to the sponsor of a program of apprenticeship, furnishing education or training under either this chapter or chapter 31, 34, or 35 of this title, a reporting fee which will be in lieu of any other compensation or reimbursement for reports or certifications which such educational institution or sponsor of a program of apprenticeship is required to submit to the Secretary by law or regulation.

“(2) Such reporting fee shall be computed for each calendar year by multiplying \$16 by the number of eligible veterans or eligible persons enrolled under this chapter or chapter 31, 34, or 35 of this title. The reporting fee shall be paid to such educational institution or sponsor of a program of apprenticeship as soon as feasible after the end of the calendar year for which it is applicable.

“(3) No reporting fee payable to an educational institution under this subsection shall be subject to offset by the Secretary against any liability of such institution for any overpayment for which such institution may be administratively determined to be liable under section 3685 of this title unless such liability is not contested by such institution or has been upheld by a final decree of a court of appropriate jurisdiction.

“(4) Any reporting fee paid to an educational institution or sponsor of a program of apprenticeship after the date of the enactment of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2011 (Public Law 111-377)—

“(A) shall be utilized by such institution or sponsor solely for the making of certifications required under this chapter or chapter 31, 34, or 35 of this title or for otherwise supporting programs for veterans; and

“(B) with respect to an institution that has 100 or more enrollees described in paragraph (2) may not be used for or merged with amounts available for the general fund of the educational institution or sponsor of a program of apprenticeship.

“(5) The reporting fee payable under this subsection shall be paid from amounts appropriated for readjustment benefits.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2018.

SEC. 305. TRAINING FOR SCHOOL CERTIFYING OFFICIALS.

(a) TRAINING REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, in consultation with the State approving agencies, set forth requirements relating to training for school certifying officials employed by covered educational institutions offering courses of education approved under chapter 36 of title 38,

United States Code. If a covered educational institution does not ensure that a school certifying official employed by the educational institution meets such requirements, the Secretary may disapprove any course of education offered by such educational institution.

(b) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) The term “covered educational institution” means an educational institution that has enrolled 20 or more individuals using educational assistance under title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term “school certifying official” means an employee of an educational institution with primary responsibility for certifying veteran enrollment at the educational institution.

(3) The term “State approving agency” means a department or agency of a State designated under section 3671 of title 38, United States Code.

(c) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—This section shall take effect on August 1, 2018.

SEC. 306. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

Section 3692 is amended by striking “December 31, 2017” and inserting “December 31, 2022”.

SEC. 307. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROVISION OF ON-CAMPUS EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL COUNSELING FOR VETERANS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Chapter 36 is amended by inserting after section 3697A the following new section:

“§ 3697B. On-campus educational and vocational counseling

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall provide educational and vocational counseling services for individuals described in section 3697A(b) of this title at locations on the campuses of institutions of higher learning selected by the Secretary. Such counseling services shall be provided by employees of the Department who provide such services under section 3697A of this title.

“(b) **SELECTION OF LOCATIONS.**—(1) To be selected by the Secretary under this section, an institution of higher learning shall provide an appropriate space on the campus of the institution where counseling services can be provided under this section.

“(2) In selecting locations for the provision of counseling services under this section, the Secretary shall seek to select locations where the maximum number of veterans would have access to such services.

“(c) **ANNUAL REPORT.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section, and each year thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the counseling services provided under this section. Such report shall include, for the year covered by the report—

“(1) the average ratio of counselors providing such services to individuals who received such services at each location where such services were provided;

“(2) a description of such services provided;

“(3) the recommendations of the Secretary for improving the provision of such services; and

“(4) any other matters the Secretary determines appropriate.”.

(b) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3697A the following new item:

“3697B. On-campus educational and vocational counseling.”.

SEC. 308. PROVISION OF INFORMATION REGARDING VETERAN ENTITLEMENT TO EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subchapter II of chapter 36 is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 3699A. Provision of certain information to educational institutions

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—For each veteran or other individual pursuing a course of education that has been approved under this chapter using educational assistance to which the veteran or other individual is entitled under chapter 30, 32, 33, or 35 of this title, the Secretary shall make available to the educational institution offering the course information about the amount of such educational assistance to which the veteran or other individual is entitled. Such information shall be provided to such educational institution through a secure information technology system accessible by the educational institution and shall be regularly updated to reflect any amounts used by the veteran or other individual.

“(b) **ELECTION.**—A veteran or other individual pursuing a course of education described in subsection (a) may elect not to provide the information described in such subsection to an educational institution in a manner prescribed by the Secretary.”.

(b) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is further amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3699 the following new item:

“3699A. Provision of certain information to educational institutions.”.

(c) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—Section 3699A of title 38, United States Code, as added by this section, shall take effect on August 1, 2018.

SEC. 309. TREATMENT, FOR PURPOSES OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE ADMINISTERED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, OF EDUCATIONAL COURSES THAT BEGIN SEVEN OR FEWER DAYS AFTER THE FIRST DAY OF AN ACADEMIC TERM.

Section 3684(a) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (4) as paragraph (5); and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following new paragraph (4):

“(4) A course offered by an educational institution that does not begin on the first day of an academic term, but does begin seven or fewer days after such day, shall be treated as beginning on such day for purposes of this section.”.

SEC. 310. INCLUSION OF RISK-BASED SURVEYS IN STATE APPROVING AGENCY OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES.

Section 3673(d) is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by striking “COMPLIANCE AND”;

(2) by striking “such compliance and oversight” and inserting “conducting risk-based surveys and other such oversight”; and

(3) by inserting “, in consultation with the State approving agencies,” after “as the Secretary”.

SEC. 311. COMPTROLLER GENERAL STUDY OF STATE APPROVING AGENCY PERFORMANCE.

(a) **STUDY REQUIRED.**—The Comptroller General of the United States shall carry out a study on the performance of State approving agencies. Such study shall include each of the following:

(1) An analysis of the effectiveness of the cooperation between the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and State approving agencies regarding the execution of shared compliance and oversight responsibilities under chapter 36 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) An analysis of the resources necessary for State approving agencies to fulfill the responsibilities of such agencies under such title, including an analysis of whether Congress has appropriated sufficient funds for State approving agencies to fulfill such responsibilities and the historic effect of funding on the ability of such agencies to fulfill such responsibilities.

(3) An evaluation of the use by State approving agencies of risk-based methods of review for identifying violations of established standards under such chapter.

(4) An examination of how State approving agencies use risk factors, including rapid increases in veteran enrollment, increases in the amount of benefits per capita, volume of student complaints, rates of Federal student loan defaults of veterans, veteran completion rates, deficiencies identified by accreditors and other State agencies, and deficiencies in Department of Veterans Affairs program administration compliance, in their oversight and compliance responsibilities and in selecting educational institutions for review of eligibility.

(5) Recommendations on how the Secretary and State approving agencies can better use data to evaluate, approve, or disapprove educational institutions under such chapter.

(b) **REPORT TO CONGRESS.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate, and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives, a report on the study required under subsection (a) and the findings and recommendations of the Comptroller General with respect to such study.

TITLE IV—RESERVE COMPONENT BENEFITS

SEC. 401. ELIGIBILITY OF RESERVE COMPONENT MEMBERS FOR POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 3301(1)(B) is amended by striking “or 12304” and inserting “12304, 12304a, or 12304b”.

(b) **RETROACTIVE APPLICATION.**—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to service in the Armed Forces occurring on or after the date of the enactment of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-252).

(c) **APPLICATION WITH RESPECT TO USE OF ENTITLEMENT.**—An individual who is entitled to educational assistance by reason of the amendment made by subsection (a) may use such entitlement to pursue a course of education beginning on or after August 1, 2018.

SEC. 402. TIME LIMITATION FOR TRAINING AND REHABILITATION FOR VETERANS WITH SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES.

Section 3103(f) is amended by striking “or 12304” and inserting “12304, 12304a, or 12304b”.

TITLE V—OTHER MATTERS

SEC. 501. REPEAL INAPPLICABILITY OF MODIFICATION OF BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR HOUSING TO BENEFITS UNDER LAWS ADMINISTERED BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **REPEAL.**—Subsection (b) of section 604 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. “Buck” McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (Public Law 113-291; 37 U.S.C. 403 note) is repealed.

(b) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on January 1, 2018, and shall apply with respect to individuals who first use their entitlement to educational assistance under chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code, on or after such date.

SEC. 502. RECONSIDERATION OF PREVIOUSLY DENIED CLAIMS FOR DISABILITY COMPENSATION FOR VETERANS WHO ALLEGE FULL-BODY EXPOSURE TO NITROGEN MUSTARD GAS, SULFUR MUSTARD GAS, OR LEWISITE DURING WORLD WAR II.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—

(1) **RECONSIDERATION REQUIRED.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall reconsider

all claims for compensation described in paragraph (2) and make a new determination regarding each such claim.

(2) CLAIMS FOR COMPENSATION DESCRIBED.—A claim for compensation described in this paragraph is a claim for compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, that the Secretary determines—

(A) arose from the alleged full-body exposure of a veteran to a covered substance—

(I) during active military, naval, or air service during World War II; and

(ii) at a site listed in paragraph (3); and

(B) was denied before the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) SITES.—The sites listed in this paragraph are the following:

- (A) Camp Siebert, Alabama.
- (B) Fort McClellan, Alabama.
- (C) Huntsville Arsenal, Alabama.
- (D) Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Colorado.
- (E) Naval Research Laboratory, D.C.
- (F) Bushnell Field, Florida.
- (G) Great Lakes Naval Training Center, Illinois.

(H) Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland.

(I) Fort Detrick, Maryland.

(J) Naval Research Laboratory, Maryland.

(K) Naval Training Center, Bainbridge, Maryland.

(L) Horn Island Installation, Mississippi.

(M) Camp Crowder, Missouri.

(N) Hart's Island, New York.

(O) Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

(P) Charleston, South Carolina.

(Q) Dugway Proving Ground, Utah.

(R) Toole Army Depot, Utah.

(S) Naval Research Laboratory, Virginia.

(T) U.S.S. Eagle Boat No. 58.

(U) Ondal, India.

(V) Fort Clayton, San Jose Island, Panama.

(W) Any site the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines is appropriate.

(4) FACTORS OF CONSIDERATION.—In making a determination under paragraph (1), the Secretary—

(A) shall consider—

(i) that contemporaneous records of testing of full-body exposure to a covered substance frequently may be unavailable because such tests were classified or such records were lost or destroyed;

(ii) that many veterans were sworn to secrecy following testing described in clause (i);

(iii) each statement based on personal knowledge of a veteran who served at a site listed in paragraph (3);

(iv) information in the report from the Secretary of Defense under subsection (b)(2); and

(v) any evidence the Secretary considers relevant; and

(B) may not determine that testing of full-body exposure to a covered substance did not occur at a site based solely on—

(i) information contained in the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs Chemical Biological Warfare Database; or

(ii) any list of known sites of testing of full-body exposure to a covered substance maintained by the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Department of Defense.

(5) PRESUMPTION OF EXPOSURE.—In carrying out paragraph (1), when the Secretary of Veterans Affairs makes a determination regarding whether a veteran experienced full-body exposure to a covered substance, the Secretary—

(A) shall presume, unless there is affirmative evidence to establish otherwise, that the veteran experienced such exposure by reason of the service of the veteran in World War II—

(i) based on the locations listed in paragraph (3); and

(ii) consistent with the places, types, and circumstances of service of the veteran in accordance with section 1154 of title 38; and

(B) shall resolve each reasonable doubt in favor of the veteran.

(6) EFFECTIVE DATE OF AWARD.—The effective date of any award of disability compensation resulting from reconsideration of a claim under paragraph (1) shall be fixed in accordance with the facts found, but shall not be earlier than the date of the receipt of the claim for compensation described in paragraph (2).

(b) INVESTIGATION AND REPORT BY THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall—

(1) investigate and assess each site—

(A) where the Army Corps of Engineers has uncovered evidence of testing conducted by the Department of Defense during World War II to assess the effects of full-body exposure to a covered substance on humans; or

(B) with regards to which more than two veterans have been denied claims for compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, in connection with exposure to a covered substance at such site; and

(2) submit to the appropriate congressional committees and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs a report on testing described in paragraph (1)(A), including—

(A) a list of each location where such testing occurred, including locations investigated and assessed under paragraph (1);

(B) the dates of each such testing; and

(C) the number of members of the Armed Forces who experienced full-body exposure to a covered substance in each such testing.

(c) INVESTIGATION AND REPORT BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(1) investigate and assess—

(A) the actions taken by the Secretary to contact individuals who experienced full-body exposure to a covered substance in the course of testing described in subsection (b)(1)(A);

(B) the number of claims filed with the Secretary for disability compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code, arising from testing described in subsection (b)(1)(A); and

(C) the percentage of claims described in subparagraph (B) that the Secretary denied.

(2) submit to the appropriate congressional committees and the Secretary of Defense a report regarding the investigations and assessments carried out under paragraph (1).

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The terms “active military, naval, or air service”, “veteran”, and “World War II” have the meanings given such terms in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committees on Armed Services of the House of Representatives and the Senate; and

(B) the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

(3) The term “covered substance” means—

(A) nitrogen mustard gas;

(B) sulfur mustard gas; or

(C) Lewisite.

(4) The term “full-body exposure”, with respect to a covered substance, has the meaning given that term by the Secretary of Defense.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise today in support of H.R. 3218, as amended, the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, which I introduced with Ranking Member WALZ and every member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs 2 weeks ago.

This bill and how it got to this point today is a shining example of how well Congress can and should work together. It is the result of tireless work of many veterans service organizations and the bipartisan efforts of committee members.

I am proud that the improvements and enhancements to the GI Bill that this Chamber will advance today will empower servicemembers, veterans, survivors, and dependents for generations to come.

This is the first major improvement to the GI Bill since 2011, and it encompasses 17 bills introduced by our colleagues, many who serve on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and also others who share our committee's commitment to the men and women who have raised their right hand side to serve.

This package includes over 30 provisions and brings forward many enhancements that veterans' groups have requested for years. I have said it before and I will say it again, this isn't a package that comes along every day.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 3218, as amended, is aptly named after Mr. Harry W. Colmery, who is credited with actually writing by hand the first draft of the World War II-era GI Bill. It is only appropriate that we honor him today for his work on the first GI Bill decades ago.

This package would do a number of things, and I want to focus on just a few key improvements. First, it would eliminate the 15-year time limit to use the GI Bill benefits for future eligible beneficiaries and anyone who left active service on or after January 1, 2013.

Madam Speaker, the GI Bill, when I used it for 2 years after I got out of the military, was, at 10 years, you could no longer use it. This is a lifetime commitment to the American people, to our veterans, if they can exercise their GI Bill benefit at any time.

Let me repeat that. For the first time in the history of our GI Bill, future beneficiaries and some veterans will be able to carry these benefits with them throughout their life.

Secondly, the bill would provide significant increases in GI Bill funding for

reservists and guardsmen, including those who are currently serving on orders but do not accrue GI Bill eligibility, as well as dependents, surviving spouses, and surviving dependents.

It would also provide 100 percent GI eligibility for post-9/11 Purple Heart recipients.

Finally, it would increase opportunities for veterans to complete a science, technology, engineering, math degree, or other high technology program. That particular issue is one that I know Leader MCCARTHY has advocated for. It is a privilege to have him as an original cosponsor of the bill, and we thank him for his leadership in getting the bill to the House floor promptly.

The provisions I just mentioned only scratch the surface of the benefits that our veterans and survivors will receive under this bill.

The amendment to this bill before the House today provides technical and conforming changes to ensure the bill is budget-neutral over the 10-year budget window, clarifies that students impacted by the closure of ITT Tech would be able to have their GI Bill eligibility restored if they are unable to transfer their credits, and, starting in fiscal year 2022, would provide eligibility for a Yellow Ribbon Program to Active Duty servicemembers.

Madam Speaker, we owe a debt of gratitude to all the VSOs who pushed for this package. And I would be remiss if I didn't single out and give my sincere thanks to the Student Veterans of America, the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Vietnam Veterans of America, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, and Got Your Six for working tirelessly across the Hill over several months to help us make this happen.

I commend and thank them because, without a doubt, we would not be in this Chamber today on the verge of this historic moment without their efforts.

Finally, I thank Ranking Member WALZ for his strong leadership and support in making this package come together. I also express my appreciation to Senators ISAKSON and TESTER for their efforts in negotiating a strong package we can all agree on. I know they are planning to hold a markup on this companion bill to H.R. 3218, as amended, this week, and I would expect that they can pick up and pass this bill and get it to President Trump's desk before the August District Work Period.

Madam Speaker, this is a strong bill that would help thousands of student veterans for the rest of their lives. I urge my colleagues to support it, and I reserve the balance of my time.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 20, 2017.

Hon. DAVID P. ROE, M.D.,
Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing to you concerning H.R. 3218, the "Harry W. Colmery

Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017." There are certain provisions in the bill which fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Armed Services.

In the interest of permitting your committee to proceed expeditiously to floor consideration of this important legislation, I am willing to waive this committee's further consideration of H.R. 3218. I do so with the understanding that by waiving consideration of the bill, the Committee on Armed Services does not waive any fixture jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the legislation which fall within its Rule X jurisdiction.

Please place a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging our jurisdictional interest into the committee report on H.R. 3218 and into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor. The committee also reserves the right to seek appointment to any House-Senate conference on this legislation and requests your support if such a request is made. Thank you for the cooperative spirit in which you have worked regarding this matter and others between our respective committees.

Sincerely,
WILLIAM M. "MAC" THORNBERRY,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, July 21, 2017.
Hon. WILLIAM M. "MAC" THORNBERRY,
Chairman, House Committee on Armed Services,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THORNBERRY: In reference to your letter on July 20, 2017, I write to confirm our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 3218, as amended, the "Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017."

I appreciate the House Committee on Armed Services' waiver of consideration of provisions under its jurisdiction and its subject matter as specified in your letter. I acknowledge that the waiver was granted only to expedite floor consideration of H.R. 3218, as amended, and does not in any way waive or diminish the Committee on Armed Services' jurisdictional interests over this legislation or similar legislation. I will support your committee's request for appointment to any House-Senate conference on H.R. 3218, as amended. Finally, I will also support your request to include a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter in the committee report on H.R. 3218, as amended, and in the Congressional Record during floor consideration.

Again, thank you for your assistance and cooperation with these matters. Sincerely,
DAVID P. ROE, M.D.,
Chairman.

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

I rise in unwavering support of H.R. 3218.

It is interesting, we may prove a couple of things. One is that the universe needs to be balanced, or God has an incredible sense of irony, or our democracy is resilient and strong because, after our debate over the last piece of legislation, I can tell you that, in the time I have had the privilege of representing the people of southern Minnesota, I am not sure there is a day that I feel more of that sense of pride and honor than to be here today. Much of that thanks goes to a humble man who won't say so himself.

The Colmery GI Bill, in any years past, and maybe with a different chair-

man, would have been the Roe GI Bill, as the Sonny Montgomery GI Bill; but the chairman is a man of humbleness and passing on thanks to others, and it shows in giving the credit to so many Members who wrote and were part of this legislation.

This is a real historic piece of work. It is hard to get big pieces of legislation like this done. I saw somebody had written up recently and said: Well, the VA Committee is moving a lot of things because it is easy.

I think, after that last little debate and how this one has gone, there is nothing easy about it because it is not supposed to be easy. It is supposed to be a challenge building the coalitions necessary. It is supposed to be thoughtful because we are impacting generations going forward.

There are so many people to thank, and the chairman started hitting on them; but I want to again as someone who, if not for the GI Bill, would not have received my education, and our lives and the trajectory of our lives are changed dramatically for that.

Somebody stood in these chairs years ago and thought about putting a GI Bill in place that ended up benefiting me; and the idea of being able to pay it forward from one veteran to another, or from this House to another, is something that seems like it is lacking too much around here.

When we get together, there is much we can do for this country. The improvements in the bill are wide-ranging. I just want to mention a couple because I think they need to be said and I think veterans are paying attention, Madam Speaker, and maybe some of the folks watching this.

I am happy to say we are able to remove the 15-year expiration date. The idea of a lifetime GI Bill just goes to the reality of modern-day warriors; many of them serving at different times, serving later in life, not going right away when they get out, or even changing professions; and having that benefit there and holding it and enhancing their education is not only benefiting their lives, it benefits our economy.

We know that when these wars started we had very high veteran unemployment rates. We are trying to figure out different ways. And as the chairman pointed out, using the GI Bill for STEM research and other ways to get a skill set is just smart legislation.

I want to thank a few folks on the other side about understanding that we have one force now. We do not have an active Army and a Guard and Reserve that are two separate things. These warriors fight side by side, and their call up, when they get called up, means the same thing.

Because of the way regulation was written, there were things in here that created an inequality among them. And we were happy to have a general with us in General BERGMAN, Representatives O'ROURKE, BANKS, and RADEWAGEN, along with someone who

is not a member of this committee but is a co-chair on the Guard and Reserve Caucus. Mr. PALAZZO worked to make sure that we offset those things to make sure our Guard and reservists receive those same benefits from when they were deployed.

So this is a rare opportunity, Madam Speaker, to pass a significant piece of legislation that is fully paid for, compromised to in a bipartisan manner. The Senate is going to pick this up, I think. And I look forward to that day when President Trump, hopefully here towards the end of summer or early fall, picks that pen up and signs this and makes a difference in veterans' lives today and going forward.

So my thanks once again to the chairman and his leadership for bringing together and building this coalition that made something that many of us thought about for many years; we would like to have seen got done. It is going to get done today.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1500

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I think one of the greatest things in here is the lifetime benefit. When I was in my early twenties, I wouldn't have put a big bet on being 40 years old. So I know you don't ever think you are going to get there, but you do. With the changing workforce today, it is a huge benefit that I think that veterans going forward are going to appreciate and the country will benefit from.

Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK), my good friend.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman and the ranking member for their leadership on this bill.

Since 1944, the GI Bill has provided veterans the opportunity to invest in themselves and their future through access to education benefits.

My father attended college on the GI Bill following his service to our country, launching his life and putting our family on the path to success.

While the world has changed since 1944, the dedication and service of our men and women in uniform remains constant. These volunteer warriors stand ready to defend our Nation in theaters around the globe. While we can never fully thank them for their commitment, we must endeavor to assist them and their families wherever possible.

The Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act improves and extends the benefits granted to veterans and their surviving dependents through the GI Bill, helping to ease the transition from Active Duty to civilian life by paving the way with new career opportunities and technical education.

This bipartisan legislation is a crucial step to investing in the success of our veterans and advancing the common cause of serving those who have served us so honorably.

Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman and the ranking member and the entire committee for their leadership.

Mr. WALZ. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY), my good friend and a stalwart supporter of veterans, the ranking member of the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee.

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I rise in enthusiastic support of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act, or the new GI Bill.

I thank Chairman ROE and Ranking Member WALZ for leading the charge so that we can bring this important legislation to the House floor today.

I have the great honor of serving on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, a committee on which Democrats and Republicans work together and work closely with our partners, the veterans service organizations.

The GI Bill we bring forward today is no exception. This strong bipartisan legislation represents the biggest expansion of veterans' educational benefits in a decade. It is a huge win for our Nation's veterans.

The men and women of our military deserve the security of knowing that, upon completion of their service to our country, they will be able to embark on a fulfilling career and continue providing for their families.

I want to highlight several of the veterans who represent why we need this bill today. The first is a young man from my hometown of Cheshire. He was a classmate of my middle son in high school, and who, at age 19, lost his left leg and seriously injured his right leg when his unit was hit by an IED in Afghanistan. He had been in the country 3 months. It was the third IED.

He has been awarded a Purple Heart, but this young man and many others would not, under the current GI Bill, be entitled to receive educational benefits. That seems crazy, and it is. But this bill will correct that injustice and ensure that all our Purple Heart heroes, our American heroes are entitled to use those benefits because, regardless of those months, they have served this country.

The second one I think of is a 90-plus-year-old, who doesn't like to disclose his age, a Navy veteran from New Britain, Connecticut. He has just earned his second master's degree. That is the point of the lifelong benefits. We need educational benefits for life.

Again, this bill corrects the injustice for Guard and reservists, lifelong benefits. It is a win for America. The military is changing. The GI Bill needs to change with it.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), my distinguished colleague, a senior member and vice chair of the committee.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman. I think he outdid

himself on this one. This is outstanding stuff. There is no other word. It is huge. It really is. He is helping our true American heroes with this, and I am so proud to be a cosponsor of this legislation.

The challenges our Nation's heroes face do not end on the battlefield. Education and career training programs offer veterans the opportunity to enter a new chapter of their lives when they return home from their service.

I recently visited AmSkills, a manufacturing apprenticeship center in New Port Richey, Florida, to learn more about the good work they are doing locally to help veterans transition to civilian careers.

The Forever GI Bill helps ensure that veterans nationwide have the resources to access career education programs such as AmSkills, of course, going to a university maybe, a community college, vocational training, whatever they want to do.

Importantly, this bill allows future eligible GI Bill recipients to use their benefits at any point in their lives. That is incredible. It is long overdue, as opposed to the current 15-year time limit, which is so unfair.

It also includes my provision, the VETERAN Act, which authorizes \$30 million to help the VA invest in modernizing their information technology systems for claims processing.

Congress and the House Veterans' Affairs Committee would have oversight of the VA's proposed changes and monitor its progress. The provision would be a major step in helping veterans receive their benefits in a more timely and efficient manner.

Overall, the legislation before us today will improve, expand, and modernize the GI Bill program for veterans and their surviving spouses and dependents. That is so very important.

Madam Speaker, I urge passage of this great bill.

Mr. WALZ. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO), the vice ranking member of the full Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3218, which secures and strengthens the GI Bill for future generations of veterans. It does so without cutting benefits from anyone who is currently serving.

There are several provisions in this legislation worth celebrating. Removing time restrictions for future student veterans and making this a lifetime benefit, and increasing support for reservists, guardsmen, and their families are among the long overdue improvements to the GI Bill that are included in this legislation.

But the restoration of GI Bill benefits for students defrauded by ITT Tech and Corinthian Colleges is particularly noteworthy for veterans in my district and across the country. When those two schools abruptly shut their doors, thousands of student veterans were left with nontransferable credits, depleted

benefits, and none of the job opportunities they were promised. By restoring their tuition and housing benefits, we are restoring a measure of justice for these veterans, and we are restoring their opportunity to get the education they deserve.

I hope this is just the start of our efforts to crack down on for-profit colleges that exploit veterans.

Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman ROE and Ranking Member WALZ for their leadership, as well as the other members of the committee and the veterans service organizations who contributed to the strength of this legislation.

Madam Speaker, passing H.R. 3218 is an important step toward ensuring that every person who serves this Nation has the opportunity to live a rewarding and purposeful and prosperous civilian life. I encourage all Members to support this bill.

Madam Speaker, before closing, let me just add my praise to the chairman for his generosity and humbleness. I recognize, too, that this bill does not bear his name but the name of a predecessor. That was an incredible gesture, Madam Speaker. I salute the chairman's leadership.

Mr. ROE from Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. COFFMAN), my good friend, a Marine and Army veteran, and senior member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Mr. COFFMAN. Madam Speaker, today the House will vote on H.R. 3218, the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act, the largest expansion of educational benefits for our veterans in over a decade.

This legislation provides a lifetime benefit of the GI Bill, an additional 9 months of GI Bill eligibility for veterans pursuing a STEM degree, protection of GI Bill benefits for veterans impacted by a school's closure, and makes it easier for veterans to use their GI Bill for credentialing and licensure tests.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 3218 also includes provisions from my bill, the GI Bill Processing Improvement Act, H.R. 2549, which ensures that veterans studying under the GI Bill for their military service receive their benefits in a timely manner.

Madam Speaker, as a United States Army veteran who attended the University of Colorado under the GI Bill, and my late father, a retired United States Army Master Sergeant, Harold Coffman, who learned heating and air-conditioning repair under the GI Bill, I rise today in strong support of this legislation.

Mr. WALZ. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from the Northern Mariana Islands (Mr. SABLÁN), my good friend, a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and the voice of our Pacific Island veterans.

Mr. SABLÁN. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the Harry W. Colmery

Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, a bipartisan measure of which I am an original cosponsor.

Among the bill's many benefits that preceding speakers have stated, there are three that address issues specifically brought to me by veterans in my district, the Northern Mariana Islands.

The first affects veterans who were enrolled in colleges that closed and who, as a result, lost their educational benefit. The bill today restores that benefit so those veterans can continue their education.

The second problem my veterans brought to me has to do with post-9/11 reservists, like those in Company E, 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry Regiment, part of the Go for Broke Unit; and the 302nd Quartermaster Company in the Marianas; and national guardsmen, like the 368th Military Police Company, who were under Active Duty and who did not accrue education benefits. Those veterans will now have their Active Duty count towards the GI Bill.

Third, the minimum GI Bill benefit for veterans with less than 36 months of qualifying active service increases to 50 percent of the maximum amount payable.

Madam Speaker, I thank House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman ROE and Ranking Member WALZ for their leadership and commitment to working together for the benefit of our veterans, a truly bipartisan product of work.

I also commend the veteran service organizations we worked with for their determination to ensure our country honors the promise made to those who served and sacrificed on our behalf and in service to our Nation.

Madam Speaker, I ask for support for this legislation.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD), an active member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Madam Speaker, I rise today also in strong support of H.R. 3218, the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017.

When our brave men and women put on the uniform to protect our Nation, we have a sacred responsibility to provide them and their families with certain opportunities in repayment for their services and sacrifice.

As a new generation of servicemembers are returning from the battlefield, we as a nation have needed to reevaluate how we better help our veterans succeed back home. This important legislation is an example of how that success for veterans can be achieved.

As a result of the hard work of many veteran service organizations, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, and countless veteran advocates, H.R. 3218 makes many important reforms to the GI Bill to improve veterans' access to education.

One reform that I would like to highlight is a provision that I introduced as

a stand-alone piece of legislation earlier this year called the Julian Woods Yellow Ribbon Program Expansion Act.

Madam Speaker, under current law, dependents and surviving spouses of those killed in action who attend college on the Fry Scholarship are not eligible for the Yellow Ribbon Program. The Yellow Ribbon Program helps to cover the cost of schools with tuition above the level of what the GI Bill covers.

□ 1515

Since the dependents and spouses of those killed in action are not currently eligible for this program, they are, in fact, limited in their educational opportunities.

I thank the committee, Chairman ROE, and Ranking Member WALZ for including my bill in this legislation, and it is just one of many reforms that this package makes.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues' support.

Mr. WALZ. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. KHANNA), a true supporter of veterans and new Member of the House who came with a passion for veterans.

Mr. KHANNA. Madam Speaker, I thank Ranking Member WALZ.

I want to commend Ranking Member WALZ and Chairman ROE for this extraordinary piece of legislation that invests in the education of our veterans. I also am pleased that you included Majority Leader MCCARTHY's legislation of which I was a proud original cosponsor, the VET TEC Act. That will allow veterans, for the first time, to take technology courses and learn some of the skills that are going to be needed for the 21st century economy.

It is no surprise that I read that the majority leader got this idea from his son, who spent a lot of time out in Silicon Valley and is well regarded. It is really heartening to see this House come together with the chairman's and ranking member's leadership on the jobs of the 21st century and making sure our veterans have opportunities for them.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MESSER), my good friend. We have served on the Education and the Workforce Committee together since he has been here, and he is in his fourth term.

Mr. MESSER. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the chairman and his extraordinary leadership on this important topic.

I rise today to urge support for this broad, bipartisan reform package which expands and modernizes the GI Bill to better serve our military families. The bill includes a bipartisan proposal that I have worked on with Congressman MARK TAKANO of California to help veteran students impacted by school closures, like ITT Tech and Corinthian Colleges, based in our home States.

When ITT Tech abruptly closed its doors, 40,000 students nationwide, including 7,000 veterans, were left without a degree or path forward. Jason Nyikos, a U.S. Navy veteran from Greenfield, Indiana, in my district, had to start his degree completely from scratch after spending 2 years at ITT Tech. Not a single credit transferred, and his GI Bill is going to run out before he can get a new degree. He told my office: "To spend 2 years of my life at a place with nothing to show for it is one of the biggest disappointments."

Jason's story is, sadly, one of thousands. It is not fair to these veterans that they would lose their GI benefits through no fault of their own, and if we really care, we need to do something about it.

The Takano-Messer proposal restores GI Bill benefits to veterans who were attending ITT Tech and Corinthian Colleges when they closed so they can earn their degrees elsewhere. It also helps veterans who may be impacted by a school closure in the future.

Our military men and women count on their GI Bill benefits to build a career and a life after they have served our country. This bill will make sure they get a chance.

Madam Speaker, I urge your support and again thank the chairman for his efforts on this important issue and all of the reforms in this bill.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, it sounds like the gentleman who spent 2 years and didn't have anything to show for it was in the U.S. Congress, but that is another story altogether.

Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS), my good friend, whom I served with on the Education and the Workforce Committee.

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of H.R. 3218, the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act. This bipartisan package will extend and ultimately improve our veterans' access to GI Bill benefits.

And while I wasn't prepared to speak to this, since my colleague from Indiana, Mr. MESSER, just spoke, I also rise in support of the Takano-Messer amendment to support those veterans who are not receiving credits now from their time at ITT Tech. So I do support that amendment as well.

But I am proud to be a part of this bill that Chairman ROE has so ably shepherded, and I appreciate the bipartisan support on both sides of the aisle for including the Veterans TEST Accessibility Act. This act does just what the title implies: it gives our veterans simpler, fairer access to tests like the SAT and GRE, as well as licensing and certification tests, like certifications to be mechanics, firefighters, Realtors, to name just a few.

Our current law requires veterans to use a full month of eligibility to be re-

imbursed for these tests. Given the relatively low cost of many tests, it simply isn't worth it for many veterans to lose potential reimbursement for an entire month of other educational expenses, like tuition. This provision fixes that problem. Veterans will be reimbursed for the amount of the test only, and they can still utilize the remaining eligibility to cover other educational expenses incurred that month.

Our vets have the skills and experience that many universities and employers are looking for, but they face challenges. This commonsense provision will give our veterans the tools they need to compete in the job market and help address veteran underemployment and unemployment. It allows them to take what they have learned, so many skills that they learned prior to and during their service, and use these benefits they have earned to advance their education and career.

I would like to thank Chairman ROE for his leadership, the VSOs, and all of our colleagues who have contributed to this important piece of legislation, and I urge passage of the bill.

Mr. WALZ. Madam Speaker, may I inquire how much time I have left.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. TENNEY). The gentleman from Minnesota has 9 minutes remaining.

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

Once again, you heard from members of the committee, and Members of this House about an important piece of legislation.

This past Saturday, I had the opportunity to meet with my hometown Guard unit, the 2nd Battalion of the 135th Infantry, the Red Bull Battalion. They came back from a mission in the Sinai.

When they left to go to the Sinai, because of the 12304(b) orders that were in there, they were not eligible for certain benefits. The entire time they were deployed, they continued to call and asked what was happening on the bill. On Saturday, they had just returned, and I was able to tell them that we were going to vote tonight, we were going to move this thing, and that their questions had been responded to.

So, retroactively, we were able to get this back to 2013. There are lots of good things in here that I think, as people spend a little more time on this, they will see, smart stuff.

Generations of veterans have contributed to our country and bettered themselves through the GI Bill. It is one of those things that a grateful nation does, an earned benefit that has been improved with time.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the passage of H.R. 3218, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

This was a process, and it took several months working with the VSOs, with our staffs, with Mr. WALZ's team

and our team and others to get this bill where it is. And I think, as Mr. WALZ said, that as people dig into this bill, it is truly, I believe, an outstanding piece of legislation that honors the people who serve this country and will give them a benefit when they come home.

If you are 25 years old and you come home and you have a job from the military, you separate after a few years of service, and your job leaves when you are 42, you have lost that benefit now.

Now, you can go back and get retrained. We know that the average person is going to have five, six, seven different occupations during a professional working career. This will allow our veterans, I think some of the absolute finest people that grace this Nation, to be able to be the ones who are the leaders in the future because of the education benefit that they have earned with their service.

I thank my friend, Mr. WALZ, for his work on this and leadership on this, along with his team and our team here.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3218, the "Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017."

H.R. 3218 eliminates the current 15-year cap for veterans to use the benefits provided in the GI Bill, therefore enabling future eligible recipients to use their GI bill benefits for their entire lives.

This change would greatly aid our brave veterans in facilitating the transition from active duty to civilian life by ensuring that veterans have access to retraining at any point after service to meet the needs of a changing economy.

Furthermore, H.R. 3218 would enhance GI Bill benefits for survivors of military members killed during active duty by granting them access to the Yellow Ribbon Program, which is a program that covers more costs at private institutions of higher learning for eligible recipients.

By expanding access to financial assistance, this bill ameliorates the often high cost barrier associated with higher education for survivors of military members killed in the line of duty.

H.R. 3218 will also protect veteran's GI Bill benefits from the closures of private, for-profit universities, a development that has negatively impacted many student veterans across the nation.

Madam Speaker, our veterans deserve better than to see their hard-earned benefits lost, especially for events beyond their own control.

This bill also increases GI Bill benefits for nine additional months for student veterans enrolled in STEM 5-year degree programs.

I am pleased that this bill gives our veterans the resources they need to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the growing technology industry.

Last, this bill would qualify post-9/11 Purple Heart recipients for full GI Bill benefits.

It is imperative that service members whose active duty is cut short due to an injury suffered in the line of fire have their heroic service recognized fully when receiving GI Bill benefits.

H.R. 3218 corrects previous inequities faced by our nation's brave veterans, and protects their future.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 3218.

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. 3218, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. 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.

MILITARY RESIDENCY CHOICE ACT

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 282) to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to authorize spouses of servicemembers to elect to use the same residences as the servicemembers.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 282

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 "Military Residency Choice Act".

SEC. 2. RESIDENCE OF SPOUSES OF SERVICEMEMBERS FOR TAX PURPOSES.

(a) RESIDENCE FOR TAX PURPOSES.—Section 511(a)(2) of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. 4001(a)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: "The spouse of a servicemember may elect to use the same residence for purposes of taxation as the servicemember regardless of the date on which the marriage of the spouse and the servicemember occurred."

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to any return of State or local income tax filed for any taxable year beginning with the taxable year that includes the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. RESIDENCE OF SPOUSES OF SERVICEMEMBERS FOR VOTING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 705(b) of such Act is amended—

(1) by striking "State or local office" and all that follows through the period at the end of paragraph (3) and inserting "State or local office—"; and

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

"(1) a person who is absent from a State because the person is accompanying the person's spouse who is absent from that same State in compliance with military or naval orders shall not, solely by reason of that absence—

"(A) be deemed to have lost a residence or domicile in that State, without regard to whether or not the person intends to return to that State;

"(B) be deemed to have acquired a residence or domicile in any other State; or

"(C) be deemed to have become a resident in or a resident of any other State; and

"(2) the spouse of a servicemember may elect to use the same residence as the servicemember regardless of the date on which the marriage of the spouse and the servicemember occurred."

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date that is 90 days after the enactment of this Act.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise today in support of H.R. 282, the Military Residency Choice Act. The Military Residency Choice Act would change the way military spouses claim State residency by allowing a spouse to claim the same State of residence as their servicemember spouse, even if they have never physically lived in that State.

I want to commend Representatives STEFANIK and WITTMAN for their work on this bill, and I will allow them to describe it in greater detail in a moment.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 282, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 282. This is a commonsense bill. It has received bipartisan support as it moved through the committee. It simplifies the process for a spouse of a servicemember to choose and change their State of residency for tax and voting purposes.

The bill is about removing additional headaches from servicemembers' lives and doing right by them. There are enough issues being a member of the military and for spouses and family. We don't need to add more to it.

This is a smart piece of legislation. It does exactly what it says it is going to do, and I support and encourage all Members to join me in support.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. STEFANIK), co-author of the bill and my colleague on the Education and the Workforce Committee.

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, my legislation gives military spouses the

choice to establish the same State of residency as the servicemember, giving them the benefit of retaining the same State of residency for voting and tax purposes.

As the proud Representative of Fort Drum and the Navy site at Kesselring, which I visited just this past Friday, I have heard firsthand about the challenges that military families face, and I have the highest respect for the sacrifices these families make to help protect our Nation and safeguard our freedom.

Military families must relocate every few years due to their spouse's responsibility to meet the requirements within the military. They sacrifice a great deal during these relocations, uprooting their lives and disrupting their families, all while serving as the critical support system for their loved ones. This is often a difficult and challenging time, with the heaviest burden falling upon military spouses.

Current law allows Active-Duty servicemembers to maintain one State of legal residence for tax and voting purposes, even when servicemembers receive military orders requiring them to relocate, but this does not apply to the servicemember's spouse. Essentially, this loophole requires spouses to establish residency every time the servicemember receives a new assignment, adding undue stress and anxiety to military families already under the pressure of managing their relocation. This legislation fixes this inconsistency.

Military spouses serve, too, and this bill eliminates the daunting task of documenting multiple tax jurisdictions and helps reduce instances of military spousal unemployment.

Traveling across the north country in New York, I have listened to the sacrifices our military families make to keep our Nation safe. We have a duty to reduce these burdens they face.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill on a bipartisan basis.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I again urge Members to support this smart piece of legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1530

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, once again, I encourage all Members to support this commonsense legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALKER). 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. 282.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.