

“(2) The term ‘facility of the Veterans Health Administration’ means any land or building (including any medical center, nursing home, domiciliary facility, outpatient clinic, or center that provides readjustment counseling) that is—

“(A) under the jurisdiction of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

“(B) under the control of the Veterans Health Administration; and

“(C) not under the control of the General Services Administration.

“(3) The term ‘community living center’ means a facility of the Department that provides nursing home care.”

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 17 of such title is amended by striking the item relating to section 1715 and inserting the following:

“1715. Prohibition on smoking in facilities of the Veterans Health Administration.”

(2) Section 526 of the Veterans Health Care Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-585) is repealed.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall take effect 90 days after the date of 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. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1848, as amended, the Veterans Affairs Medical Scribe Pilot Act of 2017, which I am proud to sponsor.

One of my priorities as chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs is to increase access to care for veteran patients. One way to do that is help hardworking Department of Veterans Affairs clinicians to be more efficient in the practice of high-quality care.

The Veterans Affairs Medical Scribe Pilot Act of 2017 would do just that by creating a 2-year pilot program to test the use of scribes in VA medical centers.

□ 1545

Scribes are increasingly used in the private sector to help doctors navigate and document a patient's electronic health record. That allows doctors to place their focus not on a computer screen, but squarely on the patient.

I jokingly say, Mr. Speaker, that it was electronic health records that made me a Congressman. Basically, it ran me out of the medical office. That is a slight exaggeration, but it is not too far off.

Like many doctors I hear from today, I found the increasing amount of time that I was spending attending to electronic health record requirements, nec-

essary as they may be, detracted from the quality of my patients' interactions and significantly slowed down how smoothly my clinic day would operate. I believe the same is true at VA. Many doctors now, Mr. Speaker, are spending over half their time entering information, just basically being data entry people.

Onsite visits to VA medical facilities across the country, my staff and I always ask VA employees how we can help them provide safer, better care and see more patients. By far, one of the most common responses that we hear is a plea to “give us scribes; give us some help.”

That is exactly what passage of H.R. 1848, as amended, will do.

This bill also includes provisions of H.R. 1662, a bill sponsored by Dr. BRAD WENSTRUP, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Health, which would bring VA medical centers in line with every other major healthcare system by prohibiting smoking on VA medical facility properties.

I thank Dr. WENSTRUP for his leadership on this issue, and I am grateful to be working with him to make VA medical facilities healthy, smoke-free places for VA employees to serve veterans and for veterans to seek care.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support me in supporting H.R. 1848, as amended, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 1848, as amended, the Veterans Affairs Medical Scribe Pilot Act of 2017, offered by Chairman ROE.

No one knows more about this, and I appreciate the chairman's education that goes into learning about the practice of medicine. Having a physician as the chairman is invaluable. This issue of scribes and how it interfaces with the doctor providing the care and the electronic medical record has been invaluable for me to understand.

I know that the chairman and many physicians have said they feel they are spending too much time entering the data and not enough time on patients. Chairman ROE's legislation would allow for the use of scribes within the VA during a 2-year pilot program. It has been proven to assist physicians and alleviate administrative burdens.

This is smart stuff, again. I appreciate the insight brought to us and making more efficiencies in the system.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, 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, H.R. 1848, 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. 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.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

#### VA PROCUREMENT EFFICIENCY AND TRANSPARENCY ACT

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2006) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the procurement practices of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2006

*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 “VA Procurement Efficiency and Transparency Act”.

#### SEC. 2. INFORMATION ON COST OR PRICE SAVINGS FROM COMPETITION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 8128 the following new section:

#### “§ 8129. Information on cost or price savings from competition

“(a) RECORDING OF INFORMATION.—With respect to any contract awarded by the Secretary that is reported in the Federal Procurement Data System described in section 1122(a)(4)(A) of title 41, United States Code, or any successor system, the Secretary shall record information on the amount of any cost or price savings realized by using competitive procedures in awarding such contract.

“(b) PLACEMENT OF RECORDS.—The Secretary shall place recorded information under subsection (a) as follows:

“(1) With respect to contracts recorded in the Electronic Contract Management System, or any successor system, in such system.

“(2) With respect to contracts not covered by paragraph (1), in a location determined appropriate by the Secretary.

“(c) CALCULATION OF COST SAVINGS.—(1) In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall calculate the amount of cost or price savings realized by using competitive procedures in awarding a contract by—

“(A) subtracting the total value of the selected offer or quote from the average of the total values of all offers or quotes evaluated; or

“(B) subtracting the total value of the selected offer or quote from the total value of the median offer or quote evaluated.

“(2) If the difference calculated pursuant to paragraph (1) is negative, the Secretary shall record such difference as zero.

“(3) The Secretary shall make calculations under paragraph (1) with respect to a contract—

“(A) at the time at which the Secretary obligates amounts under such contract; or

“(B) if such contract contains options, at the time at which the option is exercised.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 8128 the following new item:

“8129. Information on cost or price savings from competition.”

### SEC. 3. USE OF STANDARDIZED PROCUREMENT TEMPLATES.

To the extent practicable, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall make available and use on a Department-wide basis the standardized procurement templates used by the Central Office of the Department, the Veterans Health Administration, the Veterans Benefits Administration, and the National Cemetery Administration. In carrying out this section, the Secretary may customize such templates to address particular procurement situations.

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2005, the VA Procurement Efficiency and Transparency Act.

H.R. 2006 is commonsense contracting, transparency, and efficiency legislation sponsored by my friend, Representative MIKE COFFMAN, an esteemed member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

This bill will make clear how much money the VA is saving by competing contracts and direct the VA to organize its contracting documents. Procurement difficulties seem to happen year after year, and I thank Representative COFFMAN and other Members with reform bills under consideration today for their work on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support H.R. 2006, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I feel so strongly about this, I am going to support it again today. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2006, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. COFFMAN), a senior member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, a veteran of both the Marine Corps and the U.S. Army, and a great friend.

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, one of the VA's top procurement goals is to achieve savings through competition. However, there is no uniformity in how the savings are calculated or if they are recorded at all.

This is why I introduced H.R. 2006, the VA Procurement Efficiency and Transparency Act. My bill will create a consistent method for the VA to measure and record the cost savings generated by competing contracts from its \$20 billion procurement budget.

H.R. 2006 also directs the VA to organize its document templates, which are the building blocks for every contract, and make them accessible in a central place.

Mr. Speaker, too often, the VA reports flawed or incomplete data to Congress and to the public. While the VA's current leadership is working to correct years of transparency problems, the legislation gives that effort a much-needed push in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, the VA's contracting will benefit by adopting these best practices, and I encourage my colleagues to support this commonsense measure.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, 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, H.R. 2006.

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. 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.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

### PROTECTING BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS ACT OF 2017

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2749) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the oversight of contracts awarded by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2749

*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 “Protecting Business Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2017”.

#### SEC. 2. LIMITATIONS ON SUBCONTRACTS UNDER CONTRACTS WITH SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS OWNED AND CONTROLLED BY VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 8127 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (l) as subsection (m); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (k) the following new subsection (l):

“(l) LIMITATIONS ON SUBCONTRACTING.—(1)(A) The requirements applicable to a covered small business concern under section 46 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 657s) shall apply with respect to a small business concern owned and controlled by veterans that is awarded a contract under this section.

“(B) For purposes of applying the requirements of section 46 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 657s) pursuant to subparagraph (A), the term ‘similarly situated entity’ used in such section 46 includes a subcontractor for a small business concern owned and controlled by veterans described in such subparagraph (A).

“(2) The Secretary may award a contract under this section only after the Secretary obtains from the offeror a certification that the offeror will comply with the requirements described in paragraph (1)(A) if awarded the contract. Such certification shall—

“(A) specify the exact performance requirements applicable under such paragraph; and

“(B) explicitly acknowledge that the certification is subject to section 1001 of title 18.

“(3)(A) The Director of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization for the Department, established pursuant to section 15(k) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 644(k)), and the Chief Acquisition Officer of the Department, established pursuant to section 1702 of title 41, shall jointly implement a process using the systems described in section 16(g)(2) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 645(g)(2)), and any other relevant systems available, to monitor compliance with this subsection.

“(B) The Director of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization and the Chief Acquisition Officer shall jointly refer any violations or suspected violations of this subsection to the Inspector General of the Department.

“(C) If the Secretary determines, in consultation with the Inspector General of the Department, that a small business concern that is awarded a contract under this section did not act in good faith with respect to the requirements described in paragraph (1)(A), the small business concern shall be subject to any or all of the following consequences—

“(i) referral to the Debarment and Suspension Committee of the Department;

“(ii) a fine under section 16(g)(1) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 645(g)(1)); and

“(iii) prosecution for violating section 1001 of title 18.

“(D) Not later than November 30 for each of years 2018 through 2022, the Inspector General shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report for the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year during which the report is submitted that includes, for the fiscal year covered by the report—

“(i) the number of referred violations and suspected violations received under subparagraph (B); and

“(ii) the disposition of such referred violations, including the number of small business concerns suspended or debarred from Federal contracting or referred to the Attorney General for prosecution.”

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subsection (l) of section 8127 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to a contract entered into after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman