

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, November 1, 2017.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This is to notify you formally pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives that I have been served with a subpoena for testimony, issued by the United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia.

After consulting with the Office of General Counsel, I will make the determinations required by Rule VIII.

Sincerely,

TISHYRA JOHNSON ARMSTRONG,
Constituent Services Representative.

CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO BURUNDI—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 115-76)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days before the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed emergency declared in Executive Order 13712 of November 22, 2015, with respect to the situation in Burundi, is to continue in effect beyond November 22, 2017.

The situation in Burundi, which has been marked by killing and other violence against civilians, unrest, the incitement of violence, and significant political repression, and which threatens the peace, security, and stability of Burundi and the region, continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13712 with respect to the situation in Burundi.

DONALD J. TRUMP.
THE WHITE HOUSE, November 6, 2017.

CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO IRAN—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 115-77)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together

with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days before the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to Iran that was declared in Executive Order 12170 of November 14, 1979, is to continue in effect beyond November 14, 2017.

Our relations with Iran have not yet normalized, and the process of implementing the agreements with Iran, dated January 19, 1981, is ongoing. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12170 with respect to Iran.

DONALD J. TRUMP.
THE WHITE HOUSE, November 6, 2017.

CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO THE PROLIFERATION OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 115-78)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days before the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice, stating that the national emergency with respect to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction that was declared in Executive Order 12938 of November 14, 1994, is to continue in effect beyond November 14, 2017.

DONALD J. TRUMP.
THE WHITE HOUSE, November 6, 2017.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 4:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 19 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1630

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DUNN) at 4 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

AUTHORIZING THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO FURNISH ASSISTANCE FOR ADAPTATIONS OF RESIDENCES OF VETERANS IN REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3562) to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish assistance for adaptations of residences of veterans in rehabilitation programs under chapter 31 of such title, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3562

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

SECTION 1. IMPROVEMENTS TO AUTHORITIES FOR PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE FOR ADAPTATIONS OF RESIDENCES OF VETERANS IN REHABILITATION PROGRAMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 21 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 2102A the following new section:

“§2102B. Adaptations to residences of veterans in rehabilitation programs

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsections (b) and (c), the Secretary may assist a veteran who is entitled to services and assistance under chapter 31 of this title and is pursuing a rehabilitation program under such chapter in acquiring such adaptations to such veteran's residence as are determined necessary by the Secretary to accomplish the purposes of such rehabilitation program.

“(b) AMOUNT.—(1) The aggregate amount of assistance available to a veteran under subsection (a) may not exceed \$77,307. The Secretary may waive this limitation for a veteran if the Secretary determines a waiver is necessary for the rehabilitation program of the veteran.

“(2) Effective on October 1 of each year (beginning in 2017), the Secretary shall increase the amount described in paragraph (1) by the percentage calculated under section 2102(e)(2) of this title.

“(3) Beginning on October 1, 2019, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of

Representatives a biennial report on the use of the waiver authority under paragraph (1).

“(c) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall prescribe such regulations as may be necessary to carry out this section.

“(d) REHABILITATION PROGRAM DEFINED.—In this section, the term ‘rehabilitation program’ has the meaning given such term in section 3101 of this title.”

(b) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary may provide assistance under section 2102B of such title, as added by subsection (a), in advance of regulations by issuing notice specifying the criteria for the application, approval, and oversight processes relating to the provision of assistance under such section.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) SCOPE OF SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE FOR TRAINING AND REHABILITATION.—Section 3104 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(d) The Secretary may not assist a veteran in acquiring adaptations to the residence of the veteran under this chapter. Any such assistance may be furnished only under section 2102B of this title.”

(2) MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES RESIDING OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES.—Section 2101A of such title is amended—

(A) by redesignating subsection (c) as subsection (d); and

(B) by inserting after subsection (b) the following new subsection (c):

“(c) LIMITATION.—Notwithstanding subsections (a) and (b), this section shall not apply to the provision of assistance under section 2102B of this title.”

(3) BENEFITS ADDITIONAL TO BENEFITS UNDER OTHER LAWS.—Section 2104 of such title is amended—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking “; however” and all that follows through “once”; and

(B) in subsection (b), by striking the second sentence; and

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

“(c) The Secretary may not provide assistance to a veteran under this chapter if the Secretary determines such assistance would result in a duplication of benefits under this title to the veteran.”

(4) EXCEPTION TO MANDATORY LIFE INSURANCE.—Section 2106(a) of such title is amended to read as follows:

“(a) The Secretary shall insure any individual under 70 years of age who has received assistance under this chapter against the death of the individual except for an individual who—

“(1) elects in writing to not receive insurance under this section;

“(2) fails to respond in a timely manner to a request from the Secretary for information on which the premium for such insurance can be based; or

“(3) receives such assistance under section 2102B of this title.”

(d) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 21 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 2102A the following new item:

“2102B. Adaptations to residences of veterans in rehabilitation programs.”

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

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. 3562.

This bill was introduced by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON), my good friend, and would streamline the process for needed home adaptations for our most severely wounded veterans and servicemembers. The bill would do this by having the most qualified VA employees, those who already work on VA's Specially Adaptive Housing program and who are experts in home adaptation, oversee the changes to a veteran's home.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON), chairman of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, to discuss this bill.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss H.R. 3562 and ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this bipartisan, commonsense legislation to improve our services for those who have “borne the battle”: America's disabled veterans.

Currently, if a disabled veteran in VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program needs adaptations made to their home due to the limitations of their disability, then it is their vocational rehabilitation counselor, someone who has no experience or training in home construction, who makes such arrangements for these adaptations.

In addition to the lack of core competency in home adaptations, these counselors have experienced a significant and steady rise in their job counseling caseloads, so their focusing on this home construction takes away from their primary function as a vocational counselor. This has resulted in inefficiencies for disabled veterans who now have to wait in line, and it is costing taxpayers more money.

While these are master's degree-level counselors who provide great services to our veterans every single day, they do not have the expertise to understand how to build a wheelchair ramp, affix a grab bar to a wall, or implement other home adaptations. This bill would simply transfer these responsibilities to VA's Specially Adapted Housing program, where they deal with these kinds of construction projects every day.

This change is needed. It will save the taxpayers money, and, most importantly, it will help our disabled veterans immensely by ensuring that they have the right people on the job to address their service-connected disabilities in a timely fashion.

Mr. Speaker, as we head into Veterans Day this upcoming weekend, I just want to take a moment of personal privilege and say what an honor it has been to serve on the VA Committee and chair the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, and I want to thank, especially, the chairman for that opportunity. It is humbling to know that in some small way I can do my part on behalf of the people of west Texas to serve those who put their lives on the line for all of us.

Veterans represent the very best of what this country was built on: service

before self. I say this because, at a time when our country's culture and political environment seems so divided, the one thing that continues to bring us together as Americans is our servicemembers and veterans.

When they raised their right hand and swore an oath to defend their fellow citizens, they did not care if we were from a red State or a blue State, Republican or Democrat. They did it for love of country and to protect not only their family and friends, but also the stranger whom they will never meet.

That is why I am also very proud that, when we consider veterans legislation as we are doing today and tomorrow, we are doing the two most important things expected by all Americans: working together to solve problems, and delivering on our promise to the American people. I believe that the cumulative effect of commonsense measures such as the bill that we are considering today are helping to deliver on those promises.

I want to thank Chairman ROE, again, and also House leadership on both sides for helping us bring this bill through our committee and to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, I would be remiss if I didn't also thank the leadership of my ranking member, friend, and fellow west Texan, Mr. BETO O'ROURKE, in getting this bill introduced and to where it is today.

I know that our fellow Americans would strongly agree with me that our veterans, especially our disabled veterans, deserve the very best services their country can provide, and this bill is another step towards doing just that. I urge all my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3562 requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide funding for home adaptations for severely disabled veterans within the Vocational, Rehabilitation, and Employment, or VR&E, program.

Currently, VA provides severely disabled veterans assistance to lead a more independent life through the VR&E program, which can include help with adaptive housing. However, as their name suggests, VR&E counselors are primarily trained to provide vocational and employment assistance, and they do not necessarily have the expertise to provide the best guidance on adaptive housing.

The agents and contractors who are part of VA's Specially Adaptive Housing program, however, do have this expertise. The SAH program is specifically geared towards helping severely disabled veterans with adapting their homes to be equipped for independent living.

Therefore, in order to better serve severely disabled veterans, this bill authorizes the SAH program to provide assistance to home adaptations for

VR&E-eligible veterans. The amount of assistance would be capped at the same level of funding that is currently provided to SAH-eligible veterans.

This is a solution that puts the right VA employee in charge of assisting a disabled veteran to adapt their home. This will also reduce the workload on VR&E counselors, allowing them to spend more time helping veterans with employment services.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the passage of this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is the type of legislation that I am proud members of our committee continue to bring forward. While it is not as flashy as the GI Bill package we passed earlier this year or Care in the Community legislation we are working on later this week, this bill gets to the core of what this Congress should be about: making it easier for disabled veterans to receive the benefits they have earned.

I commend Mr. ARRINGTON and Mr. O'ROURKE for looking at a challenge and working with the administration and veterans groups to craft this important bill.

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 on H.R. 3562.

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 urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 3562, 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. 3562.

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. ROE. Mr. 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.

VA MANAGEMENT ALIGNMENT ACT OF 2017

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the

bill (H.R. 1066) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report regarding the organizational structure 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. 1066

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 Management Alignment Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. REPORT ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report (including recommendations for legislation the Secretary considers appropriate) regarding the roles, responsibility, and accountability of elements and individuals of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) MATTERS INCLUDED.—In creating the report under subsection (a), the Secretary shall—

(1) utilize the results of—

(A) the Independent Assessment of the Health Care Delivery Systems and Management Process of the Department of Veterans Affairs established by section 201 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-146);

(B) any study or report by the Commission on Care established by section 202 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-146); and

(C) other studies or reports, including a report titled "Task Force on Improving Effectiveness of VHA Governance: Report to the VHA Under Secretary for Health", dated February 28, 2015; and

(2) specify clearly delineated roles and responsibilities to optimize the organizational effectiveness and accountability of each—

(A) Administration, staff office, or staff organization;

(B) subordinate organization of each Administration, staff office, or staff organization; and

(C) key leader of the Department in relation to any Administration, staff office, or staff organization, Veteran Integrated Service Network, or medical facility.

(c) DEFINITION.—In this Act, the term "key leader of the Department" includes—

(1) the Secretary;

(2) the Deputy Secretary;

(3) each Under Secretary;

(4) each Assistant Secretary;

(5) each Deputy Assistant Secretary;

(6) the Chief Financial Officer;

(7) the Chief Information Officer;

(8) the General Counsel;

(9) the Inspector General;

(10) the Director of Construction and Facilities Management;

(11) the Chief of Staff;

(12) the Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals;

(13) the Vice Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals;

(14) the Director of each Veterans Integrated Service Network; and

(15) the Director of each medical facility.

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

from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 1066.

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, in just a few days, Americans will once again take time to remember and honor the sacrifices of the very few of our fellow Americans who have sworn a solemn oath to defend this great Nation.

As an Army Medical Corps veteran myself, I am proud that, with the support of leadership and Members of both sides, we will pass a series of bills today and tomorrow that improve the delivery of healthcare and enhance the benefits available to America's veterans.

On our first bill, H.R. 1066, the VA Management Alignment Act, issues with the organization and management of the Veterans Health Administration and the Department of Veterans Affairs, in general, are nothing new. In 2015, the independent assessment found VA's organizational structure to be unnecessarily complex, rampant with mistrust and risk aversion, confused about priorities and strategic direction, and hampered by a workforce that was losing motivation and a leadership team that was overwhelmed by crisis management. In 2016, the Commission on Care found VA to have one of the lowest organizational health scores in all of the Federal Government and lacking effective national policies and a rational organizational structure.

Similar findings have been made by veterans, veterans service organizations, VA employees, the Government Accountability Office, the VA inspector general, and others in countless reports and testimony and stories over the last several years. They have also been common themes in the recent oversight hearings and site visits.

In order to improve the care, benefits, and services that VA provides to our Nation's veterans and increase accountability for poor-performing employees, VA must first clarify and rationalize the Department's organizational structure and the roles, responsibilities, and lines of authority for supervisors, managers, and employees.

H.R. 1066 would jump-start that effort by requiring the VA to use the work the independent assessment, the Commission on Care, and others have already done to create a report on how the Department is to be structured—to include clearly defined roles and responsibilities of key leaders across all