

through a process that prioritizes the public interest and involves the input of all stakeholders. This effort intends to define the term “natural” in a way that is not misleading and based on consumer understanding, and that applies to all foods in the marketplace overseen by the agency. We support this initiative, especially because our April 2018 survey found that 88% of Americans think that all companies should meet the same standard for the “natural” label. Congress should not short-circuit this important work by setting a special definition of “natural cheese.”

The CURD Act ultimately places the interests of cheese producers ahead of the broad need for consumers to understand what they’re buying and feeding their families. We urge you to support a clear, consistent, and accountable food marketplace for consumers, and vote no on S. 2322.

Sincerely,

JEAN HALLORAN,
*Director, Food Policy
Initiatives Consumer
Reports.*

CHARLOTTE VALLAËYS,
*Senior Policy Analyst
Consumer Reports.*

WILLIAM WALLACE,
*Senior Policy Analyst,
Consumer Reports.*

THE GOOD FOOD INSTITUTE,
Washington, DC, December 19, 2018.

Hon. GREG WALDEN,
*Chairman, House Committee on Energy and
Commerce,*

Hon. FRANK PALLONE, JR.,
*Ranking Member, House Committee on Energy
and Commerce, Washington D.C.*

Re Opposition to the Codifying Useful Regulatory Definitions Act (“CURD Act”).

DEAR CHAIRMAN WALDEN AND REP. PALLONE: The Good Food Institute (“GFI”) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that serves as a think tank and accelerator for plant-based foods and cell-based meat. GFI is comprised of scientists, entrepreneurs, lawyers, and policy experts focused on using food innovation and markets to create a more sustainable food supply. More specifically, we support policies that ensure a level playing field for plant-based foods and cell-based meat. We write today to express our opposition to the CURD Act (S. 2322).

A marketplace that serves consumers well is one in which products compete on their merits, not on their political connections. The role of the government in this marketplace is to ensure that products bear clear, accurate, and consistent labels that present essential information without confusing or misleading consumers.

In our view, the CURD Act has three significant flaws. First, the Act would override FDA’s regulatory definition of milk as it pertains to standards of identity for cheeses by explicitly including “the lacteal secretions from animals other than cows” but not plant-based milks. The agency’s current definition, 21 C.F.R. §133.3, states that milk used in cheese is obtained by the “complete milking of one or more healthy cows.” Of course, there are a wide variety of cheeses in the marketplace that are made from other kinds of milks, including goat’s milk, sheep’s milk, and cashew milk. The word cheese is allowable so long as these products’ labels clearly communicate to consumers the identity of the product (that it is made from goat’s milk, sheep’s milk, or cashew milk)—just as terms like soy milk, almond milk, and chocolate milk are allowable on milk cartons. The CURD Act’s expansion of the definition of milk to include lacteal secretions of other animals, but not plants, suggests that its in-

tent is protectionist: to permit producers to use the label “natural cheese” when their products contain ingredients that are not natural (e.g., synthetic dyes) while simultaneously attempting to deny producers of plant-based cheeses access to the same term.

Second, the CURD Act would establish a product-specific definition of the term “natural” instead of a consistent definition set by FDA that would apply to all the food products it regulates. Setting a product-specific definition of “natural” would likely conflict with how FDA uses it in other contexts and could result in consumer confusion.

Third, the Act would create a rift between FDA and USDA regarding the use of “natural” on labels. This too could increase consumer confusion. Since the term “natural” can mean different things to different consumers, USDA currently requires USDA-approved labels to briefly explain on-label what a “natural” claim applies to. The CURD Act does not require any such explanation, giving “natural cheese” a free pass to claim it is natural without giving further information to consumers.

To ensure a fair marketplace that works for consumers, food labels must be clear to consumers and not privilege one set of producers over another. By that measure, the CURD Act fails. We therefore respectfully urge you to oppose the bill at this time.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

JESSICA ALMY, ESQ.
*Director of Policy, The
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KENNETH FORSBERG, PH.D.,
*Senior Policy Specialist,
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Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, we should not displace the important role of the FDA in determining the correct terminology and approach to regulating and labeling food products like cheese. Changes to the statute should be considered in broad daylight, with robust discussion and significant input from consumer, industry, and government stakeholders.

That has not happened in this case, and for these reasons I oppose the bill and urge my colleagues to oppose the bill as well.

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

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I support S. 2322, the CURD Act, which would define the term “natural cheese” within the Federal statute and, with passage, head to the President’s desk.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 2322.

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. AMASH. 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 pro-

ceedings on this motion will be postponed.

VA WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY ACT OF 2018

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6418) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study regarding the accessibility of websites of the Department of Veterans Affairs to individuals with disabilities, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6418

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 Website Accessibility Act of 2018”.

SEC. 2. STUDY REGARDING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF WEBSITES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

(a) STUDY.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall examine all websites (including attached files and web-based applications) of the Department of Veterans Affairs to determine whether such websites are accessible to individuals with disabilities in accordance with section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794d).

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after completing the study under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit a report to Congress regarding such study. The report shall include the following:

(1) A list of each website, file, or web-based application described in subsection (a) that is not accessible to individuals with disabilities in accordance with section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794d).

(2) The plan of the Secretary to bring each website, file, or web-based application identified in the list under paragraph (1) into compliance with the requirements of section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794d).

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 in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6418, as amended, the VA Website Accessibility Act of 2018.

Mr. Speaker, in the interest of time, I will allow Vice Ranking Member TAKANO to discuss the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6418, as amended, the VA Website Accessibility Act of 2018. This bill from Representative ESTY mandates that the VA finally make all of its websites compliant for visually impaired individuals. This is a long-overdue action that the Blinded Veterans Association has tirelessly advocated for to make VA communications and information fully accessible to everyone, and I am proud to support this bill.

I have no further speakers.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in support of H.R. 6418, as amended, 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. 6418, 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. MASSIE. 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.

DOUGLAS FOURNET DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CLINIC

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3444) to designate the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Lake Charles, Louisiana, as the "Douglas Fournet Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3444

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

SECTION 1. DESIGNATION OF DOUGLAS FOURNET DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CLINIC IN LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Lake Charles, Louisiana, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the "Douglas Fournet Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic" or the "Douglas Fournet VA Clinic".

(b) REFERENCE.—Any reference in any law, regulation, map, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the community-based outpatient clinic referred to in subsection (a) shall be considered to be a reference to the Douglas Fournet Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic.

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 in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. HIGGINS) to discuss this bill.

Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 3444, which renames the VA community-based outpatient clinic in Lake Charles, Louisiana, after First Lieutenant Douglas Fournet.

Mr. Speaker, I was proud to sponsor the House version of this bill.

Douglas Fournet is an American hero deserving of the highest tribute. He joined the Army in 1966 and was deployed to Vietnam. There, Fournet served as rifle platoon leader of the 2nd Platoon, Company Bravo.

In the A Shau Valley of Vietnam, the platoon came under sniper fire. With an enemy mine in the way of the platoon's advance, Fournet ordered his men to take cover. He then ran uphill to the mine and attempted to disarm it with a knife. Before he could succeed, the mine was detonated.

Douglas Fournet was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in 1970. He is the sole recipient from southwest Louisiana.

Douglas Fournet gave his last full measure of devotion in service to his country and in defense of his platoon.

Our freedoms are paid for by the blood of patriots like First Lieutenant Fournet. Renaming of the Lake Charles VA clinic is a small tribute to his courage and forever enshrines the legacy among southwest Louisiana veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join with me and honor the life, legacy, and gallantry of First Lieutenant Douglas Fournet. I urge favorable passage.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 3444, a bill to designate the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Lake Charles, Louisiana, as the Douglas Fournet Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic.

I support this bill from Senator CASIDY to name this clinic after Louisiana Medal of Honor recipient Douglas Fournet.

I have no further speakers. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in support of S. 3444, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Members to support this

legislation for an American hero, First Lieutenant Douglas Fournet. It is a privilege to recommend 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. 3444.

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. MASSIE. 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.

FOREVER GI BILL HOUSING PAYMENT FULFILLMENT ACT OF 2018

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3777) to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a tiger team dedicated to addressing the difficulties encountered by the Department of Veterans Affairs in carrying out section 3313 of title 38, United States Code, after the enactment of sections 107 and 501 of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3777

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 "Forever GI Bill Housing Payment Fulfillment Act of 2018".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND SENSE OF CONGRESS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) On August 16, 2017, the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-48) (known by some as the "Forever GI Bill") was enacted into law.

(2) Such Act makes certain improvements to the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance program for veterans, including improvements relating to how the Secretary of Veterans Affairs calculates the amount of payments for monthly housing stipends under that program.

(3) Section 107 of such Act (Public Law 115-48; 33 U.S.C. 3313 note) requires the Secretary to calculate the amount of payments for monthly housing stipends based on the location of the campus of the institution of higher learning where the individual attends classes, a change from the previous direction to make such calculation based on the location of the institution of higher learning.

(4) Section 501 of such Act (Public Law 115-48; 37 U.S.C. 403 note) repeals the inapplicability of a modification of the basic allowance for housing for members of the uniformed services to benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(5) The amendments made by section 107 and 501 of such Act became effective on August 1, 2018, and January 1, 2018, respectively.