

fair that we ensure that the benefits paid to veterans who were injured during their military service do not lose value because of inflation.

If we don't, it could become hard for people who were injured while serving this Nation in uniform to keep their heads above water.

H.R. 4958 would financially protect the veterans who protected us by providing a cost-of-living increase. The amount of the COLA will be the same increase that Social Security beneficiaries will receive.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs ranking member, Ms. ESTY, for being the lead cosponsor of this bill with me. This bill has also enjoyed bipartisan support.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4958 and help disabled veterans and their families keep up with the rising costs of basic necessities.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, this is a good piece of legislation. I thank the gentleman for bringing it up. The taxpayers understand that this is exactly what we are supposed to be doing. I encourage a "yes" vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the subcommittee chairman and Marine veteran, MIKE BOST, for bringing this up. It is a great piece of legislation. I encourage all Members to support H.R. 4958, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4958, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2018.

H.R. 4958 directs the Department of Veterans Affairs to increase, as of December 1, 2018, the rates of veterans' disability compensation, additional compensation for dependents, the clothing allowance for certain disabled veterans, and dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children.

The bill increases the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans.

For the brave military men and women serving our country, this will help offset the cost of living in higher cost areas of the country.

Our nation owes a great debt to these fearless men and women defending our nation.

Providing cost of living adjustments to keep up with inflation is an effective way to honor their sacrifice.

Many of our veterans rely on the disability benefits they receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs to merely make ends meet.

While Social Security benefits are automatically adjusted annually to keep pace with inflation, Congress must pass legislation every year to increase the rates of veteran disability compensation.

Unfortunately, it requires an act of Congress to make this same adjustment for our nation's veterans.

Passing H.R. 4958 ensures that our nation's veterans are able to receive the same annual cost of living adjustment of Social Security recipients.

The community-integrated rehabilitation treatment provided by the pilot program will serve as a vital resource to our veterans as they overcome burdensome health problems.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 4958 to show their support and gratitude for the many sacrifices made by our service men and women.

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. 4958.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### SERVICE-DISABLED VETERANS SMALL BUSINESS CONTINUATION ACT

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5044) to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the treatment of certain surviving spouses under the contracting goals and preferences of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5044

*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 "Service-Disabled Veterans Small Business Continuation Act".

#### SEC. 2. TECHNICAL AMENDMENT REGARDING TREATMENT OF CERTAIN SURVIVING SPOUSES UNDER CONTRACTING GOALS AND PREFERENCES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

Effective on the date specified in subsection (e) of section 1832 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law 114-328; 130 Stat. 2660), section 8127(k)(3) of title 38, United States Code, as amended by such section 1832, is further amended by inserting after the period at the end the following new sentence: "A surviving spouse of such a veteran who is not covered by subparagraph (C)(i) of such section by reason of the disability rating of the veteran being less than 100 percent shall be treated as being so covered during the period beginning on the date of the death of the veteran and ending on the date that is three years after such death, the date on which the surviving spouse remarries, or the date on which the surviving spouse relinquishes an ownership interest in the small business concern, whichever occurs first."

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 within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 5044.

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. 5044, Service-Disabled Veterans Small Business Continuation Act.

Current law authorizes a special set-aside program at the Department of Veterans Affairs for veteran-owned small businesses and Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Businesses called Vets First Program. This program has been highly successful in providing VOSBs and SDVOSBs more opportunities, so much so that VA spent almost 20 percent of all contracting dollars with these firms in 2017.

While we should all laud the success of the program, there has been concern that current law did not appropriately address concerns of what happens to awards and contracts of VOSB and SDVOSB when the veteran owner dies.

The sudden death of a veteran could bring significant upheaval for a small business as they lose their VA contracts, which can impact not only the veteran's family, but employees as well.

H.R. 5044 would clarify and authorize the spouses of veterans who died with less than a 100-percent disability rating to maintain VOSB and SDVOSB status for up to 3 years following the veteran's death.

I believe this change to current law is an appropriate way to continue the success of the Vets First Program without hurting other veteran firms.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Chairman CHABOT, for introducing this bill, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5044, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I stand in strong support of H.R. 5044. The gentleman has brought a really important point forward.

Currently, if a veteran's death results in their small business becoming less than 51 percent owned by a service-disabled veteran, the surviving spouse can acquire the veteran's ownership interest if the veteran had a 100-percent disability rating. This allows the surviving spouse to keep their loved one's small business status.

However, the surviving spouse of a deceased veteran who had less than a 100-percent disability is not allowed to do the same.

This is a clear-cut case, I think, of spirit and intent of the law. I don't think anyone intended for a 60-percent service-disabled veteran who maybe lost a limb in combat, and then who dies, for their spouse to lose their eligibility. It is a really important point to bring up.

This bill will now permit a surviving spouse to maintain a Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business status

for a period of 3 years after the veteran's death, or until the spouse remarries.

This simply allows a Gold Star spouse a bit more time after a loved one's death to settle any business affairs of the deceased spouse it had.

It is the right thing to do to ease the burden that comes with the loss of a spouse in expression of our gratitude for their family's service.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from Ohio's willingness to point this out, I strongly support this, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT). This is his piece of legislation. I appreciate him being here on the floor today.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROE and Ranking Member WALZ for their leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5044, the Service-Disabled Veterans Small Business Continuation Act.

This bill ensures that the surviving spouses of Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Businesses are able to retain the Service Disabled Veteran Owned status of their small business for 3 years, as was mentioned, after the passing of the veteran spouse.

This policy is already codified in title 38 of the United States Code. However, there is a lack of parity between title 38 and the Small Business Act.

I have heard from several small businesses about this issue, including one in my district, that this discrepancy creates legal uncertainty and confusion in the application of this important policy. What we are trying to do is clear it up.

To guarantee clarity and certainty for the administration of these Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Businesses, the Small Business Act must conform with the policy prescribed in title 38.

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H.R. 5044 dispels any legal uncertainty, ensuring that these important policy changes to the law are sustained. Most importantly, this bill provides peace of mind for surviving spouses of veteran business owners. And one of the main things a veteran is always looking out for is making sure that his or her spouse is taken care of after they are gone. So this will not only give the surviving spouse peace of mind, but the veteran himself or herself peace of mind ahead of time.

Again, I thank the chairman and the ranking member and members of the House Veterans Affairs' Committee for their leadership in clearing this up and, again, giving peace of mind to veterans and their spouses all over America. I would urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5044.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, this is a good piece of legislation. I am grateful for the gentleman bringing it up. I encourage its passage, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Members to support H.R. 5044, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5044, the Service-Disabled Veterans Small Business Continuation Act.

H.R. 5044 amends title 38, of the United States Code to clarify the treatment of certain surviving spouses under the contracting goals and preferences of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Nearly 1 in 10 small businesses are owned by veterans and among these veteran-owned businesses, they collectively have generated over \$1 trillion in sales.

When the owner of a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business passes away, his or her spouse is permitted to inherit the business and retain priority status to obtain VA contracts in the federal procurement marketplace.

In obtaining goods and services, the VA provides a special preference to firms owned and controlled by veterans with service-connected disabilities.

Surviving spouses of veterans with service-connected disabilities rated at 100 percent are eligible to retain this preferential contracting status for up to 10 years after the veteran's death.

Passing H.R. 5044 would authorize similar treatment for surviving spouses of veterans whose service-connected disabilities are rated less than 100 percent and it would enable these spouses to retain priority status for obtaining contracts for up to three years.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5044 protects widows and widowers from any major disruptions to their businesses during one of the most difficult times in their lives, the passing of a loved one who bravely served our country.

Mr. Speaker, our veterans bravely put their lives on the line to defend our freedoms and to keep our nation safe. For those who end up making the ultimate sacrifice for our nation, it is crucial that we honor their sacrifice any way we can by honoring the widows and widowers.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 5540 to show their gratitude for the sacrifices made by our service men and women, and to maintain the livelihood of their spouses.

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. 5044.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### REDESIGNATING CERTAIN CLINICS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS LOCATED IN MONTANA

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 1282) to redesignate certain clinics of the Department of Veterans Affairs located in Montana.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 1282

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

#### SECTION 1. REDESIGNATION OF CERTAIN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CLINICS IN MONTANA.

(a) DAVID J. THATCHER VA CLINIC.—

(1) DESIGNATION.—The clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs located at 2687 Palmer Street in Missoula, Montana, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the "David J. Thatcher VA Clinic".

(2) REFERENCES.—Any reference in any law, regulation, map, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the clinic referred to in paragraph (1) shall be considered to be a reference to the David J. Thatcher VA Clinic.

(b) DR. JOSEPH MEDICINE CROW VA CLINIC.—

(1) DESIGNATION.—The clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs located at 1775 Spring Creek Lane in Billings, Montana, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the "Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow VA Clinic".

(2) REFERENCES.—Any reference in any law, regulation, map, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the clinic referred to in paragraph (1) shall be considered to be a reference to the Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow VA Clinic.

(3) PUBLIC DISPLAY OF NAME.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Any local public display of the name of the clinic referred to in paragraph (1) carried out by the United States or through the use of Federal funds shall include the English name, Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow, and the Crow name, Dakaak Baako, of Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow.

(B) LOCAL DISPLAY.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), a local public display of the name of the clinic referred to in paragraph (1) includes a display inside the clinic, on the campus of the clinic, and in the community surrounding the clinic, such as signs directing individuals to the clinic.

(c) BENJAMIN CHARLES STEELE VA CLINIC.—

(1) DESIGNATION.—The clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs located at 1766 Majestic Lane in Billings, Montana, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the "Benjamin Charles Steele VA Clinic".

(2) REFERENCES.—Any reference in any law, regulation, map, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the clinic referred to in paragraph (1) shall be considered to be a reference to the Benjamin Charles Steele VA Clinic.

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 to revise and extend their remarks and add extraneous material on S. 1282.

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 S. 1282, to designate certain clinics