

Payne	Russell	Thornberry
Pearce	Rutherford	Tipton
Pelosi	Ryan (OH)	Titus
Perry	Sánchez	Tonko
Peters	Sarbanes	Torres
Peterson	Schakowsky	Trott
Pingree	Schiff	Tsongas
Pittenger	Schneider	Turner
Pocan	Schrader	Upton
Poe (TX)	Schweikert	Valadao
Poliquin	Scott (VA)	Vargas
Polis	Scott, Austin	Veasey
Posey	Scott, David	Vela
Price (NC)	Sensenbrenner	Velázquez
Quigley	Serrano	Visclosky
Raskin	Sessions	Wagner
Ratcliffe	Sewell (AL)	Walberg
Reed	Shea-Porter	Walden
Reichert	Sherman	Walker
Renacci	Shimkus	Walorski
Rice (NY)	Shuster	Walters, Mimi
Rice (SC)	Simpson	Wasserman
Richmond	Sinema	Schultz
Roby	Sires	Waters, Maxine
Roe (TN)	Smith (MO)	Watson Coleman
Rogers (AL)	Smith (NE)	Weber (TX)
Rogers (KY)	Smith (NJ)	Webster (FL)
Rohrabacher	Smith (TX)	Welch
Rokita	Smith (WA)	Wenstrup
Rooney, Francis	Smucker	Westerman
Rooney, Thomas	Soto	Williams
J.	Speier	Wilson (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen	Stefanik	Wilson (SC)
Rosen	Stewart	Wittman
Roskam	Stivers	Womack
Ross	Suozzi	Woodall
Rothfus	Swalwell (CA)	Yarmuth
Rouzer	Takano	Yoder
Roybal-Allard	Taylor	Yoho
Royce (CA)	Tenney	Young (AK)
Ruiz	Thompson (CA)	Young (IA)
Ruppersberger	Thompson (MS)	Zeldin
Rush	Thompson (PA)	

NAYS—8

Amash	Gohmert	Massie
Biggs	Gosar	Sanford
Gaetz	Jones	

NOT VOTING—10

Beatty	Graves (LA)	Scalise
Bilirakis	Grijalva	Walz
Crowley	Lynch	
Ellison	Perlmutter	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1640

Ms. WILSON of Florida changed her vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on rollcall No. 264.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, June 13, 2018, I was unavoidably detained and was unable to make votes. Had I been present, I would have voted:

“Yea” for rollcall 261, the Previous Question; “yea” for rollcall 262, on adoption of the resolution H. Res. 934; “yea” for rollcall 263, H.R. 5890—Assisting States’ Implementation of Plans of Safe Care Act; and “yea” for rollcall 264, H.R. 5891—Improving the Federal Response to Families Impacted by Substance Use Disorder Act.

□ 1645

PEER SUPPORT COUNSELING PROGRAM FOR WOMEN VETERANS

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4635) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase the number of peer-to-peer counselors providing counseling for women 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. 4635

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

SECTION 1. PEER SUPPORT COUNSELING PROGRAM FOR WOMEN VETERANS.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Section 1720F(j) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4)(A) As part of the counseling program under this subsection, the Secretary shall emphasize appointing peer support counselors for women veterans. To the degree practicable, the Secretary shall seek to recruit women peer support counselors with expertise in—

“(i) female gender-specific issues and services;“(ii) the provision of information about services and benefits provided under laws administered by the Secretary; or

“(iii) employment mentoring.

“(B) To the degree practicable, the Secretary shall emphasize facilitating peer support counseling for women veterans who are eligible for counseling and services under section 1720D of this title, have post-traumatic stress disorder or suffer from another mental health condition, are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, or are otherwise at increased risk of suicide, as determined by the Secretary.

“(C) The Secretary shall conduct outreach to inform women veterans about the program and the assistance available under this paragraph.

“(D) In carrying out this paragraph, the Secretary shall coordinate with such community organizations, State and local governments, institutions of higher education, chambers of commerce, local business organizations, organizations that provide legal assistance, and other organizations as the Secretary considers appropriate.

“(E) In carrying out this paragraph, the Secretary shall provide adequate training for peer support counselors, including training carried out under the national program of training required by section 304(c) of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 (38 U.S.C. 1712A note).”

(b) *FUNDING.*—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out paragraph (4) of section 1720F(j) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), using funds otherwise made available to the Secretary. No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated by reason of such paragraph.

(c) *REPORT TO CONGRESS.*—Not later than two years 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 House of Representatives a report on the peer support counseling program under section 1720F(j) of title 38, United States Code, as amended by this section. Such report shall include—

(1) the number of peer support counselors in the program;

(2) an assessment of the effectiveness of the program; and

(3) a description of the oversight of the program.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CURTIS). 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 and insert extraneous material in the RECORD on H.R. 4635, as amended.

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. 4635, as amended. This bill would ensure that the Department of Veterans Affairs existing volunteer peer support counseling program includes peer counselors for women veterans.

As the number of veterans who are enrolled in the VA healthcare system continues to grow, it is critical that the VA programs are prepared to meet their needs. The peer support counseling program recruits veterans to serve on a volunteer basis to assist their fellow veterans who are struggling with mental health or readjustment issues and to conduct outreach to inform veterans and their families of the benefits and services that are available to them through the VA healthcare system.

Peer support counselors are trained and overseen by VA and, as peers, are often able to communicate on a more personal and effective basis than non-veteran clinicians, particularly to veterans who may be hesitant to seek VA care due to stigma or other barriers.

This bill is sponsored by Congressman MIKE COFFMAN of Colorado. I am grateful to Mike for his leadership on the committee and for sponsoring this bill to ensure that VA recruits a sufficient number of women veteran volunteers to support the need through the peer support counseling program.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4635, as amended, 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 in support of H.R. 4635, as amended, to increase the number of peer-to-peer counselors available to women veterans.

Peer-to-peer counseling is meant to be sensitive to the specific culture of the military and how that culture affects veterans. It can be incredibly helpful to veterans who may not feel comfortable entering a more formal form of treatment, and for many women veterans, their most relatable peer will be a fellow woman.

This bill would require VA to increase women veterans’ access to peer-to-peer counselors, thus ensuring all veterans can enjoy the benefit of this incredible form of therapy.

Between this legislation and the other peer support measure recently passed in the VA MISSION Act, this body continues to underscore its commitment to expanding peer support at VA. I appreciate the hard work Mr. COFFMAN has put into this issue and look forward to supporting his efforts.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. COFFMAN), my good friend and a senior member of the Veterans Affairs' Committee. He is also both an Army and Marine veteran.

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 4635, the Peer-2-Peer Counseling Act.

Currently, women veterans represent over 9 percent of our Nation's veterans, and that number is expected to increase to 15 percent by the year 2030. As more women veterans utilize VA healthcare, it is critical for the VA to update and improve services for women veterans. One area that warrants our particular attention for improved services is VA mental health counseling services for women veterans.

An alarming statistic from VA's 2016 suicide data report noted that the "risk of suicide was 2.4 times higher among female veterans when compared with civilian adult females," and it also noted "rates of suicide increased more among women than men in the same study."

Unfortunately, many women veterans have experienced sexual trauma and PTSD while serving in the military. Some women veterans are suffering from other mental health conditions from multiple combat tours of duty and are at risk of suicide and becoming homeless.

The Peer-2-Peer Counseling Act addresses these issues by requiring the Secretary of the VA to ensure a sufficient number of volunteer peer support counselors are available to facilitate peer-to-peer counseling and assist women veterans with gender-specific care and services.

H.R. 4635 will increase access to vital mental health opportunities within the VA for women veterans. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Peer-2-Peer Counseling Act to better serve the growing women veteran population.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 4635 to better meet the needs of the program and provide needed services to many more veterans.

I will mention one other bill that just passed the House, H.R. 2147, the Veterans Treatment Court Improvement Act, which builds upon a very successful program that essentially provides VA liaisons or veteran justice outreach program officers within these veteran treatment courts that facilitate VA services, whether drug and alcohol, mental health, or other services, to veterans who would otherwise be incarcerated. They have fallen into the criminal justice system often related

to their military service, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other mental health disorders, where they have problems adjusting from military life to civilian life.

What this program does is provide rehabilitative services in court for our veterans. With the VA in support, it keeps these veterans at a very successful rate. I think in the 18th Judicial District in my congressional district, the veterans court has a 73 percent success rate in keeping these veterans out of the criminal justice system by providing VA rehabilitative services for them. I think an expansion of this program is so important.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for having passed this bill unanimously just previously today.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY), my good friend and the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4635, the Peer-2-Peer Counseling Act. I want to thank my friend and colleague, Mr. COFFMAN, for his leadership on this very important issue.

The bill we are considering today will help ensure that our women veterans are fully equipped to transition back to civilian life.

Women veterans are the single fastest growing group of veterans in America. They face many challenges unique to our women warriors. Women veterans need access to peer counselors who are trained in recovery from military sexual trauma, post-traumatic stress, and mental health conditions that they may be struggling with.

I think it is also worth noting that women veterans are disproportionately juggling childcare, which complicates their ability to seek treatment elsewhere. They have special needs and experiences.

Our women veterans should have the opportunity to receive the advice and counseling from someone who knows what they have been and are still going through as women warriors. We need to help ensure that they have the resources to succeed.

The VA must also do more to help ensure that every veteran is able to benefit from peer support and has awareness and access to those services. That is why I am so pleased that this bill today requires the VA to conduct outreach to ensure that our women veterans know how to get access to this important and valuable assistance.

Too often, I hear from veterans in my home State of Connecticut that they are simply unaware that these services are available. We may offer them through the VA, but if our veterans don't know they are there, they aren't going to get the benefits they deserve. In many cases, programs exist to help our women veterans, but the veterans don't know they are there.

Peer support counselors have been through a transition before. They understand what it takes, and they can be particularly effective in meeting the needs of our women warriors.

With the fastest growing number of women in this country who are veterans, now nearly 2 million veterans in America—think about that, 2 million—we need to do better by them through the VA. This is an important peer-to-peer counseling support program. I am delighted that we came together as a committee with bipartisan support to support this bill.

We are also urging other legislation named in honor of Deborah Sampson, the first woman to serve this country, to serve America in the Revolutionary War, who dressed as a man.

It is important that we reassure today's women in Active Duty and those transitioning out that we will take care of them and their families as they make that important transition to civilian life. They have earned our support in the military. We need to provide it to them as they transition out.

Again, I want to thank my colleagues on the committee, the chairman and the ranking member, and Mr. COFFMAN for their important work.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in passing H.R. 4635, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I, too, encourage all Members to support this legislation, and I want to thank both sides of the aisle for bringing this forward.

As a physician and a veteran, I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that peer-to-peer counseling is the way to go. This legislation will help our female veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly 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. 4635, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

BRINGING PEACE TO THE KOREAN PENINSULA

(Mr. MARSHALL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud the President's efforts to bring peace to the Korean Peninsula.

For almost seven decades, the United States and North Korea have been adversaries, but this week we witnessed a