

assigned to Fort Hood before deploying in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

After her husband's death, Kylie chose to be back in Illinois with her family, surrounded by those whom she loves and love her so they could mourn together this inconceivable loss. But in the wake of this tragedy, their landlord refused to allow Kylie to terminate the lease that she and her husband had signed—I mean, it is just hard to even get those words out—refused to allow them to get out of their lease.

The families of our fallen heroes have already sacrificed far too much, and we should do everything in our power to ensure grieving spouses receive the support that they need. For this reason, I was proud to introduce this commonsense, bipartisan bill, the Gold Star Spouses Leasing Relief Act.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, Congressman BRAD WENSTRUP, who is also an Army Reserve officer and a physician, who helped introduce this with me. I would also like to thank Chairman ROE and Ranking Member TIM WALZ for their work in bringing this to the floor.

Currently, the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act protects servicemembers from lease termination fees when they deploy or receive a permanent change of station. Our legislation narrowly extends that law's residential leasing protections to the surviving spouses of servicemembers who are killed while serving their country.

Ranking Member WALZ helped ensure the bill would protect all these families, including those who lose a member of the National Guard or Reserves. He has been a tireless advocate for the National Guard in Congress, and it is a pleasure to be able to work with him.

I can hardly think of anything worse than taking advantage of a grieving widow or widower whose spouse made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support this bill to ensure this does not happen again.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I have no more speakers. I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 5882, as amended.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Illinois for introducing this important piece of legislation. I am dumbfounded that we have landlords who would not recognize the situation of a fallen soldier, but this law is necessary, and I urge all my colleagues to support it.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I, too, associate my comments with Mr. TAKANO.

I grew up in a military town, Clarksville, Tennessee, where, during the

Vietnam war, I saw all too many families broken apart, had to move. I find it almost unimaginable that a landlord would insist that somebody not separate, not do this when they have lost a spouse.

That beautiful family that she showed, their lives are changed forever, and the last thing that young widow needed to worry about was that. She needed to take care of those children, to explain why their father was not coming home or, in another case, their mother might not be coming home.

Mr. Speaker, I can't think of any bill that deserves the support more than this one does, and I encourage all Members to support H.R. 5882, as amended.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GAETZ). 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. 5882, 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.

VA HOSPITALS ESTABLISHING LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE ACT

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5864) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish qualifications for the human resources positions within the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5864

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 Hospitals Establishing Leadership Performance Act".

SEC. 2. QUALIFICATIONS FOR HUMAN RESOURCES POSITIONS WITHIN THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(1) establish qualifications for each human resources position within the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

(2) establish standardized performance metrics for each such position; and

(3) submit to Congress a report containing the qualifications and standardized performance metrics established under paragraphs (1) and (2).

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the establishment of the qualifications and performance metrics under subsection (a), the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate a report containing—

(1) a description of the implementation of such qualifications and performance metrics; and

(2) an assessment of the quality of such qualifications and performance metrics.

SEC. 3. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.

No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the requirements of this Act. Such requirements shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized to be appropriated.

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.

□ 1915

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 insert 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. 5864, the VA Hospitals Establishing Leadership Performance Act, or the VA HELP Act.

The significant recruitment and retention challenges facing the VA healthcare system are nothing new. One of my priorities as chairman has been to help the VA address those challenges and attract high-quality clinicians and support staff to VA medical facilities. To that end, I have worked to see two major pieces of legislation—the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act, and the VA Mission Act—signed into law this Congress include extensive improvements to the VA's hiring authorities.

However, those improvements will not be nearly as effective as they could be if the HR professionals that are administering them aren't operating at the top of their game. Unfortunately, the committee has found several instances where it appeared that some HR staff working in VA medical facilities had substandard education and professional backgrounds, including one HR director at a VA medical center who lacked both a college degree and relevant work experience.

To prevent that, the VA HELP Act would require the VA to establish qualification standards and standardized performance metrics for HR within the VHA. To ensure transparency and to aid the committee in our ongoing oversight efforts, it would also require the VA to provide Congress with a copy of those qualification standards and performance metrics, as well as require the Government Accountability Office to conduct an assessment of them.

I wholeheartedly believe that this bill will result in better staffed VA medical facilities, and, therefore, a

more accessible VA healthcare system for our Nation's heroes.

I am grateful to the sponsor of the VA HELP Act, my colleague and friend, Congressman MIKE BOST of Illinois. MIKE is the chairman of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, a tireless advocate for veterans and their families, and, I might add, a veteran himself.

Mr. Speaker, I thank him for his leadership on this bill. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it, 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. 5864, as amended, the VA Hospitals Establishing Leadership Performance Act, or VA HELP Act.

Due to nationwide shortages, nuanced certification and licensing requirements, and complex position descriptions, human resource professionals working in the healthcare industry must possess a unique set of skills and qualifications.

Human resource professionals working within the VA must further develop their skills while learning how to leverage the many hiring initiatives, budgetary concerns, and Federal resources in a way that can compete with the private sector's financial incentives.

The VA HELP Act is an effort to assist the VA in finding the unique talent it needs to fill these health-specific human resource officers by requiring the VA to establish qualifications and standardized performance metrics for each human resource position within VHA.

By further defining the human resource positions within VHA and standardizing performance metrics, the VA will be able to more easily to attract, access, and retain quality human resource officers.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST), the chairman of the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee, who also is a Marine veteran who has drunk from the Devil Dog fountain at Belleau Wood.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman. As all of us here know today, the mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs is the care for those who have borne the battle.

When our heroes transition from the military, they deserve to have access to quality healthcare and services. Unfortunately, the VA continues to fall short on the promises, due, in part, to failures in human resource offices. This issue hit close to home for me after the VA National Center for Patient Safety surveyed the Marion VA Medical Center in my district.

The Marion survey showed a decline in key factors, such as communication between management and staff, and reporting problems to management. The Veterans Affairs' Subcommittee on

Oversight and Investigations staff then visited Marion in order to get a firsthand look at the issues at the facility.

During that site visit, multiple employees raised concerns about poor management, poor communication, distrust between leadership and management, and the lack of accountability. Despite several efforts to encourage the VA headquarters leadership to address these problems, limited actions have been taken, and my office continues to receive complaints.

The common thread throughout has been the issue in the human resource department. HR management is a critical part of delivering quality healthcare. HR is responsible for recruiting and retaining highly qualified professionals, and the current status quo within the VHA's HR offices cannot continue.

That is why I introduced H.R. 5854, the VA HELP Act, with Representative SINEMA. This bipartisan, straightforward legislation instructs the VA Secretary to establish qualifications for HR positions within the VHA, and to set performance metrics for these positions.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Members of the House to support H.R. 5864 to ensure that our Nation's veterans are being provided the best possible care from VA employees. I thank the chairman of the committee, Chairman ROE, and Ranking Member TAKANO for supporting this.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 5864, 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 H.R. 5864, as amended, 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. 5864, 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. ROE of Tennessee. 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.

VETERANS SERVING VETERANS ACT OF 2018

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5938) to amend the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a vacancy and recruitment database to facilitate the recruitment of certain members of the Armed

Forces to satisfy the occupational needs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to establish and implement a training and certification program for intermediate care technicians in that Department, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5938

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 "Veterans Serving Veterans Act of 2018".

SEC. 2. RECRUITMENT DATABASE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Section 208 of the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act (Public Law 115-46; 38 U.S.C. 701 note) is amended as follows:

(1) In subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter proceeding paragraph (1), by striking "a single database" and inserting "and maintain a single searchable database (to be known as the 'Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs Recruitment Database')";

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking "and" and inserting a semicolon;

(C) in paragraph (2), by striking the period at the end and inserting "and"; and

(D) by adding after paragraph (2) the following new paragraph:

"(3) with respect to each vacant position under paragraphs (1) and (2)—

"(A) the military occupational specialty or skill that corresponds to the position, as determined by the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense; and

"(B) each qualified member of the Armed Forces who may be recruited to fill the position before such qualified member of the Armed Forces has been discharged and released from active duty."

(2) By redesignating subsections (b), (c), and (d) as subsections (f), (g), and (h), respectively.

(3) By inserting after subsection (a) the following new subsections:

"(b) ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.—Subject to subsection (c), the database established under subsection (a) shall include, with respect to each qualified member of the Armed Forces, the following information:

"(1) The name and contact information of the qualified member of the Armed Forces.

"(2) The date on which the qualified member of the Armed Forces is expected to be discharged and released from active duty.

"(3) Each military occupational specialty currently or previously assigned to the qualified member of the Armed Forces.

"(c) AVAILABILITY.—Information in the database shall be available to offices, officials, and employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs to the extent the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines appropriate.

"(d) EXPEDITED HIRING PROCEDURES.—The Secretary shall hire qualified members of the Armed Forces who apply for vacant positions listed in the database established under subsection (a) without regard to the provisions of subchapter I of chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code.

"(e) RELOCATION BONUS.—The Secretary may authorize a relocation bonus, in an amount determined appropriate by the Secretary and subject to the same limitations as in the case of the authority provided under section 5753 of title 5, to any qualified member of the Armed Forces who has accepted a position listed in the database established under subsection (a)."

(4) In subsection (g)(1), as redesignated in paragraph (2), by striking "subsection (b)" and inserting "subsection (g)".