

sacrificed for our Nation. They deserve equal access to all VA services, and I am honored to champion their cause.

Our heroes should not have to wait one day longer. Today, we can help thousands of veterans receive better access to healthcare resources.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of the VA Website Accessibility Act, H.R. 1199.

□ 1700

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers and am prepared to close. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would challenge that people who are sight impaired in this country have a 75 percent unemployment rate, if you look at that.

The challenge that I do each year and what I do to myself when my sight-impaired constituents come to my office is I go back to my small apartment that I have and I put a blindfold on, and I try to get around and just do simple tasks of the day. And you find out how very difficult that is.

I could not be more supportive of this legislation, and I thank the gentleman for bringing it up because, try on your computer when you can't see to get information you need to get services. You have to have someone there to help you.

We have the technology available today, if it is used at the VA, so that these men and women who have served this country can also have the access that every other veteran has.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this bill, H.R. 1199, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I, again, want to urge all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 1199, Mrs. LURIA's legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1199, the "Directing of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study regarding the accessibility of websites of the Department of Veterans Affairs to individuals with disabilities."

H.R. 1199 permits the Secretary of VA to use grants rather than federal contracts to fund cemetery research programs and produce educational materials as part of the Veterans Legacy Program.

This bill directs the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to report to Congress regarding the accessibility of VA websites (including attached files and web based applications) to individuals with disabilities.

According to the United States Census Bureau 31,390 residents in Harris County, Texas are disabled veterans and this study would greatly benefit them.

The report shall identify websites, files, and applications that are not accessible to such individuals and include the VA's plan to make each of them accessible.

There are 21.8 million veterans of the U.S. armed forces as of 2014, according the Census Bureau, approximately 10 percent of whom are women.

The states with the highest number of veteran residents are California with 2 million, Texas with 1.6 million and Florida also with 1.6 million.

Each of these states have major military bases including Fort Hood in Texas, Fort Irwin in California and Naval Air Station Pensacola.

The Department of Veterans Affairs offers health and welfare services to veterans but has fallen short in its task of serving the mental and physical needs of generations of former troops.

The study required by this bill must be enacted no later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this bill.

Once this study has been conducted we will be better able to assist veterans with disabilities in accessing the website for resources.

It is critical for the United States Congress to ensure that veterans have access to the resources they need.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1199 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.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1199.

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.

WILSON AND YOUNG MEDAL OF HONOR VA CLINIC

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2334) to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Odessa, Texas, as the "Wilson and Young Medal of Honor VA Clinic".

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2334

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

SECTION 1. DESIGNATION OF WILSON AND YOUNG MEDAL OF HONOR VA CLINIC.

(a) FINDING.—Congress finds that Private First Class Alfred "Mac" Wilson of the Marine Corps and Staff Sergeant Marvin "Rex" Young of the Army were both posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for their heroic actions in the Vietnam War.

(b) DESIGNATION.—The Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Odessa, Texas, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the "Wilson and Young Medal of Honor VA Clinic".

(c) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (b) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Wilson and Young Medal of Honor VA Clinic".

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 2334.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the lives of Army Staff Sergeant Marvin "Rex" Young and Marine Corps Private First Class Alfred "Mac" Wilson. I thank my colleague from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY) for bringing this bill before us so that we all may be able to pay tribute to two of our Nation's heroes.

As soon as the law allowed, both men signed up to serve our country during the height of the Vietnam war. It was during this war that both Staff Sergeant Young and Private First Class Wilson would ultimately give their lives in defense of our country.

Private First Class Wilson was born on January 13, 1948, in Olney, Illinois. His family moved to Odessa, Texas, in 1950, where he attended local schools before graduating from Odessa Senior High School in 1967. He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps Reserve at Abilene, Texas, on November 1, 1967, and was discharged to enlist in the Marine Corps on January 14, 1968.

At the time of his death, Private First Class Wilson was a rifleman with Company M, 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines, 3rd Marine Division.

Staff Sergeant Young was born on May 11, 1947, in Alpine, Texas, the youngest of three children born to Roy Clinton and Marilyn Young.

He joined the Army from Odessa, Texas, in September 1966 and by August 21, 1968, was serving as a staff sergeant in Company C, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division.

At two different points of the Vietnam war, these two brave men gave their lives to support the mission of their respective units and were both posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

For Private First Class Wilson, it was March 3, 1969, when the first platoon of Company M was ambushed by the North Vietnamese Army after returning from patrol. Intense automatic weapons fire and grenade attacks wounded the platoon's gunner and assistant gunner.

Acting as squad leader, Private Wilson put himself in between enemy fire and his men to retrieve the machine gun from the wounded marines so that his platoon could maintain a heavy volume of fire against the enemy.

When he reached the M-60 machine gun, a North Vietnamese soldier threw a grenade at him, landing between Private First Class Wilson and another

marine. Private First Class Wilson first fired a burst from his M-16 rifle, killing the enemy, and then shouted to his companion and, unhesitatingly, threw himself on the grenade, absorbing the full force of the explosion with his body.

Because of his selfless act of valor, his platoon members were able to give maximum effort to aggressively and successfully defeat the enemy.

On August 21, 1968, a regimental sized force of the North Vietnamese Army attacked Staff Sergeant Young's platoon while on a reconnaissance mission. Staff Sergeant Young assumed command of the platoon after the acting platoon leader was killed, organizing and deploying his men to repel the enemy force.

While wave after wave of the enemy attacked, he courageously moved from position to position, encouraging and directing fire at the North Vietnamese Army while exposing himself to enemy bullets.

When Staff Sergeant Young noticed that parts of his squad were unable to retreat, he fought his way to them, despite sustaining a critical head injury, so they could safely withdraw. While fighting with the squad as it fought its way to the rear, Staff Sergeant Young was seriously wounded in the arm and his leg was badly shattered.

Without wanting to slow the retreat of his squad, he refused assistance and ordered their withdrawal while providing protective cover until the enemy engulfed his position.

These two heroes sacrificed their lives for their fellow servicemembers and our freedom.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I, and a grateful Nation, owe a debt of gratitude to Private First Class Alfred "Mac" Wilson and Staff Sergeant Marvin "Rex" Young, and to their families and to their legacies.

I fully support the naming of the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Odessa, Texas, as the "Wilson and Young Medal of Honor VA Clinic" so that we never forget their sacrifices.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on this bill and urge our Senate colleagues to take up this bill without delay, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2334, a bill sponsored by Congressman MICHAEL CONAWAY of Texas. This bill would name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Odessa, Texas, the "Wilson and Young Medal of Honor VA Clinic," after two Texas veterans who received the Medal of Honor for their heroic actions in the Vietnam war.

Private First Class Alfred "Mac" Wilson was a marine killed in action March 3, 1969, when he threw himself on a grenade to save his platoon mate during an enemy ambush.

Staff Sergeant Marvin "Rex" Young was a soldier who was killed in action on August 21, 1968, when he was fatally wounded while rescuing several of his fellow soldiers who had been pinned down by enemy fire.

Both of these men received posthumously the Medal of Honor, our country's highest tribute, for their actions.

Even these many years after their deaths, their memories live on as examples of true courage, selflessness, and love of country. I commend Congressman CONAWAY for introducing this bill in their honor.

This bill is supported by the entire Texas delegation, in both the House and the Senate, as well as by several veterans' service organizations throughout Texas.

Mr. Speaker, this is something very near and dear and personal to me. I am a Vietnam-era veteran myself. I remember, all too often, seeing these American heroes who never got to see their families, their children, or their grandchildren because of the sacrifice that they gave for this country: their life, the greatest sacrifice they could.

And we stand here in this great country, free, because of what these men did. And I hope that people in Odessa, Texas, take as much pride as I do. Tennessee and Texas have a great connection, as the Speaker knows, and I take great pride, in Tennessee, in having the privilege today to be on this floor debating this bill and bestowing this honor on these two heroes.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD letters from The American Legion, Department of Texas; from the DAV, Disabled American Veterans, Department of Texas; and the VFW, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, in support of Mr. CONAWAY's bill to name the clinic in Texas after these gentlemen.

THE AMERICAN LEGION,
DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS,
Austin, TX, May 30, 2019.

Chairman MARK TAKANO,
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
Washington, DC.

Ranking Member PHIL ROE,
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN TAKANO AND RANKING MEMBER ROE: On the behalf of The American Legion, Department of Texas, I am honored to extend my support to the efforts of U.S. Representative K. Michael Conaway and the Members of Congress from Texas to rename the Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic in Odessa, Texas to the "Wilson and Young Medal of Honor VA Clinic".

As Medal of Honor recipients raised in Odessa, it is fitting that Alfred "Mac" Wilson and Marvin "Rex" Young be memorialized by naming a facility that serves their brothers and sisters in arms in their time of need. It is a testament to their bravery and self-sacrifice. May it also be a reminder for us all to live up to their examples.

self-sacrifice. May it also be a reminder for us all to live up to their examples.

"For God and Country",

LLOYD BUCKMASTER,
State Commander.

Attest:

WILLIAM WEST,
State Adjutant.

DAV,
DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS,
Lufkin, TX, April 24, 2019.

Chairman MARK TAKANO,
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
Washington, DC.

Ranking Member PHIL ROE,
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN TAKANO AND RANKING MEMBER ROE: On the behalf of the Disabled American Veterans, Department of Texas, I am honored to extend my support to the efforts of U.S. Representative K. Michael Conaway and the Members of Congress from Texas to rename the Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic in Odessa, Texas to the "Wilson and Young Medal of Honor VA Clinic".

As Medal of Honor recipients raised in Odessa, it is fitting that Alfred "Mac" Wilson and Marvin "Rex" Young be memorialized by naming a facility that serves their brothers and sisters in arms in their time of need. It is a testament to their bravery and self-sacrifice. May it also be a reminder for us all to live up to their examples.

Sincerely,

TERESA JOHNKEN,
Adjutant/Treasurer.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS,
Austin, TX, June 5, 2019.

Chairman MARK TAKANO,
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
Washington, DC.

Ranking Member PHIL ROE,
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN TAKANO AND RANKING MEMBER ROE: On the behalf of the Texas Veterans of Foreign Wars, I am honored to extend my support to the efforts of U.S. Representative K. Michael Conaway and the Members of Congress from Texas to rename the Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic in Odessa, Texas to the "Wilson and Young Medal of Honor VA Clinic".

As Medal of Honor recipients raised in Odessa, it is fitting that Alfred "Mac" Wilson and Marvin "Rex" Young be memorialized by naming a facility that serves their brothers and sisters in arms in their time of need. It is a testament to their bravery and self-sacrifice. May it also be a reminder for us all to live up to their examples.

Sincerely,

INGEBORG A. CONLEY,
State Commander.

Attest:

DAN WEST,
State Adjutant/Quartermaster.

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

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY), my good friend from Texas' 11th District, the former chairman of the Agriculture Committee and now ranking member, who also serves on the Intelligence Committee, to honor these two great heroes.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I want to specifically thank Chairman TAKANO

and Ranking Member ROE for bringing this bill to the floor and allowing this much-deserved recognition of two young heroes from Odessa, Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the official citations from each of the awards of the Medal of Honor to Alfred “Mac” Wilson and Rex Young.

WILSON, ALFRED M.

Rank: Private First Class Organization: U.S. Marine Corps

Company: Company M, 3d Battalion Division: 9th Marines, 3d Marine Division

Born: 13 January 1948, Olney, Ill. Departed: Yes

Place/Date: Quang Tri Province, Republic of Vietnam, 3 March 1969

CITATION

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a rifleman with Company M in action against hostile forces. While returning from a reconnaissance-in-force mission in the vicinity of Fire Support Base Cunningham, the 1st Platoon of Company M came under intense automatic weapons fire and a grenade attack from a well concealed enemy force. As the center of the column was pinned down, the leading squad moved to outflank the enemy. Pfc. Wilson, acting as squad leader of the rear squad, skillfully maneuvered his men to form a base of fire and act as a blocking force. In the ensuing fire fight, both his machine gunner and assistant machine gunner were seriously wounded and unable to operate their weapons. Realizing the urgent need to bring the weapon into operation again, Pfc. Wilson, followed by another marine and with complete disregard for his safety, fearlessly dashed across the fire-swept terrain to recover the weapon. As they reached the machinegun, an enemy soldier stepped from behind a tree and threw a grenade toward the 2 marines. Observing the grenade fall between himself and the other marine, Pfc. Wilson, fully realizing the inevitable result of his actions, shouted to his companion and unhesitatingly threw himself on the grenade, absorbing the full force of the explosion with his own body. His heroic actions inspired his platoon members to maximum effort as they aggressively attacked and defeated the enemy. Pfc. Wilson’s indomitable courage, inspiring valor and selfless devotion to duty upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the U.S. Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

YOUNG, MARVIN R.

Rank: Staff Sergeant Organization: U.S. Army

Company: Company C, 1st Battalion Division: 5th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division

Born: 11 May 1947, Alpine, Tex. Departed: Yes

Place/Date: Near Ben Cui, Republic of Vietnam, 21 August 1968

CITATION

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. S/Sgt. Young distinguished himself at the cost of his life while serving as a squad leader with Company C. While conducting a reconnaissance mission in the vicinity of Ben Cui, Company C was suddenly engaged by an estimated regimental-size force of the North Vietnamese Army. During the initial volley of fire the point element of the 1st Platoon was pinned down, sustaining several casualties, and the acting platoon leader was killed. S/Sgt. Young毫不犹豫地 assumed command of the platoon and began to organize and deploy his men into a defensive position in order to repel the attacking force. As a human wave

attack advanced on S/Sgt. Young’s platoon, he moved from position to position, encouraging and directing fire on the hostile insurgents while exposing himself to the hail of enemy bullets. After receiving orders to withdraw to a better defensive position, he remained behind to provide covering fire for the withdrawal. Observing that a small element of the point squad was unable to extract itself from its position, and completely disregarding his personal safety, S/Sgt. Young began moving toward their position, firing as he maneuvered. When halfway to their position he sustained a critical head injury, yet he continued his mission and ordered the element to withdraw. Remaining with the squad as it fought its way to the rear, he was twice seriously wounded in the arm and leg. Although his leg was badly shattered, S/Sgt. Young refused assistance that would have slowed the retreat of his comrades, and he ordered them to continue their withdrawal while he provided protective covering fire. With indomitable courage and heroic self-sacrifice, he continued his self-assigned mission until the enemy force engulfed his position. By his gallantry at the cost of his life are in the highest traditions of the military service, S/Sgt. Young has reflected great credit upon himself, his unit, and the U.S. Army.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, both our previous speakers have described the last days that Mac and Rex spent on this Earth.

I had the privilege of going to high school with Rex. He was a year older than I. Rex and I played on the football team together. Rex was a really good baseball player.

I did not have the privilege of knowing Mac. He went to our across-town rival. He was also a wonderful young man.

Mr. Speaker, I want to specifically thank all of those men and women in Odessa, Texas, who, for years now, have attempted and worked really hard at maintaining the memory of Mac and Rex in our communities. They have done great work, and, without their support and efforts, I don’t know if we would have gotten this done as well.

Odessa, Texas, at that point in time, in the late sixties, was a town of about 80,000 or so folks. Medal of Honor recipients are really rare, and to have two of them come from one west Texas town is a high honor.

Both these men embody the west Texas values of selflessness, courage, and devotion to one’s country, and their gallant sacrifices serve as a somber reminder to all of us of the price that some have paid to secure our freedoms.

Mr. Speaker, on Memorial Day every year we honor all of our servicemen and -women who have given that ultimate sacrifice on the altar of freedom, as we should.

When I give speeches and talk to folks back home during that time frame, I ask people to make it personal. We talk about them as a group, and it loses some of the punch, some of the impact, so I ask my folks back home to find somebody specifically who gave that sacrifice and made that sacrifice and to think about them on that day. For me, every year, it is Rex.

The VA clinic there in Odessa, Texas, will now bear both their names, and all of those untold numbers of current vets and future vets who will walk through those doors and receive the care that they have earned from their service to our Nation will see those two names and will know that two of their own were honored appropriately by having that VA clinic named after them.

I want to thank the hospital in Odessa, Texas, which actually owns the building, for allowing us to do that, and I thank the VA system itself for working so hard to get this done. I am looking forward to the ceremony that we will conduct.

I also want to thank Senators CRUZ and CORNYN in the Senate for introducing the companion legislation in the Senate so that we can get that done over there and then move to appropriately honor two of America’s finest, two young men who woke up one morning, their last day on Earth, and then went out and did something stunningly heroic. I don’t know that they necessarily knew that day they were going to do it, but they did it, and they have earned this medal and they have earned this recognition and our deep, lasting gratitude for their sacrifices.

□ 1715

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

Let me say how much I appreciate this legislation from the gentleman from Texas. Reading through the medal citations, it was certainly very moving. I found myself even finding my voice very halting as I read through it with my staff. I see that the gentleman still, today, remembers his friend with great memories. He was a great ballplayer.

It is always poignant to take note of young servicemembers who give their lives for our country, and we certainly want to join together, on a bipartisan basis, as a Nation, to express our gratitude.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 2334, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I will associate myself with the remarks of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY). I know he misses his friend.

It is a true privilege to be here today to be able to honor this clinic in Odessa, Texas.

I encourage all Members to support H.R. 2334, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 2334, honoring Staff Sergeant Marvin “Rex” Young and Private First Class Alfred “Mac” Wilson, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2334.

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.

HOMELESS VETERAN FAMILIES ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 95) to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that children of homeless veterans are included in the calculation of the amounts of certain per diem grants.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 95

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 “Homeless Veteran Families Act”.

SEC. 2. MODIFICATION OF CALCULATION OF AMOUNTS OF PER DIEM GRANTS.

Section 2012(a)(2)(B) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

- (1) in clause (i), by inserting “or (iii)” after “clause (ii)”; and
- (2) by adding at the end the following new clause:

“(iii) With respect to a homeless veteran who has care of a minor dependent while receiving services from the grant recipient or eligible entity, the daily cost of care shall be the sum of the daily cost of care determined under subparagraph (A) plus, for each such minor dependent, an amount that equals 50 percent of such daily cost of care.”.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 95.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 95, the Homeless Veteran Families Act.

H.R. 95 was introduced by Representative JULIA BROWNLEY, chair of the Subcommittee on Health and a tireless advocate for women veterans and their children.

This bill would ensure that children of homeless veterans are included in the calculation of per diem grants to organizations supporting homeless veterans and their families. By including children in this calculation, homeless veterans and their children will receive much-needed housing and supportive

services, which will reduce the rate of homelessness among the veteran population.

Mr. Speaker, since 1994, VA’s homeless grant and per diem program has provided homeless veterans with community-based transitional housing and supportive services. The grant per diem program annually offers funding to community agencies that provide supportive services to homeless veterans. It promotes the development and provision of supportive housing and supportive services, with the goal of helping homeless veterans achieve residential stability, increase their skill levels and income, and obtain greater self-determination.

However, many homeless veterans with children are unable to obtain transitional housing and support assistance through the program because providers only receive payments from VA for the veteran, not their dependent children. Many housing providers have been unable to house homeless veterans who are accompanied by their dependent children without additional financial support.

Mr. Speaker, current law limits VA’s authority to reimburse the additional costs associated with sheltering the dependent children of homeless veterans, which has resulted in many grant per diem service providers not accepting homeless veterans with dependent children.

This has resulted in a lack of access to supportive housing and services for veterans with children, as these veterans are forced to choose between receipt of housing assistance and supportive services and caring for their children. This is especially true for many women veterans who have children and who are also homeless.

This legislation would authorize VA to pay a partial per diem to grant per diem service providers supporting our Nation’s homeless veterans with children. For each child accompanying a homeless veteran, the service provider would receive per diem at a 50 percent rate for each child.

This committee is committed to addressing and ending homelessness, and this legislation is one step toward this end.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, Economic Opportunity Subcommittee Chairman LEVIN and Ranking Member BILIRAKIS held two field hearings in San Diego, California, and Tampa, Florida, to learn more about how VA can better coordinate with local organizations to end veteran homelessness. This bill is the first of many solutions, some of which have been identified from these bipartisan hearings of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee.

The full committee will continue to work together to find bipartisan solutions to end veteran homelessness. H.R. 95 has 301 cosponsors, which demonstrates this Chamber’s commitment to ending veteran homelessness and to working together to improve the lives of the veterans we represent.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 95, the Homeless Veteran Families Act. This bill would amend the Department of Veterans Affairs Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program to provide payments to GPD providers for the services they provide to the children of homeless veterans.

Mr. Speaker, while VA and other partners have been very successful in decreasing the number of homeless veterans in the country by almost 50 percent since 2010, we still have an unacceptable number of veterans on the streets every night.

The GPD program is a tool in VA’s arsenal to help community organizations provide services to homeless veterans by reimbursing them for providing temporary housing and supportive services that promote health and self-sufficiency among homeless veterans.

However, under current rules, community partners are not authorized funding for providing services and shelter to the dependents of the homeless veterans who they serve. This forces these organizations to make a difficult choice of turning away homeless veterans with children or finding another source of funding to provide services for them.

H.R. 95 would address this issue by amending current law to authorize grant and per diem payments for the children of homeless veterans at half the amount paid for each homeless veteran.

While I have some concerns about using medical care dollars to provide these services, as they may detract from the already limited resources available for providing services for homeless veterans themselves, I am not going to oppose this approach today. I want what is best for our veterans, and if this change helps community partners provide the services they need to homeless veteran families, then it is worthy of our support.

I thank the gentlewoman from California, my friend, Congresswoman JULIA BROWNLEY, for sponsoring this bill, which has my full support, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BROWNLEY), my good friend, the chairwoman of the Health Subcommittee, and the author of this bill.

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding this afternoon, and I thank the ranking member of the committee for his support of a very, very important bill for our veterans, the Homeless Veteran Families Act.

As a member of the Veterans’ Affairs Committee, I believe that it is absolutely critical that veterans and their families receive the housing support they need simply to get back on their feet.