

been a pleasure to work here, both as a member of the Select Committee and certainly as chair of the House Administration Committee charged with implementing many of these recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, I urge that all of us support H. Res. 756, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, as Vice Chair of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress, I want to express my strong support for H. Res. 756, the Moving our Democracy and Congressional Operations Towards Modernization Resolution.

This resolution is the result of bipartisan collaboration and hard work by our committee members, who are committed to making Congress work better for the American people.

H. Res. 756 marks the first time in recent history a select committee like ours has turned recommendations into legislative action. This is a testament to the hard work of our members, and the support from our colleagues on both sides of the aisle has been instrumental throughout this process.

In the last year, the Select Committee has passed nearly four dozen recommendations crafted to make Congress more effective, efficient and transparent. Through conversations with our colleagues and listening sessions with congressional staff, we've worked to address everything from staff retention and recruitment to boosting bipartisanship and civility throughout the U.S. House of Representatives.

Today's resolution addresses five key sections of reform: streamlining and reorganizing human resources; improving orientation for Members-elect and providing improved continuing education opportunities for Members; modernizing and revitalizing technology, making the House accessible to all; and improving access to documents and publications. These sections include 29 recommendations that were unanimously passed by our committee on a rolling basis throughout last year—another first for a committee like ours.

We're committed to pushing boundaries and breaking the mold with our approach and the solutions we propose. Our chair, Rep. Derek Kilmer, has been a strong leader and bipartisan partner throughout this process. When the Select Committee first started, we chose to work together and combine our resources as one team, instead of separating the staff and office space by party line. This unique opportunity and approach has created a bond of trust unlike anything I've experienced in Congress.

We have more work to do before the year is over, and I can think of no better capstone to my career in public service than to leave Congress in better shape for the next generation of leaders. Together we are giving the House a roadmap for a brighter future.

I look forward to continuing our work as a bipartisan team and am grateful for the opportunity to help make a little history here in the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LOFGREN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 756, 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.

Ms. LOFGREN. 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.

□ 1300

SUPPORT FOR VETERANS IN EFFECTIVE APPRENTICESHIPS ACT OF 2019

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 760) to enable registered apprenticeship programs to better serve veterans, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 760

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 "Support for Veterans in Effective Apprenticeships Act of 2019".

SEC. 2. IMPROVED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM COORDINATION BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

(1) REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM.—The term "registered apprenticeship program" means an apprenticeship program registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (50 Stat. 664; commonly referred to as the "National Apprenticeship Act").

(2) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Labor.

(b) ADDITIONAL REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, for any program applying to become a registered apprenticeship program on or after the date that is 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall—

(1) acquire from the program sponsor a written assurance that the sponsor—

(A) is aware of the availability of educational assistance for a veteran or other individual eligible under chapters 30 through 36 of title 38, United States Code, for use in connection with a registered apprenticeship program;

(B) will make a good faith effort to obtain approval for educational assistance described in subparagraph (A) for, at a minimum, each program location that employs or recruits a veteran or other individual eligible for educational assistance under chapters 30 through 36 of title 38, United States Code; and

(C) will not deny the application of a qualified candidate who is a veteran or other individual eligible for educational assistance described in subparagraph (A) for the purpose of avoiding making a good faith effort to obtain approval as described in subparagraph (B);

(2) in accordance with paragraphs (5) and (12) of section 29.5(b) of title 29, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act), require the program sponsor, to the extent practicable, to provide standards that contain provisions to grant advanced standing or credit, and provide increased wages commensurate to such standing or credit, for any veteran or other individual eligible for educational assistance under chapters 30 through 36 of title 38, United States Code, who—

(A) is enrolled in the registered apprenticeship program; and

(B)(i) has a demonstrated competence applicable to the apprenticeship occupation; or (ii) has acquired experience, training, or skills through military service that is applicable to the apprenticeship occupation; and

(3) when the Secretary approves the registered apprenticeship program, provide a copy of the program's certificate of registration to the State approving agency designated under chapter 36 of title 38, United States Code, in the State where the program is located.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Nevada (Mrs. LEE) and the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. WATKINS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Nevada.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. 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 on S. 760, the Support for Veterans in Effective Apprenticeships Act of 2019.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Nevada?

There was no objection.

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of S. 760, Support for Veterans in Effective Apprenticeships Act. This legislation is a commonsense approach to helping men and women who have laid their life on the line for our freedom.

So many of our veterans transition to civilian life and need to develop a skill to get good-paying jobs. Yet, many are not suited for traditional education pathways. This is where registered apprenticeship programs are so important, and this legislation takes important steps to increasing veterans' access to complete financial assistance they can use to connect to a registered apprenticeship program.

Registered apprenticeships are our Nation's most successful federally funded workforce development with a 94 percent placement rate for workers who complete a registered apprenticeship, and an average starting salary of \$70,000 a year. The bill would ensure more veterans access to these high-quality programs by:

One, requiring the Department of Labor, DOL, to ensure employers are working with their State veterans affairs agencies to obtain education benefits available for veterans;

Two, improving the coordination between the DOL and the VA, requiring the DOL to provide information to the VA on newly registered apprenticeship programs to enable the VA to be more proactive in outreach to registered apprenticeship programs not yet approved for GI bill benefits; and

Three, ensuring that employers grant advanced standing or credit, and provide increased wages commensurate to such standing or credit to veterans or

other eligible individuals who can demonstrate competencies or experience, training or skills through their military service.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this important legislation, which will take real steps to improve veterans and their families access to high-quality registered apprenticeship programs.

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

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

I rise today in support of S. 760, the Support for Veterans in Effective Apprenticeships Act. This bill would provide more opportunities for service-members within apprenticeship programs that align with their skills and their background.

As a veteran, one of the hardest things I did was transitioning back to the civilian world. I spent somewhere around 8½ years in conflict environments over the course of maybe 12 or 13, and it was easier to stay in Iraq or Afghanistan than it was to come back to the United States.

Now, we have got an outstanding military. It is resilient and bright; many fought in two wars. They have excellent leadership and technical skills, skills that would be used to close the skills gap. Veterans are more likely to be underemployed than their nonveteran counterparts. This is not because they lack the appropriate skills, rather, they lack the clear path that helps them to transition from the military service to good-paying jobs.

S. 760 ensures that veterans receive advanced standings in registered apprenticeship programs for their prior experience. This bill acknowledges the unique capabilities of veterans and simplifies the process for veterans transitioning from successful careers in the military to civilian life.

We have a wealth of experience right here in our country with our veterans. Let's tap into that pool of intelligent and hardworking heroes.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON).

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Nevada and the gentleman from Kansas for their support of this very important piece of legislation.

I rise in support of S. 760, the Support for Veterans in Effective Apprenticeships Act of 2019. I was proud to introduce the House companion bill, H.R. 5314, with my colleague, Representative KATHERINE CLARK.

Our Nation's veterans deserve our support while deployed and when they return home. One of the best ways to do that is to prepare them for the workforce outside of the military.

Our servicemembers have attained incredible skills during their service, many times, quite frankly, under fire. Sadly, when they return to civilian life, finding a good-paying, family-sustaining job may be difficult.

Many States have significant inconsistencies between the number of registered apprenticeships offered and the number of programs listed as approved for veterans' benefits. These discrepancies exist despite the simple, expedited VA approval process for apprenticeship sponsors who have gone through all the steps to register their programs through the Department of Labor at either the Federal or the State level.

The VA approval process still requires additional steps that not all sponsors follow through to completion. This makes it difficult in many States for veterans to have the full list of apprenticeship programs where they can use their earned benefits and apply their learned skills and knowledge.

H.R. 5314 helps streamline the process of attaining an apprenticeship and reduces roadblocks for our veterans.

The bill ensures programs are equipped to complete the expedited VA process for registered apprenticeships and expands coordination between the Department of Labor and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Now, additionally, the bill clarifies that veterans are eligible for advanced placement and appropriate wage increases and instructs apprenticeship programs to account for a participant's competencies and prior experiences, including those gained during military service.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support this bill, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, if the gentleman from Kansas is, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WATKINS. Mr. Speaker, I am ready to close.

Mr. Speaker, S. 760 would help veterans transition to the civilian workforce and address our growing skills gaps that has led to 7 million unfilled jobs. This bill is a clear win for our country, and I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on this bill.

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

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

The Support for Veterans in Effective Apprenticeships Act, S. 760, will assist our veterans and their families in accessing the high-quality pathways that registered apprenticeships provide.

As I said before, we owe it to our brave veterans to set them up for a life of self-sufficiency and dignity. This legislation does not create another bureaucratic layer that veterans must navigate, instead, it requires coordination. Coordination between the DOL and the VA that will reduce barriers for employers and veterans and accessing financial assistance they can use in connection with the registered apprenticeship program.

We have all heard stories of veterans having to navigate complex requirements to access benefits that, quite honestly, they have earned and de-

serve. This legislation proves that this Congress has heard our veterans, and we are taking concrete steps to reduce barriers by cutting red tape.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know why anyone would be opposed to that, which is why I urge my colleagues to support the legislation.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Nevada (Mrs. LEE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 760.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. 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.

FEDERALLY REQUIRING EARNED EDUCATION-DEBT DISCHARGES FOR VETS ACT

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3598) to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to automatically discharge the loans of certain veteran borrowers, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3598

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 "Federally Requiring Earned Education-debt Discharges for Vets Act" or the "FREED Vets Act".

SEC. 2. AUTOMATIC LOAN DISCHARGE FOR CERTAIN VETERAN BORROWERS.

Section 437(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087(a)) is amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

“(2) **DISABILITY DETERMINATIONS.**—With respect to a borrower who has been identified under clause (1) or (ii) of paragraph (4)(A), the Secretary shall—

“(A) consider the borrower permanently and totally disabled for the purpose of discharging the loans of the borrower under this subsection;

“(B)(i) notify the borrower of the intent of the Secretary to discharge the loans of the borrower under this subsection; and

“(ii) only if section 108(f)(5) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 does not apply to such a loan discharge for the calendar year, include as part of such notice a statement informing the borrower that such loan discharge may be includible in the gross income of the borrower for purposes of such Code;

“(C) provide the borrower with an opportunity to opt-out of such loan discharge during the 60 day period beginning on the date on which the Secretary transmits the notice required under subparagraph (B) to the borrower; and

“(D) after the expiration of such period, discharge the loans of the borrower under this subsection, without any further action by the borrower (except that this subparagraph shall not apply to a borrower who opts