

S. 3084, as amended, would correct an error in existing law that impedes employees serving in Senior Executive Service-equivalent positions in the Department of Veterans Health Administration from receiving their full salaries. Congress passed legislation in 2010 to ensure that the individuals in those positions would be appropriately compensated for their work.

However, VA discovered a technical error in that legislation just last year that, unless corrected, would result in those hardworking men and women instead having their salaries significantly reduced. It would also result in VA having to issue and collect debts for current and former employees who served in these high-level positions over the last decade. That is certainly not what Congress intended.

The VA employees who are impacted by this issue are serving in mission-critical positions across the VA healthcare system. Many of them have been working around the clock, leading VA's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. They are responsible for ensuring that veterans and VA employees are safe and well cared for and that VA is able to fulfill the Department's fourth mission obligation to support the national response to this crisis.

They and their colleagues have performed incredibly lifesaving work during the pandemic. I commend them for their efforts, which I know will continue to be critical in the weeks and months ahead. Making them whole by passing this bill today is the least we can do for them in return.

I am glad to be back at work in our Nation's Capitol, as our constituents always intended for us to be, and to support this bill today as a small token of appreciation to the VA leaders who are steering the Department through the crisis on behalf of our Nation's veterans and families.

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

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

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time. I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

I would like to start, since Monday was Memorial Day, to associate myself with the remarks of Mr. LAMALFA from California about Sam Johnson, one of our colleagues.

Sam Johnson is one of the reasons I am so proud to have served in this body. Sam was one of the most incredible human beings I have ever met. He spent over 40 months in solitary confinement, chained to a concrete floor. This man came back to this country as a Wounded Warrior, but he did not let that stop him. He went ahead and had a very fulfilling life and really affected many of us in ways Sam will never know.

I can remember seeing Sam on this floor. Sam was so beat up in his captivity that he would take his voting

card and have to step up, raise up on his toes to put his card—I would get tears in my eyes watching him—put his card in that voting machine over there to cast his vote.

We owe Sam and many veterans like him who have given the ultimate sacrifice to this great country a debt that we can never pay back.

I served at the same time that Sam did. I was in the 2nd Infantry Division in Korea but I did not serve in Vietnam, and I can't thank those men and women enough.

To my colleagues, my brothers and sisters, welcome home.

Mr. Speaker, before I yield back, I would like to take a moment to thank Chairman TAKANO and the leadership on both sides of the aisle for bringing these three important bills to the floor today. Our actions show that, like many other Americans, we can continue to do our jobs and our part to reopen the country and our economy in a safe and productive way.

While I am pleased that we are debating these bills today, I am disappointed that H.R. 3504, the Ryan Kules and Paul Benne Specially Adaptive Housing Improvement Act of 2019, was not included on today's agenda. H.R. 3504 is a bipartisan bill introduced by Representatives GUS BILIRAKIS and MIKE LEVIN that would make important improvements to the specially adaptive housing program that helps severely injured veterans adapt their homes.

The bill would also require important changes to the administration of VA work-study benefits and make improvements to the GI Bill.

The bill has already passed the House and has now come back over from the Senate. It represents a four corners bicameral agreement, and the bill is strongly supported by our veterans service organizations.

I hope in the coming days we can pass the bill and send it to President Trump's desk as soon as possible. During this difficult time, we should be doing all we can to help support severely disabled veterans and student veterans.

I thank the chairman. During this time that we have been at home with our constituents and with our families and really confined, we tried to continue to work, and I want to commend the chairman on being able to do this.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

I associate myself with the remarks about the memory of our recently departed former Member. Of course, all of our Vietnam veterans who paid the ultimate sacrifice but also those who came back from that service in that war, we all owe a debt of gratitude toward them.

I recall my own uncle, who, unfortunately, committed suicide. I remember coming back from school and learning that he had committed suicide. We

have so many of our Vietnam-era veterans who are extremely vulnerable because they have underlying conditions. I know that many of our veterans have been playing leadership roles among their neighbors to lead their neighbors in responding to COVID-19, the novel coronavirus.

I thank all of those veterans across our country for leading that effort. Coming off of the Memorial Day weekend, it is certainly always a poignant holiday that we observe in recognition of those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

With regard to S. 3084, I urge my colleagues to pass it. It is the right thing to do. We need to do right by the senior leaders of the VA. We need to make sure that we continue to attract the very best to serve our veterans in the service of the Veterans Department.

Mr. Speaker, 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, S. 3084, 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.

□ 0945

SMALL BUSINESS TRANSPARENCY AND REPORTING FOR THE UNDERBANKED AND TAXPAYERS AT HOME ACT

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6782) to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to submit a report on recipients of assistance under the paycheck protection program and the economic injury disaster loan program, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6782

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 "Small Business Transparency and Reporting for the Underbanked and Taxpayers at Home Act" or the "TRUTH Act".

SEC. 2. REPORT.

Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall make publicly available, in an online format that is sortable and searchable for key words and downloadable (to the extent technically practicable), the following information with respect to the paycheck protection program and the economic injury disaster loan program:

(1) An identification of each recipient of assistance in an amount greater than \$2,000,000 from funds appropriated under the CARES Act (Public Law 116-136) or the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act (Public Law 116-139).

(2) An explanation of the decision-making processes under which such funds were disbursed.

(3) The number of employees of each entity that received such assistance.

(4) The date on which such assistance was disbursed.

(5) An identification of each lender or intermediary through which such assistance was disbursed.

(6) The amount of assistance provided to small business concerns owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals (as defined in section 8(d)(3)(C) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(d)(3)(C)), small business concern owned and controlled by women (as defined under section 3(n) of such Act (15 U.S.C. 632(n)), and small business concern owned and controlled by veterans (as defined in section 3(q) of such Act (15 U.S.C. 632(q))), from information voluntarily provided by such concerns.

SEC. 3. COMMITMENTS FOR 7(a) LOANS.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the amounts authorized for commitments for general business loans authorized under section 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)) under the heading "BUSINESS LOANS PROGRAM ACCOUNT" under the heading "SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION" under title V of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (Public Law 116-93; 133 Stat. 2475) shall apply with respect to loans made under such section 7(a), other than loans made under paragraph (36) of such section 7(a), on and after the date of enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the measure under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bill before us today, H.R. 6782, the Small Business Transparency and Reporting for the Underbanked and Taxpayers at Home Act, or the TRUTH Act.

The CARES Act and the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act provided over \$725 billion in relief to nonprofits, small businesses, and the independently employed who are struggling to cope with the economic downturn brought about by the spread of COVID-19.

By utilizing the SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program and creating the Paycheck Protection Program, Congress took swift action to provide a necessary lifeline. And while both programs have saved countless livelihoods, jobs, and businesses, millions more remain left out.

Unfortunately, it won't matter how much money Congress spends to ad-

dress these problems if Congress cannot track where the money is going to verify that it is reaching the families and businesses that need it most.

To that end, my colleagues and I have sent multiple oversight letters to SBA requesting detailed data and information on the implementation of the Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster Loans. To date, we have not received anything more than what SBA has published on their website. This is simply unacceptable.

It is vital that the administration be transparent and good stewards of taxpayers' dollars. I am proud to support the bipartisan effort before us today, led by my esteemed colleagues Mr. PHILLIPS of Minnesota and Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania.

The bill requires SBA to publish an online database of the recipients of PPP and EIDL loans over \$2 million. It would also list the number of employees at each business benefiting from this assistance and the amount of funds provided to underserved businesses.

This is precisely the kind of data Congress needs to ensure that the programs are being administered as intended and, more importantly, to ensure the scarce funds are reaching those communities and businesses that need it most.

Furthermore, the bill includes language that will decouple the 7(a) loan program and Paycheck Protection Program accounts.

Currently, both programs share the same appropriations account, meaning that once the Paycheck Protection Program appropriation lapses, the 7(a) loan program will shut down along with it. It was never congressional intent to tie the future of both programs together, so in order to preserve the sustainability of the 7(a) loan program, it is necessary to decouple the two accounts.

At a time when the future of the small business economy is so uncertain, it is of top importance to ensure the long-term sustainability of the 7(a) loan program. This language achieves that goal.

I applaud the bipartisanship and, more importantly, the commitment to being good stewards of the taxpayers' dollars.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues, Republican and Democrat, to join me in voting for stronger transparency and oversight of the CARES Act programs. Our hardworking small business owners and the American people deserve no less.

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

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

I rise in reluctant opposition to H.R. 6782, the Small Business Transparency and Reporting for the Underbanked and Taxpayers at Home Act, or the TRUTH Act, as amended.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to express my appreciation to Chairwoman

VELÁZQUEZ and her staff for working with me and with my staff on this legislation, as well as many other pieces of legislation in the past.

On this specific bill, we were able to negotiate a couple of changes that made the bill slightly more palatable for those of us on this side of the aisle, and that would have not happened without the chairwoman's leadership, so we do appreciate that.

That said, philosophically, it is exceptionally difficult for me and others on this side of the aisle to accept the bill in its entirety. For instance, I am a firm believer that small businesses are just that, small businesses; and as long as they qualify under the Small Business Act and the SBA size standards, no one small business ought to have to do anything different under the law than any other small business.

In addition to all the burdensome reporting requirements this legislation would impose on small businesses, there are two specific provisions that are difficult for us to support.

First, the bill we have before us attempts to name—and some would say, shame—businesses that are recent PPP loan recipients above \$2 million. And I do appreciate Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ going from \$250,000 to \$2 million.

These businesses—at least the ones that acted in good faith—followed the law and the guidelines and received their loans based on the best information available at that time, and I do not believe that those businesses should be put on public display for potential shaming.

If they didn't follow the rules, we have remedies for calling them out, such as the SBA's Office of the Inspector General, even the Department of Justice, to seek out waste, fraud, and abuse. Publicly naming them will do little to increase transparency or anything else, for that matter, we believe.

Second, the bill requires, albeit voluntarily, small businesses to disclose whether they are economically disadvantaged, minority owned, women owned, or veteran owned. As I mentioned previously, I believe we ought to be making regulatory burdens fewer and farther between, not imposing more paperwork that doesn't help any business fight this pandemic.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I reluctantly oppose this legislation but again thank the chairwoman for her leadership and willingness to work with us on these bills and on many issues facing America's small businesses moving forward.

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

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PHILLIPS), the sponsor of the bill.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about truth.

Now, you would think that truth would not be up for debate in this Chamber, yet here we stand literally

debating my bill, the TRUTH Act, which simply injects transparency and accountability into the very largest expenditure of taxpayer money in American history.

That is it. There is no hidden agenda, just a straightforward requirement for the Small Business Administration to publish information about how Federal relief dollars are flowing and where they are going. And that truth should be important to every American: business owners and patrons, bankers and borrowers, Republicans and Democrats.

We cannot accept a situation in which bigger businesses with access to other sources of liquidity are pushing to the front of the line at the expense of those with the greatest need, particularly minority-, women-, and veteran-owned businesses that are struggling the very most during the pandemic.

I won't accept it.

I am on a mission to restore Americans' faith in their government. But trust is earned by action, not by words. So I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting the TRUTH Act, in allowing the American people to see where their money is going and in ensuring that businesses that need relief the most are getting it.

They say that sunlight is the best disinfectant, and we could surely use more of it here.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time. I want to thank the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) on her leadership, and I regret that we cannot support this particular piece of legislation; however, I am certain that we will continue to work together in a bipartisan manner to address the needs of America's small businesses.

I would note, just in response, briefly, to the gentleman's mention that this is called the TRUTH Act, just because something is called the TRUTH Act doesn't necessarily mean that it is the truth, just like something called the Affordable Care Act doesn't necessarily mean it is going to make healthcare more affordable.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, when this body spent trillions of dollars to address the economic downturn brought about by COVID-19, we included a special inspector general to provide oversight over the expenditure of these dollars. Unfortunately, President Trump said the special IG could not issue reports to Congress without Presidential supervision and subsequently removed the acting IG at the Pentagon and chairman of the panel.

So with the erosion of accountability, transparency is needed more than ever. Congress needs to ensure that there is no waste, fraud, or abuse of taxpayers' dollars.

□ 1000

This data collection and transparency bill is a positive step in that direction, providing much-needed transparency and accountability. Knowledge is power and, with this bill, the public will finally have the knowledge on how these programs have been implemented, where the money has gone, who has gotten it and who hasn't.

Not only will this empower the people, it will empower Congress as we continue working to optimize the CARES Act programs.

The bill also clarifies the program accounts for the Paycheck Protection Program and the 7(a) Loan Program are wholly distinct, ensuring that the SBA's flagship lending program will not shut down when the Paycheck Protection Program appropriation lapses.

As the small business economy begins to recover in the coming weeks and months, small businesses need to be able to access affordable capital to rehire workers, restock their shelves, and resume operations. This language ensures the 7(a) program will be an option for them in the next phase of recovery.

I urge my colleagues to support this measure, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 6782, the Small Business Transparency and Reporting for the Underbanked and Taxpayers at Home Act or TRUTH Act, which directs the Small Business Administration (SBA) to explain and justify all disbursements of coronavirus relief funds, ensuring transparency and accountability from this critical agency.

Together, the CARES Act and the Payroll Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act together allocated more than \$2 trillion to address the devastating coronavirus pandemic, the most expensive relief package ever authorized by Congress, and the largest outlay of taxpayer funds in all human history.

The stakes simply are too high to allow irresponsible stewardship, and those charged with disbursing coronavirus relief funds must be held to the highest standards and held to account for misfeasance or malfeasance.

Mr. Speaker, it is wholly unacceptable that the SBA has not to date provided full transparency over its administration of the Payroll Protection Program (PPP) and Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program (EIDL).

PPP and EIDL were created by Congress to provide relief for small businesses affected by the pandemic, and more than \$700 billion has been allocated in service of those goals.

However, in too many cases the programs did not function as Congress intended, and large organizations such as the Los Angeles Lakers received funding while many of our smallest and most vulnerable businesses were unable to secure assistance.

In light of this mismanagement, it is imperative that SBA be subject to an exhaustive audit of its handling of PPP and EIDL funding.

The agency has refused to do so voluntarily, requiring Congress to mandate compliance from the agency that exists to serve small business, the backbone of the American economy.

The TRUTH Act would require the SBA to make the following information publicly avail-

able in an online, searchable, sortable, and downloadable format within 30 days of passage:

1. The identity of every recipient of a grant or loan that was funded by the CARES Act or the Payroll Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act;

2. An explanation of the SBA's decision-making process;

3. The number of employees at the entity in question;

4. The date when the grant or loan was disbursed;

5. The identification number of the bank or lender that administered the grant or loan; and

6. The amount of assistance provided to small businesses owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals, women, and veterans.

Mr. Speaker, the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged us in ways we could have scarcely imagined; it has claimed lives and destroyed livelihoods all across our nation.

We are in this together and we will come out stronger and better.

And we do that by caring for each other and rendering equal, justice and fairness, whether it is in the area of coronavirus testing, distribution of PPE, or economic assistance.

Our small businesses need help and they need the truth, which is why I urge my colleagues to join me in voting to pass H.R. 6782, the TRUTH Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6782, 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. ROY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3 of House Resolution 965, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question are postponed.

PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY ACT OF 2020

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7010) to amend the Small Business Act and the CARES Act to modify certain provisions related to the forgiveness of loans under the paycheck protection program, to allow recipients of loan forgiveness under the paycheck protection program to defer payroll taxes, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7010

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 "Paycheck Protection Program Flexibility Act of 2020".

SEC. 2. MATURITY FOR LOANS WITH REMAINING BALANCE AFTER APPLICATION OF FORGIVENESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7(a)(36)(K)(ii) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(a)(36))