

Because the removal of a veteran dependent requires a manual review, a debt is often created because VA's lengthy review process results in overpayments to veterans that, by law, VA must attempt to recoup.

I thank my good friend and fellow veteran, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, Congressman MIKE BOST from Illinois, for amending this bill while it was being considered in committee to require VA to establish a process to allow a veteran to remove a dependent through eBenefits as seamlessly as they add a dependent. This would remove the bureaucratic and archaic hurdles of the current paper-based process and reduce the creation of debts.

The remainder of the bill would streamline and improve VBA's debt collection process, so veterans have a transparent understanding of their rights and how to dispute debts when they do occur.

I thank the chairman and ranking member of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation, Congressman CHRIS PAPPAS from New Hampshire and General JACK BERGMAN from Michigan, for their work on this bill. I also thank Chairman PAPPAS for amending the bill that we reported out of the committee to address late-identified CBO scoring issues.

I believe that our bipartisan efforts produced a policy that is good for veterans and taxpayers alike, and I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill today.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. PAPPAS), my good friend, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, and also the author of this important piece of legislation.

Mr. PAPPAS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman TAKANO and Ranking Member ROE for their words, as well as for their efforts to help us get to yes on this important piece of legislation.

I rise in support of H.R. 5245, a bill I introduced along with my colleague, Congressman MAX ROSE, to fix some major problems directly affecting our veterans.

Last year, I heard from one of my constituents, New Hampshire veteran Jeff Varney, who contacted my office for assistance. Jeff, like thousands of other veterans across the country, is facing tremendous financial hardship due to VA errors.

Jeff was in disbelief when the VA informed him that he needed to repay years of benefit overpayments because of an apparent error that VA made decades ago.

So after a lifetime of service, and through no fault of his own, Jeff was told he is on the hook for more than \$11,000, even though VA produced no

accounting of how these debts were accrued.

Unfortunately, Jeff is not alone in this experience, and too many of our veterans are badly surprised when they receive letters saying they owe the VA money. Sometimes these debts reach thousands of dollars. During the hearings held by our Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, we heard from veterans service organizations about the pain and hardship that these surprises may bring.

Last fiscal year, the VA collected \$1.6 billion in debts from veterans. Sometimes these debts result from mistakes in disability payouts, changes in eligibility, or simple accounting errors that place an undue, unexpected financial burden on our veterans.

It is long past the time to clean this issue up. That is why today I am asking my colleagues to support the SHIELD for Veterans Act, which reforms VA debt collection processes and ensures we are making good on the promises we have made to our veterans.

The SHIELD Act prevents VA from collecting overpayments that came as a result of their own delays in processing and requires the VA to provide our veterans notice of an overpayment and their plan to collect it. It also requires VA to notify veterans of their ability to dispute the overpayment or request a waiver.

Under this bill, VA will issue a report to Congress on a plan to improve communications with our veterans on the debt issue.

The last thing that my constituent needs, and other constituents need, is to be hounded by debt collectors, especially if they have done everything right.

This is a bipartisan, commonsense bill, and I really want to thank the majority and minority staff for their work. I thank my ranking member, General BERGMAN, as well as Congressman BOST, for their contributions to helping make this bill better.

It is simply unacceptable that VA's mistakes or inefficiencies are going to hurt the men and women that they are supposed to serve.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this commonsense bill. It is one of the most common things we hear in our office, about an outrageous debt that a veteran owes back that they didn't know they owed because of a bureaucratic snafu. We have all heard these cases.

I thank my colleagues for bringing this up. We should have done this years ago.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I, too, urge passage of this commonsense solution. I very much also appreciate the bipartisan agreement that we have

reached that this is, indeed, a problem we should have fixed many years ago.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 5245, 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 California (Mr. TAKANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5245, 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.

DEPENDABLE EMPLOYMENT AND LIVING IMPROVEMENTS FOR VETERANS ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7105) to provide flexibility for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in caring for homeless veterans during a covered public health emergency, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7105

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Dependable Employment and Living Improvements for Veterans Economic Recovery Act” or the “DELIVER Act”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—ASSISTANCE FOR HOMELESS VETERANS

Sec. 101. Flexibility for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in caring for homeless veterans during a covered public health emergency.

Sec. 102. Expansion of eligibility for HUD-VASH.

Sec. 103. Legal services for homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness.

Sec. 104. Gap analysis of Department of Veterans Affairs Programs that provide assistance to women veterans who are homeless.

Sec. 105. Improvements to grants and agreements between the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and entities that provide services to homeless veterans.

Sec. 106. Repeal of sunset on authority to carry out program of referral and counseling services for veterans at risk for homelessness who are transitioning from certain institutions.

Sec. 107. Coordination of case management services for veterans receiving housing vouchers under Tribal HUD-VASH program.

Sec. 108. Contracting for HUD-VASH case managers.

Sec. 109. Report on HUD-VASH staffing, training, and data systems.

TITLE II—RETRAINING ASSISTANCE FOR VETERANS

Sec. 201. COVID-19 Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program.

- Sec. 202. Access for the Secretaries of Labor and Veterans Affairs to the Federal directory of new hires.
- Sec. 203. Expansion of eligible class of providers of high technology programs of education for veterans.
- Sec. 204. Pilot program for off-base transition training for veterans and spouses.
- Sec. 205. Grants for provision of transition assistance to members of the Armed Forces after separation, retirement, or discharge.
- Sec. 206. One-year independent assessment of the effectiveness of Transition Assistance Program.
- Sec. 207. Longitudinal study on changes to TAP.
- Sec. 208. Department of Veterans Affairs loan fees.

TITLE I—ASSISTANCE FOR HOMELESS VETERANS

SEC. 101. FLEXIBILITY FOR THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IN CARING FOR HOMELESS VETERANS DURING A COVERED PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY.

(a) GENERAL SUPPORT.—

(1) USE OF FUNDS.—During a covered public health emergency, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may use amounts appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs to carry out sections 2011, 2012, 2031, and 2061 of title 38, United States Code, to provide to homeless veterans and veterans participating in the program carried out under section 8(o)(19) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(19)) (commonly referred to as “HUD-VASH”), as the Secretary determines is needed, the following:

(A) Assistance required for safety and survival (such as food, shelter, clothing, blankets, and hygiene items).

(B) Transportation required to support stability and health (such as for appointments with service providers, conducting housing searches, and obtaining food and supplies).

(C) Communications equipment and services (such as tablets, smartphones, disposable phones, and related service plans) required to support stability and health (such as maintaining contact with service providers, prospective landlords, and family).

(D) Such other assistance as the Secretary determines is needed.

(2) HOMELESS VETERANS ON LAND OF THE DEPARTMENT.—

(A) COLLABORATION.—During a covered public health emergency, to the extent possible, the Secretary may collaborate with one or more organizations to manage use of land of the Department for homeless veterans for living and sleeping.

(B) ELEMENTS.—Collaboration under subparagraph (A) may include the provision by either the Secretary or the organization of food services and security for property, buildings, and other facilities owned or controlled by the Department.

(b) GRANT AND PER DIEM PROGRAM.—

(1) LIMITS ON RATES FOR PER DIEM PAYMENTS.—Section 20013(b) of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (Public Law 116-136) is amended—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and (2) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), respectively;

(B) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), as so redesignated, by inserting “(1)” before “In the case”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(2) If the Secretary waives any limit on grant amounts or rates for per diem payments under paragraph (1), notwithstanding section 2012(a)(2)(B) of such title, the maximum rate for per diem payments described in paragraph (1)(B) shall be three times the

rate authorized for State homes for domiciliary care under section 1741 of such title.”.

(2) USE OF PER DIEM PAYMENTS.—During a covered public health emergency, a recipient of a grant or an eligible entity under the grant and per diem program of the Department (in this subsection referred to as the “program”) may use per diem payments under sections 2012 and 2061 of title 38, United States Code, to provide assistance required for safety and survival (such as food, shelter, clothing, blankets, and hygiene items) for—

(A) homeless veterans; and

(B) formerly homeless veterans residing in a facility operated wholly or in part by such a recipient or eligible entity receiving per diem payments under section 2012 of such title.

(3) ADDITIONAL TRANSITIONAL HOUSING.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—During a covered public health emergency, under the program, the Secretary may provide amounts for additional transitional housing beds to facilitate access to housing and services provided to homeless veterans.

(B) NOTICE; COMPETITION; PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE.—The Secretary may provide amounts under subparagraph (A)—

(i) without notice or competition; and

(ii) for a period of performance determined by the Secretary.

(4) INSPECTIONS AND LIFE SAFETY CODE REQUIREMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—During a covered public health emergency, the Secretary may waive any requirement under subsection (b) or (c) of section 2012 of title 38, United States Code, in order to allow the recipient of a grant or an eligible entity under the program—

(i) to quickly identify temporary alternate sites of care for homeless veterans that are suitable for habitation;

(ii) to facilitate social distancing or isolation needs; or

(iii) to facilitate activation or continuation of a program for which a grant has been awarded.

(B) LIMITATION.—The Secretary may waive a requirement pursuant to the authority provided by subparagraph (A) with respect to a facility of a recipient of a grant or an eligible entity under the program only if the facility meets applicable local safety requirements, including fire safety requirements.

(c) INSPECTION AND LIFE SAFETY CODE REQUIREMENTS FOR THERAPEUTIC HOUSING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—During a covered public health emergency, the Secretary may waive any inspection or life safety code requirement under subsection (c) of section 2032 of title 38, United States Code—

(A) to allow quick identification of temporary alternate sites of care for homeless veterans that are suitable for habitation;

(B) to facilitate social distancing or isolation needs; or

(C) to facilitate the operation of housing under such section.

(2) LIMITATION.—The Secretary may waive a requirement pursuant to the authority provided by paragraph (1) with respect to a residence or facility referred to in such section 2032 only if the residence or facility, as the case may be, meets applicable local safety requirements, including fire safety requirements.

(d) ACCESS TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TELEHEALTH SERVICES.—To the extent practicable, during a covered public health emergency, the Secretary shall ensure that veterans participating in or receiving services from a program under chapter 20 of title 38, United States Code, have access to telehealth services to which such veterans are eligible under the laws administered by the Secretary, including by ensuring that telehealth capabilities are available to—

(1) such veterans;

(2) case managers of the Department of programs for homeless veterans authorized under such chapter; and

(3) community-based service providers for homeless veterans receiving funds from the Department through grants or contracts.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COVERED PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY.—The term “covered public health emergency” means an emergency with respect to COVID-19 declared by a Federal, State, or local authority.

(2) HOMELESS VETERAN; VETERAN.—The terms “homeless veteran” and “veteran” have the meanings given those terms in section 2002 of title 38, United States Code.

(3) TELEHEALTH.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “telehealth” means the use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to support and promote long-distance clinical health care, patient and professional health-related education, public health, and health administration.

(B) TECHNOLOGIES.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), “telecommunications technologies” include video conferencing, the internet, streaming media, and terrestrial and wireless communications.

(f) EMERGENCY DESIGNATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—This section is designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 4(g) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (2 U.S.C. 933(g)).

(2) DESIGNATION IN SENATE.—In the Senate, this section is designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 4112(a) of H. Con. Res. 71 (115th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018.

SEC. 102. EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR HUD-VASH.

(a) HUD PROVISIONS.—Section 8(o)(19) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(19)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(D) VETERAN DEFINED.—In this paragraph, the term ‘veteran’ has the meaning given that term in section 2002(b) of title 38, United States Code.”.

(b) VHA CASE MANAGERS.—Subsection (b) of section 2003 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following: “In the case of vouchers provided under the HUD-VASH program under section 8(o)(19) of such Act, for purposes of the preceding sentence, the term ‘veteran’ shall have the meaning given such term in section 2002(b) of this title.”.

(c) ANNUAL REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not less frequently than once each year, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the homelessness services provided under programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including services under the program carried out under section 8(o)(19) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(19)) (commonly referred to as “HUD-VASH”).

(2) INCLUDED INFORMATION.—Each such annual report shall include, with respect to the year preceding the submittal of the report—

(A) a statement of the number of eligible individuals who were furnished such homelessness services;

(B) the number of individuals furnished such services under each such program, disaggregated by the number of men who received such services and the number of women who received such services; and

(C) such other information the Secretary determines appropriate.

SEC. 103. LEGAL SERVICES FOR HOMELESS VETERANS AND VETERANS AT RISK FOR HOMELESSNESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 20 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 2022 the following new section:

“§ 2022A. Legal services for homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness

“(a) GRANTS.—Subject to the availability of appropriations provided for such purpose, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall make grants to eligible entities that provide legal services to homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness.

“(b) CRITERIA.—(1) The Secretary shall—

“(A) establish criteria and requirements for grants under this section, including criteria for entities eligible to receive such grants; and

“(B) publish such criteria and requirements in the Federal Register.

“(2) In establishing criteria and requirements under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

“(A) take into consideration any criteria and requirements needed with respect to carrying out this section in rural communities, Tribal lands, and the territories and possessions of the United States; and

“(B) consult with organizations that have experience in providing services to homeless veterans, including veterans service organizations, the Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps Veterans Legal Corps, and other organizations the Secretary determines appropriate.

“(c) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—The Secretary may make a grant under this section to an entity applying for such a grant only if the applicant for the grant—

“(1) is a public or nonprofit private entity with the capacity (as determined by the Secretary) to effectively administer a grant under this section;

“(2) demonstrates that adequate financial support will be available to carry out the services for which the grant is sought consistent with the application;

“(3) agrees to meet the applicable criteria and requirements established under subsection (b)(1); and

“(4) has, as determined by the Secretary, demonstrated the capacity to meet such criteria and requirements.

“(d) USE OF FUNDS.—Grants under this section shall be used to provide homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness the following legal services:

“(1) Legal services related to housing, including eviction defense, representation in landlord-tenant cases, and representation in foreclosure cases.

“(2) Legal services related to family law, including assistance in court proceedings for child support, divorce, estate planning, and family reconciliation.

“(3) Legal services related to income support, including assistance in obtaining public benefits.

“(4) Legal services related to criminal defense, including defense in matters symptomatic of homelessness, such as outstanding warrants, fines, and driver's license revocation, to reduce recidivism and facilitate the overcoming of reentry obstacles in employment or housing.

“(5) Legal services related to requests to upgrade the characterization of a discharge or dismissal of a former member of the Armed Forces under section 1553 of title 10.

“(6) Such other legal services as the Secretary determines appropriate.

“(e) FUNDS FOR WOMEN VETERANS.—For any fiscal year, not less than 10 percent of the amount authorized to be appropriated for grants under this section shall be used to provide legal services described in subsection (d) to women veterans.

“(f) LOCATIONS.—To the extent practicable, the Secretary shall make grants under this section to eligible entities in a manner that is equitably distributed across the geographic regions of the United States, including with respect to—

“(1) rural communities;

“(2) Tribal lands;

“(3) Native Americans; and

“(4) Tribal organizations.

“(g) REPORTS.—On a biennial basis, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report on grants under this section. To the extent feasible, each such report shall include the following with respect to the year covered by the report:

“(1) The number of homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness assisted.

“(2) A description of the legal services provided.

“(3) A description of the legal matters addressed.

“(4) An analysis by the Secretary with respect to the operational effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of the services provided.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 2022 the following new item:

“2022A. Legal services for homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness.”.

(c) CRITERIA.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish the criteria and requirements in the Federal Register pursuant to subsection (b)(1) of section 2022A of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

SEC. 104. GAP ANALYSIS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO WOMEN VETERANS WHO ARE HOMELESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall complete an analysis of programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs that provide assistance to women veterans who are homeless or precariously housed to identify the areas in which such programs are failing to meet the needs of such women.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the analysis completed under subsection (a).

SEC. 105. IMPROVEMENTS TO GRANTS AND AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND ENTITIES THAT PROVIDE SERVICES TO HOMELESS VETERANS.

(a) INCREASE IN PER DIEM PAYMENTS.—Subsection (a)(2)(B) of section 2012 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking clause (i) and inserting the following:

“(i) Except as provided in clause (ii) or (iii) and subject to the availability of appropriations, the Secretary shall determine the rate under this paragraph, which—

“(I) may not—

“(aa) be lower than the amount in effect under this clause as in effect immediately preceding the enactment of the Dependable Employment and Living Improvements for Veterans Economic Recovery Act; or

“(bb) exceed the amount that is 115 percent of the rate authorized for State homes for domiciliary care under subsection (a)(1)(A) of section 1741 of this title, as the Secretary may increase from time to time under subsection (c) of that section; and

“(II) may be determined on the basis of locality.”; 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.”.

(b) REIMBURSEMENT OF CERTAIN FEES.—Such section is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(e) REIMBURSEMENT OF ENTITIES FOR CERTAIN FEES.—The Secretary may reimburse the recipient of a grant under section 2011, 2012, 2013, or 2061 of this title for fees charged to that grant recipient for the use of the homeless management information system described in section 402 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Public Law 100-77; 42 U.S.C. 11630a)—

“(1) in amounts the Secretary determines to be reasonable; and

“(2) if the Secretary determines that the grant recipient is unable to obtain information contained in such system through other means and at no cost to the grant recipient.”.

SEC. 106. REPEAL OF SUNSET ON AUTHORITY TO CARRY OUT PROGRAM OF REFERRAL AND COUNSELING SERVICES FOR VETERANS AT RISK FOR HOMELESSNESS WHO ARE TRANSITIONING FROM CERTAIN INSTITUTIONS.

Section 2023 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (d); and

(2) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (d).

SECTION 107. COORDINATION OF CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES FOR VETERANS RECEIVING HOUSING VOUCHERS UNDER TRIBAL HUD-VASH PROGRAM.

Section 2003 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(c) MOU ON IHS ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Secretary of Health and Human Services under which case managers of the Indian Health Service may provide case management assistance to veterans who receive housing vouchers under the Tribal HUD-VASH program of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.”.

SEC. 108. CONTRACTING FOR HUD-VASH CASE MANAGERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 304 of the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-154; 38 U.S.C. 2041 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by inserting “(1)” before “The Secretary”;

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(2)(A) Subject to subparagraphs (B) and (C), the director of a covered medical center shall seek to enter into a contract or agreement described in paragraph (1).

“(B) A contract or agreement under subparagraph (A) may require that a case manager employed by an eligible entity have credentials equivalent to those of a case manager of the Department.

“(C) The Secretary may waive the requirement under subparagraph (A) if the Secretary determines that fulfilling such requirement is infeasible. If the Secretary grants such a waiver, the Secretary shall submit, not later than 90 days after granting such waiver, to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives, a report containing—

“(i) an explanation of that determination;

“(ii) a plan to increase the number of case managers of the Department; and

“(iii) a plan for the covered medical center to increase use of such vouchers.

“(D) In this paragraph, the term ‘covered medical center’ means a medical center of the Department that the Secretary determines—

“(i) had more than 15 percent of all vouchers allocated to that medical center under the program described in paragraph (1) through the fiscal year preceding such determination go unused due to a lack of case management services provided by the Secretary; and

“(ii) has a case manager position that has been vacant for at least nine consecutive months immediately preceding the date of such determination.”; and

(2) in subsection (b)(2)—

(A) in the matter before subparagraph (A), by striking “, including because—” and inserting a period; and

(B) by striking subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C).

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the first day of the first fiscal year to begin on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 109. REPORT ON HUD-VASH STAFFING, TRAINING, AND DATA SYSTEMS.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every three years thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report that includes the following:

(1) An assessment of the hiring needs of the program carried out under section 8(o)(19) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(19)) (commonly referred to as “HUD-VASH”), including—

(A) identification of the number of HUD-VASH case managers as of the date of the report including—

(i) the total number of vacancies; and

(ii) the vacancies at each medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

(B) the number of HUD-VASH case managers that the Secretaries of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development determine necessary to meet the needs of the Department and program; and

(C) the amount of turnover among HUD-VASH case managers and whether the turnover was planned or unexpected.

(2) An assessment of how compensation, including recruitment and retention incentives, for HUD-VASH case managers affects turnover, and what percentage of retention compensation is provided to case managers at each medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs (compared to other positions).

(3) A comparison of compensation described in paragraph (2) with the compensation provided to State, local, and nongovernmental housing employees at comparable training and experience levels.

(4) Examples of how the Departments have worked with non-Federal partners (such as local governments, nongovernmental organizations, veterans service organizations, and employee unions) to meet the staffing needs of the HUD-VASH program.

(5) Examples of how medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs with high retention rates for HUD-VASH case managers have been able to maintain their staffing levels.

TITLE II—RETRAINING ASSISTANCE FOR VETERANS

SEC. 201. COVID-19 VETERAN RAPID RETRAINING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a program under which the Secretary shall provide up

to 12 months of retraining assistance to an eligible veteran for the pursuit of a covered program of education. Such retraining assistance shall be in addition to any other entitlement to educational assistance or benefits for which a veteran is, or has been, eligible.

(b) ELIGIBLE VETERANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this section, the term “eligible veteran” means a veteran who—

(A) as of the date of the receipt by the Department of Veterans Affairs of the application for assistance under this section, is at least 22 years of age but not more than 66 years of age;

(B) as of such date, is unemployed by reason of the covered public health emergency, as certified by the veteran;

(C) as of such date, is not eligible to receive educational assistance under chapter 30, 31, 32, 33, or 35 of title 38, United States Code, or chapter 1606 of title 10, United States Code;

(D) is not enrolled in any Federal or State jobs program;

(E) is not in receipt of compensation for a service-connected disability rated totally disabling by reason of unemployability; and

(F) will not be in receipt of unemployment compensation (as defined in section 85(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986), including any cash benefit received pursuant to subtitle A of title II of division A of the CARES Act (Public Law 116-136), as of the first day on which the veteran would receive a housing stipend payment under this section.

(2) TREATMENT OF VETERANS WHO TRANSFER ENTITLEMENT.—For purposes of paragraph (1)(C), a veteran who has transferred all of the veteran’s entitlement to educational assistance under section 3319 of title 38, United States Code, shall be considered to be a veteran who is not eligible to receive educational assistance under chapter 33 of such title.

(3) FAILURE TO COMPLETE.—A veteran who receives retraining assistance under this section to pursue a program of education and who fails to complete the program of education shall not be eligible to receive additional assistance under this section.

(c) COVERED PROGRAMS OF EDUCATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this section, a covered program of education is a program of education (as such term is defined in section 3452(b) of title 38, United States Code) for training, pursued on a full-time or part-time basis—

(A) that—

(i) is approved under chapter 36 of such title;

(ii) does not lead to a bachelors or graduate degree; and

(iii) is designed to provide training for a high-demand occupation, as determined under paragraph (3); or

(B) that is a high technology program of education offered by a qualified provider, under the meaning given such terms in section 116 of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-48; 38 U.S.C. 3001 note).

(2) ACCREDITED PROGRAMS.—In the case of an accredited program of education, the program of education shall not be considered a covered program of education under this section if the program has received a show cause order from the accreditor of the program during the five-year period preceding the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) DETERMINATION OF HIGH-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS.—

(A) INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION.—In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall use the list of high-demand occupations compiled by the Commissioner of Labor Statistics until

the final list under subparagraph (C) is complete.

(B) STUDY REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enter into an agreement with a federally funded research and development corporation or another appropriate non-Department entity for the conduct of a study to determine which occupations are high-demand occupations. Such study shall be completed not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(C) FINAL LIST.—The Secretary—

(i) may add or remove occupation from the list in use pursuant to subparagraph (A) during the 90-day period following the completion of the study required by subparagraph (B);

(ii) shall issue a final list of high-demand occupations for use under this section by not later than 90 days after the date of the completion of the study; and

(iii) shall make such final list publicly available on a website of the Department.

(D) USE OF LIST.—The Secretary shall use the list developed under this paragraph in order to apply the requirement that retraining assistance under this section is used for training for a high-demand occupation, but the Secretary may remove occupations from the list as the Secretary determines appropriate.

(4) FULL-TIME DEFINED.—For purposes of this subsection, the term “full-time” has the meaning given such term under section 3688 of title 38, United States Code.

(d) AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE.—

(1) RETRAINING ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide to an eligible veteran pursuing a covered program of education under the retraining assistance program under this section an amount equal to the amount of educational assistance payable under section 3313(c)(1)(A) of title 38, United States Code, for each month the veteran pursues the covered program of education. Such amount shall be payable directly to the educational institution offering the covered program of education pursued by the veteran as follows:

(A) 50 percent of the total amount payable shall be paid when the eligible veteran begins the program of education.

(B) 25 percent of the total amount payable shall be paid when the eligible veteran completes the program of education.

(C) 25 percent of the total amount payable shall be paid when the eligible veteran finds employment in a field related to the program of education.

(2) FAILURE TO COMPLETE.—

(A) PRO-RATED PAYMENTS.—In the case of a veteran who pursues a covered program of education under the retraining assistance program under this section, but who does not complete the program of education, the Secretary shall pay to the educational institution offering such program of education a pro-rated amount based on the number of months the veteran pursued the program of education in accordance with this paragraph.

(B) PAYMENT OTHERWISE DUE UPON COMPLETION OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall pay to the educational institution a pro-rated amount under paragraph (1)(B) when the veteran provides notice to the educational institution that the veteran no longer intends to pursue the program of education.

(C) NONRECOVERY FROM VETERAN.—In the case of a veteran referred to in subparagraph (A), the educational institution may not seek payment from the veteran for any amount that would have been payable under paragraph (1)(B) had the veteran completed the program of education.

(D) PAYMENT DUE UPON EMPLOYMENT.—

(i) **VETERANS WHO FIND EMPLOYMENT.**—In the case of a veteran referred to in subparagraph (A) who finds employment in a field related to the program of education during the 180-day period beginning on the date on which the veteran withdraws from the program of education, the Secretary shall pay to the educational institution a pro-rated amount under paragraph (1)(C) when the veteran finds such employment.

(ii) **VETERANS WHO DO NOT FIND EMPLOYMENT.**—In the case of a veteran referred to in subparagraph (A) who does not find employment in a field related to the program of education during the 180-day period beginning on the date on which the veteran withdraws from the program of education—

(I) the Secretary shall not make a payment to the educational institution under paragraph (1)(C); and

(II) the educational institution may not seek payment from the veteran for any amount that would have been payable under paragraph (1)(C) had the veteran found employment during such 180-day period.

(3) **HOUSING STIPEND.**—For each month that an eligible veteran pursues a covered program of education under the retraining assistance program under this section, the Secretary shall pay to the veteran a monthly housing stipend in an amount equal to—

(A) in the case of a covered program of education leading to a degree, or a covered program of education not leading to a degree, at an institution of higher learning (as that term is defined in section 3452(f) of title 38, United States Code) pursued on more than a half-time basis, the amount specified under subsection (c)(1)(B) of section 3313 of title 38, United States Code;

(B) in the case of a covered program of education other than a program of education leading to a degree at an institution other than an institution of higher learning pursued on more than a half-time basis, the amount specified under subsection (g)(3)(A)(i) of such section; or

(C) in the case of a covered program of education pursued on less than a half-time basis, or a covered program of education pursued solely through distance learning on more than a half-time basis, the amount specified under subsection (c)(1)(B)(iii) of such section.

(4) **FAILURE TO FIND EMPLOYMENT.**—The Secretary shall not make a payment under paragraph (1)(C) with respect to an eligible veteran who completes or fails to complete a program of education under the retraining assistance program under this section if the veteran fails to find employment in a field related to the program of education within the 180-day period beginning on the date on which the veteran withdraws from or completes the program.

(e) **NO TRANSFERABILITY.**—Retraining assistance provided under this section may not be transferred to another individual.

(f) **EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Labor shall contact each veteran who pursues a covered program of education under this section—

(A) not later than 30 days after the date on which the veteran begins the program of education to notify the veteran of the availability of employment placement services upon completion of the program; and

(B) not later than 14 days after the date on which the veteran completes, or terminates participation in, such program to facilitate the provision of employment placement services to such veteran.

(2) **PROVISION OF INFORMATION.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide to the Secretary of Labor such information as may be necessary to carry out paragraph (1).

(g) **NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall seek to enter into a memorandum of understanding with one or more qualified nonprofit organizations for the purpose of facilitating the employment of veterans who participate in the retraining assistance program under this section.

(2) **QUALIFIED NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION.**—For purposes of this subsection, a qualified nonprofit organization is a nonprofit organization that—

(A) is an association of businesses; and

(B) has at least two years of experience providing job placement services for veterans.

(h) **FOLLOW UP OUTREACH.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in coordination with the Secretary of Labor shall contact each veteran who completes a covered program of education under the retraining assistance program under this section 30, 60, 90, and 180 days after the veteran completes such program of education to ask the veteran about the experience of the veteran in the retraining assistance program and the veteran's employment status.

(i) **QUARTERLY REPORTS.**—Not later than the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and quarterly thereafter, the Secretary of Labor shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report containing the following information about veterans who participate in the retraining assistance program under this section:

(1) The percentage of such veterans who found employment before the end of the second calendar quarter after exiting the program.

(2) The percentage of such veterans who found employment before the end of the fourth calendar quarter after exiting the program.

(3) The median earnings of all such veterans for the second quarter after exiting the program.

(4) The percentage of such veterans who attain a recognized postsecondary credential during the 12-month period after exiting the program.

(j) **LIMITATION.**—Not more than 17,250 eligible veterans may receive retraining assistance under this section.

(k) **TERMINATION.**—No retraining assistance may be paid under this section after the date that is 21 months after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(l) **GAO REPORT.**—Not later than 180 days after the termination of the retraining assistance program under subsection (k), the Comptroller General shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the outcomes and effectiveness of the program.

(m) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) The term “covered public health emergency” means the declaration—

(A) of a public health emergency, based on an outbreak of COVID-19 by the Secretary of Health and Human Services under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 247d); or

(B) of a domestic emergency, based on an outbreak of COVID-19 by the President, the Secretary of Homeland Security, or State, or local authority.

(2) The term “veteran” means—

(A) a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable; or

(B) a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces who performs active service for a period of 30 days or longer by reason of the covered public health emergency.

(3) The term “active service” has the meaning given such term in section 101 of title 10, United States Code.

(n) **FUNDING.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—For each fiscal year for which the Secretary provides retraining assistance under this section, such sums as may be necessary shall be made available for such assistance from funds appropriated to, or otherwise made available to, the Department for the payment of readjustment benefits.

(2) **ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.**—There is authorized to be appropriated \$15,000,000 to carry out administrative functions of this section.

(o) **INITIATION OF PAYMENTS.**—The Secretary may begin providing retraining assistance under this section on the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 202. ACCESS FOR THE SECRETARIES OF LABOR AND VETERANS AFFAIRS TO THE FEDERAL DIRECTORY OF NEW HIRES.

Section 453A(h) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 653a(h)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(4) **VETERAN EMPLOYMENT.**—The Secretaries of Labor and of Veterans Affairs shall have access to information reported by employers pursuant to subsection (b) of this section for purposes of tracking employment of veterans.”.

SEC. 203. EXPANSION OF ELIGIBLE CLASS OF PROVIDERS OF HIGH TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS OF EDUCATION FOR VETERANS.

Section 116 of the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-48; 38 U.S.C. 3001 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by adding at the end the following: “The Secretary shall treat an individual as an eligible veteran if the Secretary determines that the individual shall become an eligible veteran fewer than 180 days after the date of such determination. If an individual treated as an eligible veteran by reason of the preceding sentence does anything to make the veteran ineligible during the 180-day period referred to in such sentence, the Secretary may require the veteran to repay any benefits received by such veteran by reason of such sentence.”;

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (3)(A), by striking “has been operational for at least 2 years” and inserting “employs instructors whom the Secretary determines are experts in their respective fields in accordance with paragraph (6)”;

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(6) **EXPERTS.**—The Secretary shall determine whether instructors are experts under paragraph (3)(A) based on evidence furnished to the Secretary by the provider regarding the ability of the instructors to—

“(A) identify professions in need of new employees to hire, tailor the programs to meet market needs, and identify the employers likely to hire graduates;

“(B) effectively teach the skills offered to eligible veterans;

“(C) provide relevant industry experience in the fields of programs offered to incoming eligible veterans; and

“(D) demonstrate relevant industry experience in such fields of programs.”;

(3) in subsection (d), in the matter preceding paragraph (1)—

(A) by inserting “(not including an individual described in the second sentence of subsection (b))” after “each eligible veteran”;

(B) by inserting “or part-time” after “full-time”;

(4) in subsection (g), by striking “\$15,000,000” and inserting “\$45,000,000”; and
 (5) by adding at the end the following new subsection (i):

“(i) PROHIBITION ON CERTAIN ACCOUNTING OF ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may not consider enrollment in a high technology program of education under this section to be assistance under a provision of law referred to in section 3695 of title 38, United States Code.”.

SEC. 204. PILOT PROGRAM FOR OFF-BASE TRANSITION TRAINING FOR VETERANS AND SPOUSES.

(a) EXTENSION OF PILOT PROGRAM.—Subsection (a) of section 301 of the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans’ Benefits Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-260; 10 U.S.C. 1144 note) is amended—

(1) by striking “During the two-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act” and inserting “During the 5-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Dependable Employment and Living Improvements for Veterans Economic Recovery Act”; and

(2) by striking “to assess the feasibility and advisability of providing such program to eligible individuals at locations other than military installations”.

(b) LOCATIONS.—Subsection (c) of such section is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking “not less than three and not more than five States” and inserting “not fewer than 50 locations in States (as defined in section 101 of title 38, United States Code)”; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking “at least two” and inserting “at least 20”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(5) PREFERENCES.—In selecting States for participation in the pilot program, the Secretary shall provide a preference for any State with—

“(A) a high rate of usage of unemployment benefits for recently separated members of the Armed Forces; or

“(B) a labor force or economy that has been significantly impacted by the covered public health emergency.

“(6) COVERED PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY.—In this subsection, the term ‘covered public health emergency’ means the declaration—

“(A) of a public health emergency, based on an outbreak of COVID-19 by the Secretary of Health and Human Services under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 247d); or

“(B) of a domestic emergency, based on an outbreak of COVID-19 by the President, the Secretary of Homeland Security, or State, or local authority.”.

(c) ANNUAL REPORT.—Subsection (e) of such section is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: “Each such report shall include information about the employment outcomes of the eligible individuals who received such training during the year covered by the report.”.

(d) CONFORMING REPEAL.—Subsection (f) of such section is repealed.

SEC. 205. GRANTS FOR PROVISION OF TRANSITION ASSISTANCE TO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AFTER SEPARATION, RETIREMENT, OR DISCHARGE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall make grants to eligible organizations for the provision of transition assistance to members of the Armed Forces who are separated, retired, or discharged from the Armed Forces, and spouses of such members.

(b) USE OF FUNDS.—The recipient of a grant under this section shall use the grant to provide to members of the Armed Forces and spouses described in subsection (a) resume

assistance, interview training, job recruitment training, and related services leading directly to successful transition, as determined by the Secretary.

(c) ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS.—To be eligible for a grant under this section, an organization shall submit to the Secretary an application containing such information and assurances as the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor, may require.

(d) PRIORITY.—In making grants under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to an organization that—

(1) provides multiple forms of services described in subsection (b); or

(2) is located in a State with—

(A) a high rate of veteran unemployment;

(B) a high rate of usage of unemployment benefits for recently separated members of the Armed Forces; or

(C) a labor force or economy that has been significantly impacted by the covered public health emergency (as such term is defined in section 201(1)(1)).

(e) AMOUNT OF GRANT.—A grant under this section shall be in an amount that does not exceed 50 percent of the amount required by the organization to provide the services described in subsection (b).

(f) DEADLINE.—The Secretary shall carry out this section not later than six months after the effective date of this Act.

(g) TERMINATION.—The authority to provide a grant under this section shall terminate on the date that is five years after the date on which the Secretary implements the grant program under this section.

(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated \$10,000,000 to carry out this section.

SEC. 206. ONE-YEAR INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the covered officials, shall enter into an agreement with an appropriate entity with experience in adult education to carry out a one-year independent assessment of the Transition Assistance Program under sections 1142 and 1144 of title 10, United States Code (in this section referred to as “TAP”), including—

(1) the effectiveness of TAP for members of each military department during the entire military life cycle;

(2) the appropriateness of the TAP career readiness standards;

(3) a review of information that is provided to the Department of Veterans Affairs under TAP, including mental health data;

(4) whether TAP effectively addresses the challenges veterans face entering the civilian workforce and in translating experience and skills from military service to the job market;

(5) whether TAP effectively addresses the challenges faced by the families of veterans making the transition to civilian life;

(6) appropriate metrics regarding TAP outcomes for members of the Armed Forces one year after separation, retirement, or discharge from the Armed Forces;

(7) what the Secretary, in consultation with the covered officials and veterans service organizations determine to be successful outcomes for TAP;

(8) whether members of the Armed Forces achieve successful outcomes for TAP, as determined under paragraph (7);

(9) how the Secretary and the covered officials provide feedback to each other regarding such outcomes;

(10) recommendations for the Secretaries of the military departments regarding how to improve outcomes for members of the Armed Forces after separation, retirement, and discharge; and

(11) other topics the Secretary and the covered officials determine would aid members of the Armed Forces as they transition to civilian life.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the completion of the independent assessment under subsection (a), the Secretary and the covered officials, shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives and the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and House of Representatives—

(1) the findings and recommendations (including recommended legislation) of the independent assessment prepared by the entity described in subsection (a); and

(2) responses of the Secretary and the covered officials to the findings and recommendations described in paragraph (1).

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “covered officials” means—

(A) the Secretary of Defense;

(B) the Secretary of Labor;

(C) the Administrator of the Small Business Administration; and

(D) the Secretaries of the military departments.

(2) The term “military department” has the meaning given that term in section 101 of title 10, United States Code.

SEC. 207. LONGITUDINAL STUDY ON CHANGES TO TAP.

(a) STUDY.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretaries of Defense and Labor and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, shall conduct a five-year longitudinal study regarding the Transition Assistance Program under sections 1142 and 1144 of title 10, United States Code (in this section referred to as “TAP”), on three separate cohorts of members of the Armed Forces who have separated from the Armed Forces, including—

(1) a cohort that has attended TAP counseling as implemented on the date of the enactment of this Act;

(2) a cohort that attends TAP counseling after the Secretaries of Defense and Labor implement changes recommended in the report under section 206(b); and

(3) a cohort that has not attended TAP counseling.

(b) PROGRESS REPORTS.—Not later than 90 days after the date that is one year after the date of the initiation of the study under subsection (a) and annually thereafter for the three subsequent years, the Secretaries of Veterans Affairs, Defense, and Labor, and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives and the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and House of Representatives a progress report of activities under the study during the immediately preceding year.

(c) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the completion of the study under subsection (a), the Secretaries of Veterans Affairs, Defense, and Labor, and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives and the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and House of Representatives a report of final findings and recommendations based on the study.

(d) ELEMENTS.—The final report under subsection (c) shall include information regarding the following:

(1) The percentage of each cohort that received unemployment benefits during the study.

(2) The numbers of months members of each cohort were employed during the study.

(3) Annual starting and ending salaries of members of each cohort who were employed during the study.

(4) How many members of each cohort enrolled in an institution of higher learning, as that term is defined in section 3452(f) of title 38, United States Code.

(5) The academic credit hours, degrees, and certificates obtained by members of each cohort during the study.

(6) The annual income of members of each cohort.

(7) The total household income of members of each cohort.

(8) How many members of each cohort own their principal residences.

(9) How many dependents that members of each cohort have.

(10) The percentage of each cohort that achieves a successful outcome for TAP, as determined under section 206(a)(7).

(11) Other criteria the Secretaries and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration determine appropriate.

SEC. 208. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS LOAN FEES.

The loan fee table in section 3729(b)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking subparagraph (E) and inserting the following:

(E)(i) Interest rate reduction refinancing loan issued before January 1, 2021	0.50	0.50	NA
(E)(ii) Interest rate reduction refinancing loan issued on or after January 1, 2021, and before January 15, 2027	0.85	0.85	NA
(E)(iii) Interest rate reduction refinancing loan issued on or after January 15, 2027	0.50	0.50	NA

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. Madam 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. 7105, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7105, as amended, the DELIVER Act.

H.R. 7105, as amended, was introduced by Representative MIKE LEVIN, chairman of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, in June of this year. But the package before us encompasses many of the issues his subcommittee has worked on to reduce homelessness and improve employment opportunities for veterans.

This bipartisan package encompasses seven bipartisan, bicameral pieces of legislation to improve the lives of veterans experiencing hardships.

First, section 101 of this package includes Chairman LEVIN's Homeless Veterans Coronavirus Response Act. This section includes temporary authorities for the Department of Veterans Affairs to effectively assist veterans during this difficult time.

Madam Speaker, that means giving VA the ability to serve more meals and providing blankets, clothing, basic hygiene products, and permanent and temporary shelter to veterans experiencing homelessness.

The section also allows VA flexibility to more quickly pay out grant and per diem payments. This means housing more veterans more quickly.

Finally, Mr. LEVIN's bill authorizes VA to use resources to contract healthcare services for veterans in the Health Care for Homeless Veterans, or HCHV, program during a public health emergency.

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These are crucial improvements that VA has asked for, and we stand with them to deliver this assistance.

Now, section 102 of this legislation represents H.R. 2398 from Representative SCOTT PETERS. His Veteran HOUSE Act would finally expand HUD-VASH to cover veterans with other-than-honorable discharges.

Veterans with other-than-honorable discharges make up 3 percent of the population, but they compose 15 percent of the homeless veteran population. There is no question that this commonsense expansion of the program would mean fewer homeless veterans, and I thank Representative PETERS for his tireless work on this section.

Now, included in section 103 of the bill is H.R. 3749, Representative PANETTA's Legal Services for Homeless Veterans Act. This would authorize VA to provide grants or enter into cooperative agreements with eligible entities that provide legal services to homeless veterans and veterans at risk for homelessness.

Madam Speaker, according to community organizations, legal services are one of the top unmet needs for homeless veterans. Under this section, VA would be required to consult with organizations that have experience providing services to homeless veterans when establishing these criteria and requirements, and these grants or coop-

erative agreements would only be available to highly rated public or non-profit entities.

Additionally, Representative WILD has included legislation to ensure that at least 10 percent of the funds made available each fiscal year for this grant program must be reserved for providing legal services to homeless women veterans.

As we know, women veterans are the fastest growing population of homeless veterans, and I thank Representative PANETTA and Representative WILD for their work on this section.

Section 104 of the underlying bill includes Representative BEATTY's legislation to carry out a gap analysis study to determine if VA programs are properly serving homeless women veterans.

Section 105 of the legislation represents bipartisan legislation just introduced by Minority Leader MCCARTHY and Chairman LEVIN. Their legislation, the Reducing Veteran Homelessness Act, would encourage VA to contract out vacant HUD-VASH caseworker positions, increase the grant per diem rates, and allow grant per diem participants to gain access to the homeless management information systems. This will make our community providers more effective at delivering for their communities.

Section 105 also includes Representative BROWNLEY's Homeless Veteran Families Act.

Many homeless veterans with children are unable to obtain transitional housing and support assistance through the program because providers only receive payments from the VA for the veteran, not their minor dependents. This section would authorize VA to pay a partial per diem to GPD providers supporting our Nation's homeless veterans with children.

Finally, this legislation would also have VA more accurately track HUD-

VASH case manager vacancies and help Congress determine how to more effectively keep the program staffed so that it may most effectively serve our Nation's veterans.

Sections 201 through 203 represent Ranking Member ROE and Chairman LEVIN's Rapid Retraining Assistance Program for Veterans. Now, this program will train 7,500 veterans who have been economically impacted by COVID-19, putting their skills and knowledge back to work in our economy.

We have a commitment to our Nation's veterans to support them regardless of the challenges they face. COVID-19 is no different, and I am pleased that we were able to find a way to pass concrete employment measures for our Nation's veterans.

Last but certainly not least, sections 204 through 207 represent Chairman LEVIN's Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer William "Bill" Mulder, Retired, Transition Improvement Act.

This section would make much-needed improvements to our servicemembers' transition process, including more accessible transition sites and providing grants for organizations to assist with resume assistance, interview training, and job recruitment training.

All told, this is one of the most meaningful pieces of legislation dealing with economic hardship we will have a chance to consider, and I am grateful to the countless Members of Congress for their hard work to make it a reality.

Our time here is short, so we call on our colleagues in the Senate, who have also worked on many of these provisions, to send this bill to the President before we finish our work this year.

Madam Speaker, I encourage all my colleagues to join me in voting for H.R. 7105, as amended.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7105, as amended, the Dependable Employment and Living Improvements for Veterans Economic Recovery, or DELIVER, Act.

This bill would help veterans who are homeless, provide needed job training and education benefits to veterans who are unemployed, and support veterans who are transitioning out of the military and into civilian life.

It would contain provisions that help homeless veteran service providers meet the increasing demands associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, provide additional flexibility to fund services for homeless veterans with children, authorize grant funding for legal services for homeless veterans, and assist incarcerated veterans who are leaving the criminal justice system.

This bill also contains the text of numerous other bills that have been sponsored by Members on both sides of the

aisle to better support those who have served.

It contains the text of H.R. 8275, the Reducing Veteran Homeless Act of 2020, which is sponsored by Republican Leader KEVIN MCCARTHY of California and Congressman MIKE LEVIN of California, the chairman of the Subcommittee of Economic Opportunity, to increase funding for transitional housing providers and improve case management in the Department of Housing and Urban Development—Department of Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing, or the HUD-VASH program, which we have used in my district numerous times. These efforts would help connect homeless veterans with stable housing and get them back on their own two feet.

Madam Speaker, I am grateful to Leader MCCARTHY and Congressman LEVIN for bringing these important issues to our attention and working to address them.

The DELIVER Act also contains another bill that was introduced by Republican Leader MCCARTHY, H.R. 5766, the VET TEC Expansion Act.

The VET TEC program was created by Leader MCCARTHY in the Forever GI Bill in 2017 to support veterans pursuing careers in the technology sector by providing them with tuition and a living stipend as they complete their training.

The VET TEC program is very popular among veterans, with over 1,100 of them completing the program and many already finding jobs with an average starting salary of \$60,000 per year. That is money well invested when you have veterans getting those kinds of jobs.

The VET TEC Expansion Act would help streamline processes and authorize additional funding for the VET TEC program so that even more veterans can benefit from it.

Madam Speaker, I once again thank Republican Leader MCCARTHY, who is a champion for our Nation's servicemembers and veterans and never fails to support efforts for them to succeed, for his work on this bill.

Madam Speaker, the DELIVER Act also contains two provisions that are named for Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer William "Bill" Mulder, who tragically died by suicide in 2017 after years of honorable service to our country.

The first is H.R. 7111, which I was pleased to introduce this summer with Congressman LEVIN and Senators JERRY MORAN of Kansas and JON TESTER of Montana, the chairman and ranking member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

As we work to restore the record-breaking economy we had in place before COVID-19, we must do all we can to prepare unemployed veterans for success in the new post-pandemic economy. My bill would do that by authorizing a rapid retraining program for veterans who find themselves unemployed as a result of COVID-19.

Last month, it was estimated that there are 560,000 unemployed veterans

in this country. The retraining program my bill would create would put those veterans back on track to compete for gainful, long-term employment opportunities.

The second provision named after Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer William "Bill" Mulder is H.R. 2326, as amended, which was introduced by my friend Congressman LEVIN and my friends Congressman BILIRAKIS from Florida and Congressman JOEY ARRINGTON from Texas, who are, respectively, the current and former Republican leaders of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity.

Their bill, which passed the House earlier this summer, would improve servicemembers' transition to civilian life by authorizing a review of the curriculum of the Transition Assistance Program, or TAP program, and authorizing TAP at off-base locations and providing grant funds to community organizations that help servicemembers as they transition.

This bill is a culmination of the work the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity started last Congress to improve TAP.

Madam Speaker, I am grateful to Congressmen LEVIN, BILIRAKIS, and ARRINGTON for their continued work to support those transitioning out of the military and for including their bill in the DELIVER Act today.

Madam Speaker, I also thank the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans for their help in crafting the homeless veteran provisions in this bill and the numerous military and veteran service organizations that helped advocate for the employment, education, and transition provisions in the bill. Their steadfast advocacy is critical to getting veterans into safe, stable homes and back to work, and I am grateful to them for their strong partnership that we have fostered in my nearly 12 years in Congress.

Madam Speaker, I encourage all Members to support the DELIVER Act today, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. LEVIN), my good friend and the chairman of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, who is also the author of this impressive, comprehensive H.R. 7105.

Mr. LEVIN of California. Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman TAKANO for yielding.

As chair of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs' Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, and as a Representative for tens of thousands of veterans around Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, I strongly believe that we have got to do more to support those who have served our country. We can't allow men and women who have served to fall into homelessness, end up without a job, or go without the basic services that they deserve.

Today, we are taking a significant step in making sure veterans are no

longer left behind. I am so proud to lead the DELIVER Act, a robust, action-forward package to help get our veterans back on their feet. The legislation includes six of my bipartisan bills to help get veterans the housing and employment opportunities they deserve.

It includes the Homeless Veteran Coronavirus Response Act, a bill I introduced with my friend, Representative GUS BILIRAKIS—I don't see Gus here, but I am grateful to him—to expand and strengthen VA services to homeless veterans during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It includes the Veteran HOUSE Act, a bill I co-led with my friend Representative SCOTT PETERS, also from San Diego, to expand the HUD-VASH program to homeless veterans discharged under conditions other than honorable.

It includes the Reducing Veteran Homelessness Act, a bill I introduced with Republican Leader KEVIN MCCARTHY to ensure that homeless veterans and their families receive the resources and services they deserve by filling gaps in the HUD-VASH case management system.

It includes the Housing for Women Veterans Act, a bill I introduced with Representative FITZPATRICK to require the VA to complete an analysis of its programs that provide assistance to women veterans who are homeless to identify the areas in which such programs are failing to meet their needs.

It includes the Veterans Economic Recovery Act, a bill I introduced with Ranking Member ROE.

And we are all going to miss Dr. ROE. We are grateful for all that he does.

That bill will, as Dr. ROE just said, create a rapid retraining program for unemployed veterans and reservists.

And it includes the Chief Petty Officer William "Bill" Mulder Transition Improvement Act, a bill I introduced with my friend Representative ARRINGTON to make the transition process easier for servicemembers returning to civilian life.

I have said it before, and I will say it again: Even one homeless veteran is one too many.

□ 1330

We have a moral obligation to make robust Federal investments in programs to help get veterans off the street, and we have got to do a better job of ensuring that our Nation's heroes have the housing assistance and services they need. Each of the bills that we have talked about today will make a real difference for the veterans I serve and countless others across the country.

You hear a lot about how things in Washington are broken and how we can't get a lot done around here, but I am very proud of the bipartisan progress we have made today for our veterans. I am hopeful the Senate will take the bill up quickly and get it on the President's desk.

I am just so grateful to everybody that has been involved, both the Members and their staff. It was really a wonderful, bipartisan, bicameral effort. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON), a former member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee who I had the privilege of visiting in his district and I know his commitment to our veterans.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Madam Speaker, for the record, it is my friend, PHIL ROE, who likes to say that there would be no Texas if there weren't a Tennessee. I have to say that in his honor, and then I will have to defend my honor now when I go back to Texas. That is my gift to the gentleman as he departs.

He is a distinguished gentleman and statesman and an effective leader for our Nation and for our veterans. I thank the gentleman for that from the bottom of my heart.

I thank Chairman TAKANO for his camaraderie and our common cause of serving the veterans. We served together when I was in my first term on the VA Committee, and he has a passion for our veterans. While we may disagree about things from time to time, I respect that about the gentleman and I wish him all the best success as we try to do right by those men and women who gave up their today so we could have our tomorrow.

Now, to Chairman LEVIN, nothing would honor me more than to honor the Mulder family and my friend Bill Mulder. And for the gentleman to allow us to carry his name forward, representative of the men and women who have served and who have returned with honor but with wounds that you can't see and that end up taking their lives and taking so much from this country because they have so much more to offer, I thank the gentleman.

We need to recognize when things are working around here, and I will say that any time we can govern for this great country and we can do the right thing and put our country first, I will commend anybody any day and all day.

So God bless you gentlemen for your leadership.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7105, a package that includes legislation that I, along with Chairman LEVIN, introduced to honor Navy SEAL Chief Petty Officer Bill Mulder. This legislation aims to improve the VA's transition assistance program to help our Nation's servicemembers successfully reintegrate back into civilian life when they return home from serving our Nation.

Bill Mulder was a friend, a leader, and an American hero who, as I mentioned, due to the invisible wounds that often plague our soldiers when they return, tragically ended his own life just a few months after retiring from serving our Nation with distinction.

Our veterans face unique challenges when they return home and if we can do a better job on the front end, engaging them earlier and providing them the education, training, equipping them to reintegrate so that we can, on the back end, prevent the struggles with addiction, unemployment, homelessness, suicide, that is the goal here. Those are things that disproportionately affect our veterans and we can do something about it, and I believe this legislation will address that in a meaningful way.

As we recognize September as National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, I can think of no other cause more worthy for our support in this great body than helping our veterans transition to a more productive and healthy and fulfilling civilian life after they sacrificed so much for our country.

By the way, I can't think of a better way to honor Bill Mulder and those just like him. So I stand in support.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I yield the gentleman from Texas an additional 1 minute.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Madam Speaker, I almost rushed the most important part. This is not only a cause worthy of our support as a Congress, but it will honor men and women just like Bill Mulder. I believe if we do it right, and if the VA and the Defense Department actually implement it right—that is the next big hurdle—then we will save lives.

And that is why we got into this gig, right? We want to make a difference. We want to help our fellow Americans. We want to save lives.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for his kind words and comments, and I appreciate his passion for our veterans. And I am very pleased that we can honor his friend by the naming of the bill.

Madam 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. Madam Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I yield myself the balance of my time.

This is a bill that contains a lot of effort, as you can see, from both sides of the aisle, both Republicans and Democrats, and as Mr. ARRINGTON said, trying to do the right thing for our Nation's heroes.

I remember in 2008 when I was a candidate for Congress, the HUD-VASH voucher program was rolled out. I didn't really understand it. It is a program that helps homeless veterans.

And when I got into Congress, I remember General Shinseki, who was the Secretary at that time, stated that during the housing crisis there were over 100,000 homeless veterans in America, the wealthiest country in the world. I found that shameful.

His goal was to eliminate homelessness among veterans in the next 6

years. He didn't achieve that goal, but it was a worthy goal. That number now is under 40,000, less than that. And, hopefully, with this bill that has help for families and children in it, that we can get these veterans off the street, and into productive lives.

You can see in part of the bill that Congressman LEVIN, myself, and leader MCCARTHY supported, it takes veterans who have lost their jobs and gets them skills that they can transition into this new economy post-pandemic, and has money to take care of their families.

I know the transition assistance program that was mentioned. I know when I got out of the military, the only thing I was worried about was the gate of the fort I was in hitting me on the backside on the way out. That is how much help I got at the end of Vietnam. Nobody really said: What are you going to do next?

They just said: You are out of here.

We had this little helmet, I remember, when I was in service, with two feet coming out from under it. And that meant you were short. You had less than 100 days left in-country.

Well, today, we are doing a much better job with our transitioning, and we are starting to think, when these young people go into the military to serve our country and our Nation and protect us, what are you going to do when you transition out?

In other words, when you go in, start thinking about what you are going to do when your military career is over. This bill will help us get to that. I am very proud to encourage all of my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I just want to say that this is a tremendously comprehensive bill. It represents the tremendous work of Members from both sides of the aisle.

I have to say that I am recalling at this very moment a woman veteran who drove all the way from Los Angeles into my district to a townhall meeting where she first made me aware of the issue of veterans with children not having enough money, not enough benefits to be able to get into homeless housing, and I am so pleased that the bill by Ms. BROWNLEY to address that issue is in this piece of legislation.

I just urge all of my colleagues to pass H.R. 7105, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the DELIVER Act, a bipartisan veterans legislative package that includes two bills that I have introduced this Congress, the VET TEC Expansion Act and the Reducing Veteran Homelessness Act of 2020.

I believe that a nation's character can be judged by how well it treats its veterans when they complete their service and return home. Providing veterans with flexible education benefits to meet current workforce needs and protecting our most vulnerable veterans from

homelessness is the least that we can do as a country to repay our debt of gratitude.

The VET TEC Expansion Act, which I introduced with my colleague from California, Ro Khanna, builds upon the success of the existing VET TEC pilot program, which was created by the original VET TEC Act that I introduced and which President Trump signed into law in 2017 as part of a broader bipartisan veterans bill. Upon realizing the potential that non-traditional, "nanodegree" educational programs have for our veterans after visiting such a program in 2017, I discovered that GI Bill benefits did not cover the cost of enrolling in these types of programs, which is why I introduced the VET TEC Act.

The VET TEC pilot program began accepting veteran applications in May 2019, and in seeking to keep the program aligned with its mission to provide veterans with access to technology-oriented and industry-responsive educational courses, I introduced the VET TEC Expansion Act just under one year after the pilot's official launch. This bill would allow the VA to accept more course providers into the VET TEC pilot program, expand VET TEC pilot program eligibility to include certain servicemembers who are starting the transition to civilian life—so they may get a jumpstart on obtaining new skills that can help them secure a job—and would allow the VA to accept education providers that offer part-time courses, such as night classes, into the pilot program.

All of these provisions were developed in consultation with feedback from veteran organizations and I am confident that these changes will allow the VA to provide even more veterans with access to the most up-to-date, non-traditional educational courses possible. The VET TEC pilot program is incredibly popular, so I am pleased that the DELIVER Act also authorizes \$30 million in additional annual funding for this pilot program until its expiration in Fiscal Year 2023. This funding increase appropriately responds to the current overwhelming demand from veterans who are seeking to participate in non-traditional educational courses that prepare them for employment in our dynamic, technology-centric economy. An August 2020 VA report to Congress recently found that thousands of veterans who applied to participate in a VET TEC-approved course received a "Certificate of Eligibility" to participate beginning on October 1, 2020, the start of the 2021 Fiscal Year, as VET TEC's popularity caused it to run out of funding in its first pilot year. To me, this is a strong testament to the demand for flexible educational benefits from our nation's student veterans.

The Reducing Veteran Homelessness Act of 2020, which I introduced with my colleague from California, MIKE LEVIN, just last week, provides solutions to address issues that homeless providers have raised with me in recent years. The successful HUD-VA Supportive Housing Program (or HUD-VASH Program) has long been plagued by understaffing of case managers, which prevents supportive housing vouchers allocated through the program from reaching veterans in need.

My legislation requires the VA to contract out HUD-VASH case manager services to community experts when these VA case manager positions remain unfilled for a long period of time and HUD-VASH housing vouchers in the region remain unutilized. It also modernizes the VA's Grant and Per Diem program so that homeless providers that participate in this

program receive pay that is based on local or regional conditions rather than a standard across-the-board rate, in order to prevent providers operating in parts of the country with higher living costs from having to reduce services.

I would like to thank Subcommittee Chairman LEVIN, Committee Ranking Member PHIL ROE and the members of the House Veterans Affairs Committee for ensuring that our nation's veterans receive the supportive services that they deserve by including these two pieces of legislation in the DELIVER Act. Accordingly, I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in supporting this bill so that we may better serve the veterans who have so valiantly served our country.

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. 7105, as amended.

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

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to provide flexibility for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in caring for homeless veterans during a covered public health emergency, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a retraining assistance program for unemployed veterans, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VETERANS COMPREHENSIVE PREVENTION, ACCESS TO CARE, AND TREATMENT ACT OF 2020

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 8247) to make certain improvements relating to the transition of individuals to services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, suicide prevention for veterans, and care and services 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. 8247

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Veterans Comprehensive Prevention, Access to Care, and Treatment Act of 2020" or the "Veterans COMPACT Act of 2020".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—IMPROVEMENT OF TRANSITION OF INDIVIDUALS TO SERVICES FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Sec. 101. Pilot program on information sharing between Department of Veterans Affairs and designated relatives and friends of veterans regarding assistance and benefits available to the veterans.

Sec. 102. Annual report on Solid Start program of Department of Veterans Affairs.