

(4) commends direct support professionals for being integral to the provision of long-term support and services for individuals with disabilities;

(5) encourages the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor to collect data specific to direct support professionals; and

(6) finds that the successful implementation of public policies affecting individuals with disabilities in the United States can depend on the dedication of direct support professionals.

#### AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

**SA 2688.** Mr. PORTMAN (for Mr. PETERS) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 2216, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to formally recognize caregivers of veterans, notify veterans and caregivers of clinical determinations relating to eligibility for the family caregiver program, and temporarily extend benefits for veterans who are determined ineligible for the family caregiver program, and for other purposes.

#### TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

**SA 2688.** Mr. PORTMAN (for Mr. PETERS) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 2216, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to formally recognize caregivers of veterans, notify veterans and caregivers of clinical determinations relating to eligibility for the family caregiver program, and temporarily extend benefits for veterans who are determined ineligible for the family caregiver program, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Transparency and Effective Accountability Measures for Veteran Caregivers Act” or the “TEAM Veteran Caregivers Act”.

#### SEC. 2. MODIFICATION OF ADMINISTRATION OF CAREGIVER PROGRAMS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

##### (a) FORMAL RECOGNITION OF CAREGIVERS.—

###### (1) REPORT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 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 regarding the feasibility and advisability of formally recognizing all caregivers of veterans by identifying any caregiver of a veteran in the electronic health record of the veteran.

(B) CAREGIVERS RECOGNIZED.—The recognition of caregivers described in subparagraph (A) shall include recognition of—

(i) any family caregiver who is approved as a provider of personal care services for an eligible veteran under the program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers under subsection (a) of section 1720G of title 38, United States Code; and

(ii) any caregiver of a covered veteran participating in the program of general caregiver support services under subsection (b) of such section.

(C) TIMELINE.—If the Secretary determines that formally recognizing all caregivers of veterans as described in subparagraph (A) is feasible and advisable, the report required by such subparagraph shall include a timeline for implementing such recognition.

(2) IMPLEMENTATION.—If the Secretary determines that formally recognizing all care-

givers of veterans as described in paragraph (1)(A) is feasible and advisable, the Secretary shall implement such recognition in accordance with the timeline included in the report required by such paragraph.

(b) NOTIFICATIONS, EXTENSION OF BENEFITS, AND DISCHARGE FROM FAMILY CAREGIVER PROGRAM.—Section 1720G(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(12)(A) The Secretary shall notify the individuals described in subparagraph (C) regarding decisions affecting the furnishing of assistance under this subsection using standardized letters, as the Secretary determines such notifications and letters to be appropriate.

“(B) A notification provided under subparagraph (A) shall include the elements required for notices of decisions under section 5104(b) of this title to the extent that those elements apply to such notification, unless, not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of the Transparency and Effective Accountability Measures for Veteran Caregivers Act, the Secretary determines that it would not be feasible to include such elements in such notifications and submits to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives a report setting forth the reasons for such determination.

“(C) The individuals described in this subparagraph shall include—

“(i) an individual who submits an application for the program established under paragraph (1);

“(ii) an individual determined by the Secretary to be an eligible veteran pursuant to such an application; and

“(iii) a family caregiver of an eligible veteran who is—

“(I) approved as a provider of personal care services under paragraph (6)(B); or

“(II) designated as a primary provider of personal care services under paragraph (7)(A).

“(13)(A) If the Secretary determines that a veteran receiving services under the program established under paragraph (1) is no longer eligible for such program solely because of improvement in the condition of the veteran—

“(i) the effective date of discharge of the veteran from the program shall be not earlier than the date that is 60 days after the date on which the Secretary provides notice of such lack of eligibility under paragraph (12)(A) to the relevant individuals described in paragraph (12)(C); and

“(ii) the Secretary shall extend benefits under the program established under paragraph (1) for a family caregiver of the veteran described in paragraph (12)(C)(iii), including stipends under paragraph (3)(A)(ii)(V), if such an extension is determined appropriate by the Secretary, for a 90-day period following discharge of the veteran from the program.

“(B) This paragraph shall not be construed to limit the authority of the Secretary—

“(i) to prescribe regulations addressing other bases for—

“(I) the discharge of a veteran from the program established under paragraph (1); or

“(II) the revocation of the designation of a family caregiver of a veteran as a primary provider of personal care services under paragraph (7)(A); or

“(ii) to provide advance notice and extended benefits under the program, as appropriate, if another basis for discharge of a veteran described in subclause (I) of clause (i) or revocation of a designation described in subclause (II) of such clause applies.”.

#### AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I have 5 requests for committees to meet during today’s session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today’s session of the Senate.

#### COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, November 17, 2020, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

#### COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, November 17, 2020, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

#### COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

The Committee on Rules and Administration is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, November 17, 2020, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

#### SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, November 17, 2020, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

#### SUBCOMMITTEE ON MANUFACTURING, TRADE, AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

The Subcommittee on Manufacturing, Trade, and Consumer Protection of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 30, 2019, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

#### TRIBUTE TO COLLEEN HEALY

Mr. LEE. Madam President, in a city divided by politics, a nation riven by disease, and an era defined by partisan opportunism, it is vital to remember that there are among us, mercifully, on Capitol Hill, a few men and women who embody the very highest ideals of honesty, charity, public service, and personal integrity.

As chairman of the Joint Economic Committee for the past 2 years, I have had the privilege of knowing one of these indispensable patriots.

I rise today, before the end of my term as chairman of the Joint Economic Committee and at the end of her 40th year of service on the Joint Economic Committee, to commend to all of my colleagues the personal and professional merits of Ms. Colleen Healy.

Colleen was born in Port Allegany, PA, to Bob and Theresa Healy and is a sister to Bob, Barry, Brian, and Bret. She attended Port Allegany Union High School, where she participated in the school band, chorus, student government, and the Spanish club. As a senior, she was selected by her classmates to compete for the title of Pennsylvania State Laurel Queen of 1969.

Colleen next attended Penn State, where she earned her B.A. in Spanish and Latin American Studies. After graduating and teaching Spanish for several years in Florida, she came to Washington in 1977, first working for Representative Joseph Ammerman of Pennsylvania as his executive secretary. Colleen then found her calling in the Joint Economic Committee, where she has made an indelible mark on generations of Representatives, Senators, and staff ever since.

Colleen has now served on the JEC staff for more than half the time the committee has even been in existence. All great institutions, of course, depend on institutional memory. The Joint Economic Committee depends on Colleen Healy. That is why for decades the first decision every incoming JEC chair has made, whether the chair happens to be from the House or the Senate, happens to be a Democrat or a Republican, the first decision made over and over again is retaining Colleen's invaluable services as financial director.

Colleen is the reason the JEC is known across Capitol Hill for being one of the most cooperative and congenial committees to work for, to work with, or to serve on because both sides trust Colleen. They also know they can trust each other. That has a ripple effect that is undeniably positive.

Staffers trust that they can always go to Colleen with their questions and their problems, whether it is about the committee process or procedure, and receive gracious, knowledgeable, consistent, honest answers.

But even more impressive than her acumen is her essential kindness and grace. Colleen is known to get a flag flown over the Capitol for each new baby born to a coworker. Staffers past and present joke that you can't walk 10 minutes with Colleen from her office in the Dirksen Building and get very far because she has befriended literally everyone across the Capitol complex, remembering personal details about their lives and their families and stopping to talk with each person along the way.

From Members to staffers, to interns and custodians, Colleen never misses an opportunity to make every single person feel important and valued and necessary. That, again, has ripple effects that are always positive in any organization and certainly are on the JEC.

As one former coworker put it, when you talk to Colleen, you are instantly made to feel like the most special, loved, and cared-for person on Earth.

When you step into her office, you know she is ready to laugh, listen, or cry with you.

As another has said, despite the length of time she has worked in Washington, DC, Colleen still exudes warmth and joy—a spirit that permeates the committee and touches everyone she meets. This in a city not necessarily known for those traits.

And though she lives it out quietly, she gives witness to her Catholic faith

each and every day. Mother Teresa once advised: “Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier.” I can think of no better way to describe how Colleen Healy lives her life.

In the words of the JEC vice chair, Representative DON BEYER, “Colleen is the JEC’s administrator, historian, sage, and most important, the heart and soul of the committee. She is respected and beloved by decades of JEC Senate and House Members of both parties, as well as generations of staff. Her decades of service have been invaluable.”

We are all better and happier for it.

I thank Colleen for her service to the committee, and I hope we are lucky enough to get another 40 years with her serving on the Joint Economic Committee.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

#### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I am here on the floor of the Senate tonight to talk about the encouraging progress we have seen in finding a vaccine for the COVID-19 virus that has disrupted all of our lives and caused such great damage over the past year.

From the early days of this coronavirus pandemic, a public-private partnership has employed scientists who have worked around-the-clock to prevent people from getting infected by developing effective vaccines. We saw the results of this effort in the last week with announcements from Pfizer and now Moderna that their interim success rates were above 90 percent during their trials. Other companies have vaccines at various stages of development, and there is hope that they will have similar results.

Getting safe and effective vaccines across the finish line will be a monumental achievement. Not only are we witnessing unprecedented progress in creating an effective widespread vaccine, we are doing so at a speed unheard of in modern medical history. This result is going to be our best hope of getting out of this pandemic. With cases rising not only across the country but around the world, we are running out of other tools needed to stop the pandemic. I support the social distancing, wearing of masks, PPE, the testing, but I believe widespread inoculation is the most effective way to avoid the negative economic and social impacts the virus and the subsequent mitigation efforts have caused.

If these vaccines receive the expected emergency use authorization from the Food and Drug Administration over the coming weeks and months, this will be a testament to the unprecedented support that Congress has provided for vaccine development, the Trump administration’s innovative approach to cut bureaucratic redtape with Operation Warp Speed, and the

commitment and ingenuity of our researchers, our scientists, and our manufacturers.

The bipartisan CARES Act we passed here in March with unanimous support provided \$27 billion in funding for countermeasures against COVID, including funding this important vaccine development research. It was money well spent.

Thanks to these funds and the innovative approach by the administration, we have been able to invest in building the infrastructure to begin manufacturing these vaccines now so that if the vaccine is approved, we can quickly ramp up distribution. This two-track approach also involves ramping up large-scale clinical trials, which are critical to furthering our scientific understanding of this pandemic and verifying the safety and effectiveness of these vaccines. By using these CARES Act funds to invest in both research and trials and in manufacturing at the same time, we are able to ensure that the trials are thorough and methodical while also ensuring that if and when approved there is vaccine ready to be distributed.

At the same time, the Food and Drug Administration, which is the Federal agency responsible for approving the use of any new vaccine, has followed the science and moved cautiously. As an example, they have actually raised the standards needed for giving an emergency use authorization for a vaccine. Normally, a vaccine only needs to be effective about 50 percent of the time to be approved under the EUA, emergency use authorization, but with the coronavirus vaccine, the standard is much higher. By requiring companies to collect more rigorous information to show longer lasting results from their respective vaccine candidates, this will help ensure greater confidence in the system, and I am grateful that they took these additional careful steps.

This progress on the vaccine is critical for our economic recovery as well. When a vaccine and therapeutics are authorized by the FDA and made widely available and people actually get vaccinated, all of us will feel safer returning to the workplace, retail establishments, restaurants, churches and other places of worship, and schools, as well as feeling more comfortable gathering with friends and family. We will finally be able to truly reopen and get millions of Americans back to work. In short, a widely available vaccine is our best bet for getting America back to normal—something we all are desperate for.

Last month, I received a briefing from CTI Clinical Trial and Consulting Services, a research company that is based in my hometown of Cincinnati, OH. I met with them to receive a briefing to find out what is going on in Ohio and what they are doing around the country. CTI is a global leader in actually executing these clinical trials that we always talk about for these vaccines and therapeutics, and right now