

thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report regarding veterans who participate in work-study. Such report shall include the following elements:

- (1) The number of such veterans.
- (2) The percentage of such veterans who obtain a four-year degree.
- (3) The number of such veterans who obtain full-time work at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

#### SEC. 4. ADJUSTMENTS OF CERTAIN LOAN FEES.

The loan fee table in section 3729(b)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking "January 14, 2031" each place it appears and inserting "January 23, 2031".

#### SEC. 5. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled "Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation" for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. TRONE) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TRONE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 6376, as amended.

□ 1615

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

I strongly support H.R. 6376, as amended, the Student Veteran Modernization Act, which would make much-needed improvements and modernizations to the VA work-study program.

This legislation will create a pilot program to allow part-time student veterans to access VA work-study programs for the next 5 years, ensuring they can complete their certification or degree without taking on unmanageable amounts of student debt and still care for themselves and their families.

I would prefer this be a permanent change in the law, but I understand the need to review these changes in a pilot program. I hope that when this pilot program concludes, and we have an idea of how many veterans were helped, Congress will make this change permanent.

Currently, student veterans must maintain a full class load to be eligible for work-study, which is not feasible for many veterans who are balancing families or other work obligations. With this change, part-time student veterans will be able to earn a paycheck while also earning workforce skills.

I thank Representative AXNE for her hard work on the introduction of this bill. I also thank student veterans and

the Department of Veteran Affairs for their feedback, which improved the bill and will bring more student veterans into the work-study program.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6376, as amended, the Student Veteran Work Study Modernization Act.

This bill will make changes to the VA work-study program to allow student veterans who are using the GI bill part-time to take advantage of the work-study benefit. The work-study benefit provides veterans with the opportunity to be paid for helping other veterans on campus or VA facilities.

This is a win-win for the school and the veteran, as the school does not have to pay the veteran for their work, and the veteran receives a paycheck and great work experience.

I am pleased that my amendment at the markup of this bill was accepted and that the bill is now fully offset.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support H.R. 6376, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TRONE. Madam Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me and pass H.R. 6376, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. TRONE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6376, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

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

#### DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PRINCIPLES OF BENEFITS AUTOMATION ACT

Mr. TRONE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7153) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a plan to modernize the information technology systems of the Veterans Benefits Administration, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7153

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

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Department of Veterans Affairs Principles of Benefits Automation Act".

#### SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs should increase automation in the processing of claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary in accordance with the following principles:

- (1) The purpose of automation should be to increase the speed and accuracy of claims processing decisions.
- (2) Automation should be conducted in a manner that enhances the productivity of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- (3) Automation should be carried out in a manner that achieves greater consistency in the processing and rating of claims by relying on patterns of similar evidence in claim files.
- (4) To the greatest extent possible, automation should be carried out by drawing from information in the possession of the Department, other Government agencies, and claimants for benefits.
- (5) Automation of any claims process or determination should not be end-to-end.
- (6) Employees of the Department should continue to make decisions with respect to the approval of claims and the granting of benefits.
- (7) Automation should not be carried out in a manner that reduces or infringes upon—
  - (A) the due process rights of claimants for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary; or
  - (B) the duties of the Secretary to assist and notify claimants.
- (8) Automation should be carried out while taking all necessary measures to protect the privacy of claimants and their personally identifiable information.
- (9) Automation of claims processing should not eliminate or reduce the Veterans Benefits Administration workforce.

(7) Automation should not be carried out in a manner that reduces or infringes upon—

(A) the due process rights of claimants for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary; or

(B) the duties of the Secretary to assist and notify claimants.

(8) Automation should be carried out while taking all necessary measures to protect the privacy of claimants and their personally identifiable information.

(9) Automation of claims processing should not eliminate or reduce the Veterans Benefits Administration workforce.

#### SEC. 3. PLAN FOR MODERNIZATION OF VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to appropriate congressional committees a plan for the modernization of the information technology systems of the Veterans Benefits Administration. The plan shall cover the first fiscal year that begins after the date of the enactment of this Act and the subsequent four fiscal years and shall include each of the following:

- (1) An identification of any information system to be modernized or retired, if applicable, during the period covered by the plan.
- (2) A description of how the Secretary intends to incorporate the principles referred to in section 2 into the modernization of such information systems.
- (3) An identification of targets, for each fiscal year, by which the Secretary intends to complete the modernization of each information system or major component or functionality of such system identified under paragraph (1).
- (4) Cost estimates for the modernization of each information system identified under paragraph (1) for each fiscal year covered by the plan and in total.

(b) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—In this section, the term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

- (1) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans' Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and
- (2) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans' Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. TRONE) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TRONE. 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. 7153, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7153, as amended, the Department of Veterans Affairs Principles of Benefits Automation Act, introduced by Ranking Member BOST.

This bill provides clarification on the sense of Congress on the automation of benefits claims and requires the VA to submit to Congress a plan for modernization of the information technology systems of the Veterans Benefits Administration.

As the VA moves toward greater automation, we must ensure that the VA does automation the right way for all stakeholders, including both veterans and the workforce. It is also important for the VA to identify systems in need of modernization to support successful implementation of bills, such as the PACT Act, and important initiatives such as the Secretary's announcement of several new presumptions.

I will reinforce that. On the topic of automation, it is not the intent of Congress or the VA to use automation on claims to eliminate, reduce, or contract out the duties of the VBA workforce. We intend to conduct close oversight of the use of automation and potential expansion. This bill is part of those efforts.

When implemented in the right way, automation has the potential to reduce the day-to-day burden of employees by diminishing menial tasks and allowing the dedicated VA staff to focus on the kind of work that truly needs a human touch. Such an approach stands to benefit the ultimate consumer of the VA: our veterans.

Madam Speaker, I support this bill and encourage my colleagues to support it as well, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 7153, the Department of Veterans Affairs Principles of Benefits Automation Act.

The VA is embracing automation more than ever before. The early results are promising. When used properly, automation can improve claims processing for veterans. However, I am concerned that the VA has already started multiple automation projects

without a clear plan or measurable goals. There is no consistent guidance from the VA on when, why, or how automation should be used.

H.R. 7153 will establish the sense of Congress that the VA should increase automation in benefits processing, according to certain principles. Automation should increase the speed, accuracy, and consistency of claims processing. Automation should also enhance employee productivity. Automation should always protect veterans' privacy and preserve their rights to due process.

However, automation should not necessarily eliminate or reduce the VBA workforce. Employees should always make the final decision about approving claims and granting benefits. Let me be clear: The sense of Congress is that automation should enhance and support VBA employees, not replace them. I think these guiding principles will improve the claims process for veterans and beneficiaries.

Finally, my bill will require VA to submit a plan to Congress to modernize its benefits IT system over the next 5 years. This plan is crucial.

The expansion of benefits for toxic-exposed veterans will put an incredible strain on these IT systems. We need to be ready.

Madam Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TRONE. Madam Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 7153, 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 New Jersey (Mr. TRONE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7153, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

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

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 25 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1831

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. SCHRIER) at 6 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 6824;

H.R. 6825;

H.R. 5658.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

#### PRESIDENT'S CUP CYBER SECURITY COMPETITION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6824) to authorize the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency of the Department of Homeland Security to hold an annual cybersecurity competition relating to offensive and defensive cybersecurity disciplines, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MALINOWSKI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 386, nays 31, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 183]

YEAS—386

Adams	Cammack	Dean
Aderholt	Carbajal	DeFazio
Aguilar	Cárdenas	DeGette
Allen	Carey	DeLauro
Allred	Carl	DeBene
Amodei	Carson	Delgado
Armstrong	Carter (GA)	Demings
Auchincloss	Carter (LA)	DeSaulnier
Axne	Cartwright	DesJarlais
Bacon	Case	Deutch
Baird	Casten	Diaz-Balart
Balderson	Castor (FL)	Dingell
Banks	Castro (TX)	Doggett
Barr	Cawthorn	Doyle, Michael
Barragán	Chabot	F.
Bass	Cheney	Duncan
Beatty	Cherfilus	Dunn
Bentz	McCormick	Ellzey
Bera	Chu	Escobar
Bergman	Cicilline	Eshoo
Beyer	Clark (MA)	Espallat
Bice (OK)	Clarke (NY)	Estes
Bilirakis	Cleaver	Evans
Bishop (GA)	Cloud	Fallon
Bishop (NC)	Clyburn	Feenstra
Blumenauer	Cohen	Ferguson
Blunt Rochester	Cole	Fischbach
Bonamici	Comer	Fitzgerald
Bost	Connolly	Fitzpatrick
Bourdeaux	Cooper	Fleischmann
Bowman	Correa	Fletcher
Boyle, Brendan	Costa	Foster
F.	Courtney	Fox
Brady	Craig	Frankel, Lois
Brooks	Crawford	Franklin, C.
Brown (MD)	Crenshaw	Scott
Brown (OH)	Crist	Fulcher
Brownley	Crow	Gaetz
Buchanan	Cuellar	Gallagher
Bucshon	Curtis	Gallo
Bush	Davids (KS)	Garamendi
Bustos	Davidson	Garbarino
Butterfield	Davis, Danny K.	Garcia (CA)
Calvert	Davis, Rodney	Garcia (IL)