

have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 5916, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5916, as amended. Representative AGUILAR's Wounded Warrior Access Act would require VA to establish and maintain a secure, internet-based website to enable a claimant or their representative to make records requests related to VA claims and benefits.

Additionally, this bill would add a provision requiring VA to warn claimants about benefit scammers, provide a way to report potentially fraudulent activity, and provide a tool for claimants to search for accredited representation.

Currently, to make records requests related to VA claims and benefits, veterans or designated representatives must submit a Freedom of Information Act, otherwise known as a FOIA, or a Privacy Act Request.

Submitting this form followed by waiting for it to upload into the individual's electronic claims file, and then waiting action on the request can be very time-consuming and can negatively impact a claimant's ability to understand what records VA is evaluating and what information could better assist in a claim's positive adjudication.

Establishing and maintaining a secure, internet-based website to enable a claimant or their representative to make requests related to VA claims and benefits would modernize this essential process and assist in more timely, positive claim outcomes.

This bill would also add another tool in the toolbox for veterans when navigating the complexities of the claims process and will help veterans gain a little more autonomy over their claim.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that my colleagues will join me in supporting this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5916, as amended, the Wounded Warrior Access Act.

H.R. 5916, as amended, would require VA to establish a secure, public-facing website that veterans can use to request a copy of their VA records. This would make VA more accessible to veterans by modernizing its systems. Specifically, the bill would make it easier for veterans to review their records before they file a claim or appeal.

Over the years, I have heard of increasing concerns from veterans about organizations that attempt to swindle veterans out of their VA benefits. This is unacceptable, and it is about time that we do something about it.

This proposal also would require VA to warn veterans about greedy claims practices when they log into the VA's website. I hope these warnings will prevent veterans from being taken advantage of by these bad actors.

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

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

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 5916, as amended, the Wounded Warrior Access Act, 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. 5916, 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. ROSENDALE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### FASTER PAYMENTS TO VETERANS' SURVIVORS ACT OF 2022

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 8260) to amend title 38, United States Code, to shorten the timeframe for designation of benefits under Department of Veterans Affairs life insurance programs, to improve the treatment of undisbursed life insurance benefits by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 8260

*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 "Faster Payments to Veterans' Survivors Act of 2022".

#### SEC. 2. TIMEFRAME FOR DESIGNATION OF ALTERNATE BENEFICIARIES AND PAYMENT OF BENEFITS UNDER DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS LIFE INSURANCE PROGRAMS.

(a) NATIONAL SERVICE LIFE INSURANCE.—Section 1917(f)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking "two years" and inserting "one year"; and

(2) in subparagraph (B), by striking "four" and inserting "two".

(b) UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT LIFE INSURANCE.—Section 1952(c)(1) of such title is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking "two years" and inserting "one year"; and

(2) in subparagraph (B), by striking "four" and inserting "two".

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to the death of an insured person occurring on or after the date that is two years before the date of the enactment of this Act.

#### SEC. 3. BENEFICIARY DESIGNATION PROCESS UNDER DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS LIFE INSURANCE PROGRAMS.

(a) NSLI.—Section 1917 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking subsection (a) and inserting the following:

"(a)(1) A person who enrolls in insurance maturing on or after August 1, 1946, may designate a beneficiary of the insurance policy. The insured shall, subject to regulations, at all times have the right to change the beneficiary or beneficiaries of such insurance without the consent of such beneficiary or beneficiaries.

"(2) If a person enrolled in insurance maturing on or after August 1, 1946, does not designate a beneficiary under paragraph (1) before the veteran dies, or if a designated beneficiary predeceases the veteran, the Secretary shall determine the beneficiary in the following order:

"(A) The surviving spouse of the insured person.

"(B) The children of the insured person and descendants of deceased children by representation.

"(C) The parents of the insured person or the survivors of the parents.

"(D) The duly appointed executor or administrator of the estate of the insured person.

"(E) Other next of kin of the insured person entitled under the laws of domicile of the insured person at the time of the death of the insured person."

(b) USGLI.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1949 of such title is amended to read as follows:

#### "§ 1949. Beneficiaries

"(a) DESIGNATION.—A person who enrolls in United States Government life insurance may designate a beneficiary of the insurance policy. Subject to regulations, the insured person shall at all times have the right to change the beneficiary or beneficiaries of a United States Government life insurance policy without the consent of such beneficiary or beneficiaries.

"(b) DETERMINATION IN CASES OF NON-DESIGNATION.—If a person enrolled in United States Government life insurance does not designate a beneficiary under subsection (a) before the insured person dies, or if a designated beneficiary predeceases the insured person, the Secretary shall determine the beneficiary in the following order:

"(1) The surviving spouse of the insured person.

"(2) The children of the insured person and descendants of deceased children by representation.

"(3) The parents of the insured person or the survivors of the parents.

"(4) The duly appointed executor or administrator of the estate of the insured person.

"(5) Other next of kin of the insured person entitled under the laws of domicile of the insured person at the time of the death of the insured person."

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 19 of such title is amended by striking the item relating to section 1949 and inserting the following new item:

"1949. Beneficiaries."

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to the death of an insured person occurring on or after the date that is two years before the date of the enactment of this Act.

#### SEC. 4. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IMPROVEMENT OF TREATMENT OF UNDISBURSED LIFE INSURANCE BENEFITS.

(a) IMPROVEMENT OF PROCESSES.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall improve the processes and procedures of the Department of Veterans Affairs with respect to identifying, locating, and paying hard-to-find beneficiaries of life insurance policies issued under chapter 19 of title 38, United States Code, including by—

(1) improving the search tools available on the website of the Department;

(2) conducting outreach to veterans, veterans service organizations, and the general public with respect to such search tools;

(3) improving the processes for searching for information relating to potential recipients through internal Department sources and sources available through other Federal agencies, State government agencies, and non-government entities; and

(4) ensuring the Department has sufficient dedicated staff whose primary responsibilities are identifying, locating, and paying hard-to-find beneficiaries, with the goal of disbursing by not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, all funds that, as of the date of the enactment of this Act, are owed to a beneficiary of a life insurance policy issued under chapter 19 of title 38, United States Code.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs should work with interagency partners to determine the types of records, reports, and other materials that may be required to identify, locate, and disburse undisbursed life insurance benefits to hard-to-find beneficiaries.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report on the progress of the Secretary in carrying out this section.

(d) UNDISBURSED LIFE INSURANCE BENEFITS DEFINED.—The term “undisbursed life insurance benefits”—

(1) means any amount of money that is owed to a beneficiary of a life insurance policy issued under chapter 19 of title 38, United States Code, and that has not been disbursed for a period of two years or longer; and

(2) does not include any amount of money that—

(A) has not been disbursed due to a contested claim; or

(B) is in dispute by two or more parties over who is the entitled beneficiary.

#### 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 California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 8260, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 8260, as amended, the bipartisan Faster Payments to Veterans' Survivors Act, will result in important help for the surviving family members of recently deceased veterans. Families often face financial hardship when a veteran life insurance policyholder dies, making timely payment of these VA benefits is therefore essential.

The VA does an admirable job of quickly paying the vast majority of beneficiaries upon the death of a loved one. Yet, in other cases, for a variety of reasons, VA is unable to determine the identity or location of a surviving spouse, child, or family member. At the end of the fiscal year 2020, the Department owed more than \$150 million in undisbursed life insurance proceeds to nearly 15,000 survivors. Approximately 10 percent of this money had been owed for more than 5 years.

This legislation, introduced by Representative CHRIS PAPPAS ensures that VA will make the necessary improvements to expedite these life insurance payments with a goal of disbursing all unpaid benefits within 2 years.

The bill is cosponsored by more than 40 Members on both sides of the aisle, and it has the support of a half-dozen veteran service organizations, including the VFW, America Legion, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Vietnam Veterans of America, Military Officers Association of America, Modern Military Association of America, and Paralyzed Veterans of America.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative PAPPAS for his work and urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 8260, the Faster Payment of Veterans' Survivors Act.

This bill would improve VA's delivery of insurance benefits to survivors. One of the provisions would streamline insurance payments to beneficiaries under the NSLI and the USGLI programs.

Another section would make improvements to the VA's process for identifying and paying the beneficiaries.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman PAPPAS for introducing this bill and for his commitment to help VA honor its obligation to surviving family members.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. PAPPAS), my good friend who serves as chair of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman TAKANO and Ranking Member BOST for getting these bills to the floor, including this important piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bipartisan legislation, H.R. 8260, the Faster Payments to Veterans' Survivors Act. It is a bipartisan bill that ensures that VA quickly identifies, locates, and pays surviving family members the life insurance benefits they are owed.

VA's insurance service already has some tools in place to identify, locate, and pay hard-to-find beneficiaries, but more can be done to prevent these survivors from needlessly waiting during what is likely a difficult time, both emotionally and financially.

My bipartisan bill, the Faster Payments to Veterans' Survivors Act, will make much needed reforms to allow VA to better identify and locate surviving family members of recently deceased veterans.

By making these reforms, we will make sure they receive the payments and benefits they were owed in a timely manner.

According to the VA, the Department owed more than \$155 million to 15,000 individuals at the end of September 2020.

For a widow or widower who is struggling to make ends meet, a life insurance payment of \$10,000 makes a world of difference.

Alfred, a constituent of mine in Rochester, New Hampshire, and a Korean war veteran, shared how much this bill will mean to his family. His father-in-law, a veteran of World War II, passed away last year. Alfred's spouse waited for months to receive the survivors benefits owed to her by VA. He contacted our office for help remedying the issue. We were able to help them, but no family should have to jump through hoops for months following the loss of a loved one.

This bill directs the Department to improve and better publicize an online tool that families of veterans can use to search for past due benefits. It expands access to internal and external data sources that will help VA track down veterans' survivors. It makes sure the Department is adequately staffed to perform these searches.

The bill also shortens the unnecessarily long timeframe in which VA is authorized to designate and pay alternate beneficiaries and ensures that procedures for paying alternate beneficiaries are consistent across several different life insurance programs. All of these steps will lead to faster payments to veterans' survivors.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman NANCY MACE of South Carolina for co-leading this bipartisan bill. I appreciate the strong bipartisan support from my colleagues and from veterans service organizations, including the VFW, American Legion, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Vietnam Veterans of America, Military Officers Association of America, Modern

Military Association of America, and Paralyzed Veterans of America.

Once enacted, the Faster Payments to Veterans' Survivors Act will have a real and positive impact on the financial well-being of thousands of veterans' families.

Our veterans serve our country and sacrifice so much, and their family members contribute and sacrifice right alongside them. It is of utmost importance that we honor those commitments and support their family members.

The bill passed the Veterans' Affairs Committee unanimously in July, and I urge the full House to support its passage today.

□ 1630

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 8260, as amended, the Faster Payments to Veterans Survivors Act, 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. 8260, 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. ROSENDALE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### JON GLAWE POST OFFICE

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5952) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 123 East Main Street, in Vergas, Minnesota, as the "Jon Glawe Post Office".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5952

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

#### SECTION 1. JON GLAWE POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 123 East Main Street, in Vergas, Minnesota, shall be known and designated as the "Jon Glawe Post Office".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Jon Glawe Post Office".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. C. SCOTT FRANKLIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5952, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located in Vergas, Minnesota, as the "Jon Glawe Post Office."

Jon Glawe was born on January 9, 1949, in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota. He grew up on a farm near Vergas and graduated from Perham High School in 1967. After graduating, he moved to California and went to Ventura Community College for 2 years, obtaining his associate's degree.

In 1970, Mr. Glawe was drafted into the U.S. Army and was a sergeant in the 3rd Armored Division station in Frankfurt, Germany. After being honorably discharged in March of 1972, he married his high school sweetheart, Darla Olson, in June of 1973.

As a kid, during snowstorms, Mr. Glawe would ride along with his brothers and dad, who was the rural mail carrier in Vergas, to help shovel snow every time their vehicle stopped or became stuck along the mail route.

He officially began his career with the U.S. Postal Service in Minneapolis in 1975. After the passing of his father, he added a second full-time job, taking over the rural mail route delivering mail for Vergas and the surrounding areas for 36 years, until his retirement in 2011.

Mr. Glawe became well-known and revered by many on his route and served as a lifeline for many in the community. Through Minnesota's harshest winter storms, he was known to not only deliver mail, but would often bring medicine, food, and other goods to those in need.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in honoring Mr. Jon Glawe by supporting H.R. 5952.

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

Mr. C. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill, which would name a post office in Vergas, Minnesota, for Mr. Jon Glawe.

Growing up in Vergas, Minnesota, Mr. Glawe would ride along with his father, who was the rural mail carrier in Vergas. After serving in the U.S. Army during Vietnam, Mr. Glawe moved to Minneapolis and officially began his career with the U.S. Post Office in 1975.

He later moved back to Vergas and resumed work on his family's dairy farm. After his father's death in 1928,

Mr. Glawe added a second full-time job and took over the rural mail route, delivering mail to the town of Vergas and the surrounding area for 36 years.

He was well-known on his route and served as a lifeline for many in the community. Even during the harshest of Minnesota winters, he would deliver mail, medicine, and food to those in need.

There is no better way to honor Jon Glawe's decades of service to the Postal Service than by naming a post office after him.

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

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman has no further speakers, I am prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. C. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Mrs. FISCHBACH).

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding me time.

Earlier this year, I introduced H.R. 5952, a bill that honors the life of Jon Glawe, of Vergas, Minnesota. He was a mail carrier for 36 years, who left a remarkable impact on his community.

Born in 1949, Jon grew up in the Vergas area. He was a wrestling champion, which took him to college in California. After being drafted into the Army in 1970 and faithfully serving his country, he returned home and married his high school sweetheart, Darla Olson.

As a boy, Jon would join his father on the mail route, shoveling the car out of the snow, and many Minnesotans know that feeling. After his father passed away, Jon took up the reins, taking on a second full-time job as a mail carrier while also running the family dairy farm.

Over the years, he became a beloved staple of the community, regularly going above and beyond to help his neighbors.

This bill appropriately names the post office after Jon to honor his service to his neighbors and to the local area. In a letter, his family noted that since the bill's introduction, the outpouring of support from those who live in the Vergas area has been overwhelming. I agree with their words that there is no better way to honor his decades of service than this.

Jon passed away in 2016 and left behind a loving family and many, many friends. I urge my colleagues to hear the voices of those Jon impacted every day and support this bill.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman from Florida has no further speakers, I am prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. C. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

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

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 5952, and I yield back the balance of my time.