

other risk factors associated with suicide.

To honor the legacy of our fallen, we must recommit ourselves to our servicemembers and veterans, our real heroes.

Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support the legislation. Again, I thank the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUNN) for introducing this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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Mrs. KIGGANS. Mr. Speaker, in closing, just to reiterate some of the statements and points that have been made by my fellow veteran colleagues, it is hard to transition out of the military.

We wake up every day with a mission, and that is a great mission—to defend our great Nation. We are part of a team, and it gets us out of bed in the morning. There is no better, no higher calling than that.

The day that that stops and the day that you are not a part of that team, and you might not know what is next ahead in life, and there is a lot of transition with a lot unknown, it is hard. We have to do better for our servicemen and -women that are transitioning out.

We are so thankful for the service of the two young Marines that we spoke about today, but even one veteran suicide is too many.

I know that even in my district in Hampton Roads, Virginia, when we take ships out of commission, we put them in the yards, or we put people on medical hold, we have seen suicides there as well.

Again, taking those servicemembers out of their role, their mission of defending the country every day and putting them in a holding pen, is very hard on their mental health. When we transition them out of the service, there is no more challenging time than that.

This is the least we can do. It is a step in the right direction, but education is a powerful tool. It is one of the tools we have here in Congress.

Mandating that this education be given to our servicemen and -women who are often young people transitioning out who have great lives ahead, long lives ahead, and just helping them to know what resources are available to them, especially for mental health, can be such a challenging time.

I urge all of my colleagues here to support this bill. I look forward to supporting it myself, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mrs. KIGGANS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3722, 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.

VETERANS EDUCATION TRANSPARENCY AND TRAINING ACT

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5914) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the processes to approve programs of education for purposes of the educational assistance programs of 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. 5914

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 “Veterans Education Transparency and Training Act” or the “VETT Act”.

SEC. 2. PROCESSES TO APPROVE PROGRAMS OF EDUCATION FOR PURPOSES OF THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) LIMITATION OF DISAPPROVAL OF PROGRAMS OF EDUCATION FOR FAILURE TO PROVIDE CERTAIN FORMS.—Section 3679(f)(5) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking “this paragraph” and inserting “this subparagraph”;

(2) in subparagraph (B), by striking “this paragraph” and inserting “subparagraph (A)”;

and

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

“(C) If an educational institution cannot provide to an individual a form under paragraph (1) that contains all of the information required under subparagraph (A) of such paragraph, the educational institution shall provide to such individual, with the form under such paragraph, a notice—

“(i) that specifies what such information may be inaccurate or incomplete; and

“(ii) that includes, in place of the information that may be inaccurate or incomplete, the best estimate available on the date of such notice.”.

(b) PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION ABOUT TRAINING FOR SCHOOL CERTIFYING OFFICIALS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a website to serve as a central location for the publication of information about the training that the Department of Veterans Affairs provides for school certifying officials and shall update such information on a regular basis.

SEC. 3. MODIFICATION OF RULES FOR APPROVAL OF COMMERCIAL DRIVER EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR PURPOSES OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3680A(e) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (3) as subparagraphs (A) through (C), respectively;

(2) in the matter before subparagraph (A), as redesignated by paragraph (1), by inserting “(1)” before “The Secretary”;

(3) in paragraph (1)(B), as redesignated by paragraph (1), by inserting “except as provided in paragraph (2),” before “the course”; and

(4) by adding at the end the following new paragraph (2):

“(2)(A) Subject to this paragraph, a commercial driver education program is exempt from paragraph (1)(B) for a branch of an educational institution if the commercial driver education program offered at the branch by the educational institution—

“(i) is appropriately licensed; and

“(ii)(I) the branch is located in a State in which the same commercial driver education program is offered by the same educational institution at another branch of that educational institution in the same State that is approved for purposes of this chapter by a State approving agency or the Secretary when acting in the role of a State approving agency; or

“(II)(aa) the branch is located in a State in which the same commercial driver education program is not offered at another branch of the same educational institution in the same State; and

“(bb) the branch has been operating for a period of at least one year using the same curriculum as a commercial driver education program offered by the educational institution at another location that is approved for purposes of this chapter by a State approving agency or the Secretary when acting in the role of a State approving agency.

“(B)(i) In order for a commercial driver education program of an educational institution offered at a branch described in paragraph (1)(B) to be exempt under subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, the educational institution shall submit to the Secretary each year that paragraph (1)(B) would otherwise apply a report that demonstrates that the curriculum at the new branch is the same as the curriculum at the primary location.

“(ii) Reporting under clause (i) shall be submitted in accordance with such requirements as the Secretary shall establish in consultation with the State approving agencies.

“(C)(i) The Secretary may withhold an exemption under subparagraph (A) for any educational institution or branch of an educational institution as the Secretary considers appropriate.

“(ii) In making any determination under clause (i), the Secretary may consult with the Secretary of Transportation on the performance of a provider of a commercial driver program, including the status of the provider within the Training Provider Registry of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration when appropriate.

“(D) The Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a notification not later than 30 days after the Secretary grants an exemption under this paragraph. Such notification shall identify the educational institution and branch of such educational institution granted such exemption.”.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT OF REQUIREMENTS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish requirements under section 3680A(e)(2)(B)(ii) of such title, as added by subsection (a).

(2) RULEMAKING.—In promulgating any rules to carry out paragraph (2) of section 3680A(e) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall consult with State approving agencies.

(3) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply to commercial driver education programs on and after the day that is 180 days after the date on which the Secretary establishes the requirements under paragraph (1) of this subsection.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may

have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 5914, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5914, as amended, offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. VAN ORDEN), my friend and colleague.

This bill, as amended, would improve the information schools are required to give individuals regarding their GI Bill benefits.

Right now, schools are required to give an estimated cost of education to anyone using the GI Bill. However, there are cases where the school cannot accurately estimate the tuition and expenses for that year.

This could cause veterans to pick a school based off incorrect information that might harm them financially in the future.

Now, I support getting veterans all the information they need to make the right decision about their education. I do not support schools being forced to give a favorable financial estimate before the student enrolls.

This bill would also ensure that schools have a central place to find information to train their staff in charge of helping student veterans use their benefits.

Finally, this bill, as amended, would improve opportunities for veterans wanting to get commercial driver's licenses.

I thank my colleague from North Carolina (Mr. EDWARDS), as well for his work on key provisions of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5914, as amended, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support for H.R. 5914, as amended, the Veterans Education Transparency and Training Act, or VETT Act.

This bill makes changes to student veteran rules and regulations, intending to make it easier for veterans to participate in commercial driver certification programs.

The bill also makes improvements to the shopping sheet that is offered to student veterans when they are applying to institutions of higher learning.

While I support the legislation, I do wish to raise a concern, which is that this legislation chooses one industry, commercial truck driving, over others for approval streamlining.

I understand that this industry is in need of workers. However, truck driving is not the ideal career choice for all, and putting one industry ahead of others doesn't necessarily benefit veterans.

Should this bill become law, we should ensure we do strong oversight of enrollments, quality of education, and earnings.

As I mentioned, the legislation also improves student shopping sheets for enrollments at colleges and universities.

This is a welcome improvement that ensures we won't waste time on paperwork that doesn't benefit students, student veterans in particular.

I thank Representative VAN ORDEN for his work on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 5914, as amended, and urge my colleagues to do the same. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. VAN ORDEN), the sponsor of this legislation. I appreciate the fine job he has done coming forward with this.

Mr. VAN ORDEN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored today to speak on behalf of my legislation, H.R. 5914, the VETT Act.

This legislation addresses unnecessary barriers that veterans face while trying to access educational benefits that they earned during their time of service and ensures a more effective transition to civilian life.

One important provision in the VETT Act addresses a burdensome administrative requirement by revising the current mandate for individualized shopping sheets. With the Department of Education's disastrous FAFSA rollout this year, many institutions cannot provide up-to-date, accurate financial aid information to many of our student veterans. Letting this failure result in a delayed delivery of education benefits for our veterans is entirely unacceptable.

My legislation resolves this burden by ensuring that the State approving agencies can only disapprove programs when schools fail to provide necessary information to the maximum extent possible.

This change offers the needed flexibility for institutions like police academies and truck driving schools, ensuring they can operate effectively while safeguarding veterans and their families.

These are two beleaguered industries that should be supported wholeheartedly by Congress and the American people at large.

I am also very thankful to see the inclusion of the provision from my colleague from North Carolina (Mr. EDWARDS) that will aid our veterans seeking opportunities in the transportation and trucking industry.

By eliminating unnecessary 2-year waits for GI benefits for commercial driving licenses, this provision opens up great-paying jobs to our veterans and aids in fulfilling necessary roles in the private sector.

We need to get our servicemen transitioned from productive members of the military to productive members of civilian life.

This legislation dovetails perfectly with Mr. NUNN's H.R. 3722 because the 24-month window following separating from Active-Duty service is when our

men and women commit suicide, and we will do anything as a body to prevent that.

I thank Ranking Member TAKANO and the chairman for your support in this, and I urge all of my colleagues to vote for it.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. EDWARDS) who has a portion of this bill as well.

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. VAN ORDEN of Wisconsin for his leadership on H.R. 5914, the Veterans Education Transparency and Training Act.

This bill makes much-needed improvements to veteran educational assistance programs, and it will expand job opportunities for the brave men and women who serve our great Nation.

I am similarly grateful to Mr. VAN ORDEN for his collaboration and including my bill, the Veteran Improvement Commercial Driver License Act of 2023, into the VETT Act.

The VICDL Act will increase veteran access to timely, quality commercial driver license training, increase the truck driver workforce pool, and reduce the strain on our Nation's supply chain that is currently worsened by the severe truck driver shortage.

Across the United States, the trucking industry is facing more than a 78,000-driver shortage, which some estimate could reach 160,000 by 2030.

The shortage is exacerbated, in part, by burdensome red tape restricting veteran access to commercial driver license training using their GI Bill benefits.

Currently, roughly 8,400 commercial driving programs are approved for use by eligible veterans under the GI Bill, but a statutory 2-year rule prevents these training facilities from accepting GI benefits at secondary locations for 2 years.

This burdensome red tape has excluded many veterans from attending closer secondary branch training facilities, and it has been forcing veterans to travel hundreds of miles further for training or to wait 2 years to pursue their CDL.

My bill fixes that issue by exempting new branches of preapproved training facilities located in the same State as each other from the statutory 2-year wait to accept veterans' benefits.

Before I close, I thank the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. PAPPAS) for being my bipartisan co-lead on the bill and Senators FISCHER and PADILLA for leading this effort in the Senate.

Ultimately, this is a commonsense reform with wide organizational support that will reduce unnecessary roadblocks to veteran training and workforce opportunities.

I am grateful for its inclusion in the VETT Act, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5914.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 5914, as amended, the VETT Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, once again, I encourage Members to support this legislation and to help our veterans get the most out of their GI Bill benefits.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. DE LA CRUZ). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5914, 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.

VETERAN FRAUD REIMBURSEMENT ACT

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4016) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the repayment by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs of benefits misused by a fiduciary.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4016

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 "Veteran Fraud Reimbursement Act".

SEC. 2. IMPROVEMENT TO REPAYMENT BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OF CERTAIN MISUSED BENEFITS.

Section 6107 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"§ 6107. Reissuance of benefits

"(a) REISSUANCE OF MISUSED BENEFITS.—(1) In any case in which a fiduciary misuses all or part of an individual's benefit paid to such fiduciary, the Secretary shall pay to the beneficiary or the beneficiary's successor fiduciary an amount equal to the amount of such benefit so misused.

"(2) In any case in which the Secretary reissues a benefit payment (in whole or in part) under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall make a good faith effort to obtain recoupment from the fiduciary to whom the payment was originally made.

"(3) In any case in which the Secretary obtains recoupment from a fiduciary who has misused benefits, the Secretary shall promptly remit payment of the recouped amounts to the beneficiary or the beneficiary's successor fiduciary, as the case may be, to the extent that such amounts have not been paid under paragraph (1).

"(b) LIMITATION ON TOTAL AMOUNT PAID.—The total of the amounts paid to a beneficiary or the beneficiary's successor fiduciary under this section may not exceed the total benefit amount misused by the fiduciary with respect to that beneficiary.

"(c) OVERSIGHT OF NEGLIGENCE.—(1) The Secretary shall establish methods and timing with respect to determining whether an instance of misuse by a fiduciary, of all or part of an individual's benefit paid to such fiduciary, is the result of negligence by the Secretary.

"(2) The Secretary may not withhold the reissuing of a benefit payment under subsection (a)(1) by reason of a pending determination under paragraph (1).

"(3) The Secretary is not required to make a determination under paragraph (1) for each instance of misuse by a fiduciary, of all or part of an individual's benefit paid to such fiduciary."

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 4016.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4016 as offered by Representative CONNOLLY. This bill would ensure that VA's fiduciary program is managed effectively so that our Nation's most vulnerable veterans receive the benefits they earned.

The VA appoints fiduciaries for veterans who are unable to manage their VA benefits. A fiduciary misuses a veteran's VA benefit when they spend a veteran's benefit on anything other than the veteran's care and welfare. However, before a veteran who is a victim of misuse can be made financially whole, the VA is required to determine whether the misuse was as a result of VA negligence, but VA does not monitor whether these negligence determinations are being made in a timely way. This bureaucratic red tape has resulted in long wait times for veterans to recoup their misused benefits. Some veterans have passed away before recouping their misused benefits. We must ensure the VA promptly makes whole any veteran who was a victim of misuse by a fiduciary.

H.R. 4016 would ensure just that. It would prohibit VA from withholding repayment of misused benefits because the VA is still working on a negligence determination.

It would also require the VA to establish methods to ensure that negligence determinations are made in a timely way. Veterans deserve to receive their benefits without bureaucratic hurdles and unnecessary delays.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 4016, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the bill from Representative CONNOLLY, H.R. 4016, the Veteran Fraud Reimbursement Act, and encourage my colleagues to do the same.

Beneficiaries in the fiduciary program are among the most vulnerable in

VA's care. Because they are often elderly or mentally ill, they are at greater risk for financial abuse and theft of benefits. Unfortunately, in spite of VA's best efforts at vetting proposed fiduciaries, bad actors do arise from time to time.

When that happens, theft or misuse can have a devastating impact on the financial stability of the beneficiary. Not only that, the strain of being taken advantage of can further erode their physical and mental health, as well.

As such, I support this bill's goal of speeding restitution to those beneficiaries who may have suffered from theft or misuse of funds by a fiduciary. We must empower the VA to make these beneficiaries whole as soon as possible. It is the right thing to do.

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

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS).

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman BOST for yielding me time to speak.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 4016, the Veteran Fraud Reimbursement Act. This bipartisan piece of legislation, introduced by Representative CISCOMANI and Representative CONNOLLY, aims to enhance the repayment process by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for misappropriated benefits.

Our veterans have selflessly served our Nation with honor and courage, and it is our duty to ensure they receive the benefits they rightly deserve and have earned. However, instances of misappropriation of veterans' benefits are a grave injustice that cannot be tolerated. This bill addresses this issue head-on by instituting crucial reforms to ensure that our veterans are promptly reimbursed for any benefits misappropriated by their fiduciaries.

Under this proposed legislation, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs is mandated to reissue benefits to veterans in cases where they are defrauded of their benefits. Additionally, the Secretary must make a good faith effort to recoup misused funds from the responsible fiduciaries, thereby holding them accountable for their actions.

As a 24-year military veteran, I would also like to state that this bill ensures that veterans are not unduly penalized due to delays in determining negligence and guarantees that they receive their benefits owed to them in a timely manner. We cannot turn a blind eye to the injustices faced by our veterans.

By supporting H.R. 4016, we demonstrate our unwavering commitment to protecting the rights and well-being of those who have bravely served our country.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this crucial legislation and standing up for our veterans.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from