

and strengthen oversight of our respective governments in order to enhance the Quad's effectiveness.

It will also help to sustain political support and resources for the Quad in all four nations. It is simply a very important bill to further democracy in the Indo-Pacific.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join in supporting this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. KIM), who is the chair of the Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific.

Mrs. KIM. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative HUIZENGA for yielding, and I thank our ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Representative MEEKS, also for managing this on the House floor.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1263, the Strengthening the Quad Act.

As you have heard, Mr. Speaker, the Quad comprises four nations: the United States, Japan, India, and Australia. It is the cornerstone of our strategy to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific, counter the Chinese Communist Party, or CCP, and maintain stability and U.S. interests in what the Department of Defense has deemed the priority theater.

Against the backdrop of the CCP's militarization of the South China Sea, coercive economic practices, and territorial disputes, the Quad amplifies our four democracies' deterrence and economic, defense, and technological cooperation.

The Strengthening the Quad Act takes our alliance a step further by creating a comprehensive Quad strategy and establishing a Quad Inter-Parliamentary Working Group that reinforces America's commitment to our allies in the region.

I have seen the benefit of inter-parliamentary working groups coming together, having worked on one of those in the past, and I think this is going to really bring all of our interested parties together to really work on finding solutions to keep our strategic security partnerships stronger.

Now is the time to ramp up the Quad's collaboration on maritime security, cybersecurity, and efforts to counter disinformation to protect our allies and friends, especially the Pacific Island nations. They are counting on us to show up.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to co-lead this important legislation with Representative MEEKS, and I urge all my colleagues to support the Strengthening the Quad Act.

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, at this point, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, this is a bipartisan bill. I thank Representative YOUNG KIM for

her work on this bill along with Mr. BERA, Mr. HUIZENGA, and Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE.

This bill passed the House in the last Congress and also the one before that. With authoritarianism on the rise and our Indo-Pacific allies and partners increasingly worried about the United States' commitment to their region, passing this bill now and getting it signed into law will reassure our allies that the United States will remain engaged at the highest of levels.

This will help ensure that democracies in the region can continue to deliver and that we stay committed and find success in our collective endeavor to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Mr. Speaker, I hope all of my colleagues will join me and support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the ranking member's work on this legislation, as well as the work of Chairwoman KIM, Mr. BERA, and Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. This is what can happen when we come together and have our common interests as a nation be projected out to our allies.

I have been involved in a number of other inter-parliamentary groups, IPGs, that really have allowed this body to build and foster relationships with others. It is those critical relationships, not just at the administrative level, but also at that legislative level, that can work through some of the challenges that occur at times with our allies.

Mr. Speaker, let's pass this bill, Strengthening the Quad Act, and send an unmistakable message that the United States stands firm with our allies, committed to peace through strength, prosperity through unity, and an unbreakable defense of democracy against authoritarian threats.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1263.

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. HUIZENGA. 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Matthew Hanley, one of his secretaries.

COMMUNITIES HELPING INVEST THROUGH PROPERTY AND IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED FOR VETERANS ACT OF 2025

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 217) to amend title 38, United States Code, to make permanent the pilot program authorized by the Communities Helping Invest through Property and Improvements Needed for Veterans Act of 2016, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 217

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 "Communities Helping Invest through Property and Improvements Needed for Veterans Act of 2025" or the "CHIP IN for Veterans Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. EXPANDING AND EXTENDING A PILOT PROGRAM ON ACCEPTANCE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OF DONATED FACILITIES AND RELATED IMPROVEMENTS.

(a) EXPANSION.—

(1) *IN GENERAL.*—Section 2 of the Communities Helping Invest through Property and Improvements Needed for Veterans Act of 2016 (Public Law 114–294; 38 U.S.C. 8103 note) is amended, in subsection (a)(1)—

(A) *in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking "property"; and*

(B) *by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:*

"(C) A minor construction, or nonrecurring maintenance, project of the Department."

(2) *CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.*—Such section is further amended—

(A) *in subsection (b)—*

(i) *in the heading, by striking "OF PROPERTY";*

(ii) *in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking "the donation of a property" and inserting "a donation";*

(iii) *in paragraph (1), by inserting "or project" after "property" each place it appears; and*

(iv) *in paragraph (2), by inserting "project," after "improvements,;"*

(B) *in subsection (c)—*

(i) *in paragraph (1)—*

(I) *in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking "real property and improvements donated under the pilot program" and inserting "a donation";*

(II) *in subparagraph (A), by striking "or" and inserting a semicolon;*

(III) *in subparagraph (B), by striking the period at the end and inserting "or"; and*

(IV) *by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:*

"(C) the performance of a minor construction, or nonrecurring maintenance, project of the Department."

(ii) *in paragraph (2)—*

(I) *in subparagraph (A), by striking "construction of the facility" and inserting "donation";*

(II) *in subparagraph (B), by inserting "maintaining," after "altering,;" and*

(III) *in subparagraph (C), by striking "construction of the facility" and inserting "donation";*

(C) *in subsection (e)(1)—*

(i) *by inserting "alter, maintain," after "design," both places it appears;*

(ii) *in subparagraph (A)—*

(I) *by striking "real property and improvements donated" and inserting "a donation"; and*

(II) by striking “of the real property and improvements”; and

(iii) in subparagraph (B)(ii)(I), by striking “construction and donation of the real property and improvements” and inserting “donation”; and

(D) in subsection (g)(1), by striking “real property and improvements donated” and inserting “donations”.

(b) EXTENSION.—Such section is further amended, in subsection (i), by striking “December 16, 2026” and inserting “December 16, 2031”.

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 Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 217, as amended.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 217, as amended. This bill was introduced by the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BACON), my good friend and colleague.

This bill would reauthorize the CHIP IN pilot program for another 5 years while expanding it nationwide. This pilot program has enabled public-private partnerships with VA to help fund the construction of projects for healthcare facilities. It is set to expire next year.

In Omaha, Nebraska, VA and local partners used this authority to build an outpatient clinic 1 year ahead of schedule and \$35 million under budget. They delivered to veterans in Nebraska a modern state-of-the-art facility. With this bill, we would move VA to pursue even more public-private partnerships across the country to build new facilities in communities where veterans need them the most.

I thank my friend, Representative BACON, for his work to bring the CHIP IN program to communities nationwide.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 217, 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 in support of H.R. 217, the CHIP IN for Veterans Act, as amended.

Now more than ever, VA needs flexibility and creative methods to address its infrastructure needs. This legislation extends through 2031 a pilot program that allows VA to accept donations of properties to meet its strategic capital investment project needs. It also expands the types of donations that VA can accept, to include minor

construction and nonrecurring maintenance projects.

VA's infrastructure needs are estimated to be over \$150 billion, and those needs are growing every day. The average age of VA medical centers is over 60 years old, and many have retrofitting and maintenance needs that are not addressed under VA's existing budget requests.

This pilot program presents an opportunity to find creative solutions, where possible, to address VA's infrastructure needs. Non-Federal entities may donate either real property that already includes a constructed facility or that can be used as a site of a new facility constructed by the donor, or entities may donate a facility to be constructed on property VA already owns.

Under the CHIP IN for Veterans Act, donors must independently donate the real property, improvements, goods, or services for the project in an amount acceptable to VA and at no additional cost to the government.

So far, VA has received donations resulting in two medical facilities, an ambulatory care center in Omaha, Nebraska, which began seeing patients in 2020, and an inpatient medical center in Tulsa, Oklahoma, which is expected to open next year.

Under the existing CHIP IN for Veterans Act authority, VA has only been able to accept donations that result in major construction projects, which are projects for which Congress has appropriated at least \$20 million.

H.R. 217, as amended, would expand the CHIP IN program to include minor construction and nonrecurring maintenance projects. This would allow VA to accept donations of smaller outpatient clinics or to make improvements or build additions to existing facilities. Hopefully, with this expanded authority, VA will be able to attract even more donations.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 217, the CHIP IN for Veterans Act of 2025, as amended, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BACON), the sponsor of this bill, who has lived and seen what it has done.

Mr. BACON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chair and ranking member for this opportunity. This is a win for veterans from coast to coast, all 50 States, Puerto Rico, you name it. This is a win for veterans.

I rise today in support of H.R. 217, Communities Helping Invest through Property and Improvements Needed for Veterans Act of 2025, or the CHIP IN for Veterans Act, a bipartisan bill that strengthens and expands a proven program to deliver modern healthcare facilities for our Nation's veterans more efficiently and at a lower cost to taxpayers.

H.R. 217 leverages the success of the CHIP IN for Veterans Act of 2016. We

have extended it twice, and it is going to expire in 2026 if we don't get this bill done today.

H.R. 217, as amended, would reauthorize the pilot program and clarify the original intent of the program to allow the Department of Veterans Affairs to accept donations of real property from non-Federal partners for the construction, improvement, or renovation of VA medical facilities.

The bill changes current law to designate that eligible projects may include minor construction and nonrecurring maintenance, in addition to the major construction projects. These revisions are intended to expand participation in the CHIP IN program and accelerate the delivery of modernized VA infrastructure for veterans across the country.

I want to stress something that the chairman mentioned earlier in his comments. The first example of this use was completed in 2020. The VA programmed a total of \$135 million to build a new ambulatory clinic in Omaha. We built that facility at the cost of \$80 million at a higher specification and at better requirements, better across the board than what the VA would have done by itself, a \$55 million savings. On top of that, we took \$30 million in philanthropic money and offset that \$85 million down to \$55 million.

In all, we saved the taxpayers \$80 million on this one project, and we are looking to do it again with the inpatient facility, where we think we can save a half-billion dollars for the VA and provide a better clinic for inpatient care for our veterans.

This trailblazing partnership delivered a 157,000-square-foot outpatient facility that serves hundreds of veterans each day using eight primary care clinics, a first-of-its-kind women's healthcare clinic, and one specialty care clinic, a surgical suite with five operating rooms, including pre- and post-op space, radiology, and an onsite lab. The facility offers a satellite pharmacy with retail services.

This has become a national model for how a non-Federal investment can supplement VA's investment while reducing the cost for the Federal Government. The success of this project inspired a second facility in Tulsa, Oklahoma, as the ranking member said. The GAO has even recommended that the VA share lessons learned from the Omaha project to replicate its efficiency and innovation.

I cannot emphasize enough the critical role of public-private partnerships in expanding access to high-quality healthcare for our Nation's veterans. The Omaha facility is a testament to what is possible when the public and private sectors come together.

There are so many people in our country who have done well, and they want to invest in our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for the CHIP IN for Veterans Act.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing

H.R. 217, the CHIP IN for Veterans Act, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, once again, I encourage all of our Members to support H.R. 217, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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. 217, 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 ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT OF 2025

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1147) to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish the Veterans Advisory Committee on Equal Access, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1147

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 Accessibility Advisory Committee Act of 2025”.

SEC. 2. VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL ACCESS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Subchapter III of chapter 5 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 549. Advisory Committee on Equal Access

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—(1) The Secretary shall establish an advisory committee on matters relating to accessibility of the Department for individuals with disabilities.

“(2) The advisory committee established under paragraph (1) shall be known as the ‘Veterans Advisory Committee on Equal Access’ (in this section referred to as the ‘Advisory Committee’).

“(b) MEMBERSHIP.—(1) The Advisory Committee shall be composed of 15 voting members, appointed by the Secretary. In appointing such members, the Secretary shall ensure the following:

“(A) Four are veterans with disabilities, including mobility impairment, hearing, visual, and mental or cognitive disabilities.

“(B) Four are experts on issues described in subsection (f)(1)(A) or the provisions of law set forth under subsection (f)(1)(B).

“(C) Two are employees of the Department, one from the Section 508 Office and one from the Architectural Accessibility Program, who oversee the compliance of the Department with Federal accessibility laws.

“(D) Five are representatives nominated by veterans service organizations, recognized under section 5902 of this title, that advocate for veterans with physical, sensory, mental, or cognitive disabilities.

“(2) The Advisory Committee shall also include four ex officio members (or their designees):

“(A) The Under Secretary for Health.

“(B) The Under Secretary for Benefits.

“(C) The Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs.

“(D) The chairperson of the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board established by section 502 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-112; 29 U.S.C. 792).

“(c) TERMS; VACANCIES.—(1) A member of the Advisory Committee shall be appointed for a term of two years. The Secretary may reappoint members to the Advisory Committee for such additional two-year terms as the Secretary determines appropriate.

“(2) The Secretary shall fill a vacancy in the Advisory Committee in the same manner as the original appointment not later than 180 days after such vacancy occurs.

“(d) MEETINGS; SUBCOMMITTEES; QUORUM.—(1) The Advisory Committee shall meet not less frequently than twice each year.

“(2) The Advisory Committee may form subcommittees, which shall meet as often as required.

“(3) A majority of the members of the Advisory Committee shall constitute a quorum.

“(e) CHAIRPERSON.—(1) Members of the Advisory Committee shall select a Chairperson from among the members of the Advisory Committee.

“(2) If the position of Chairperson becomes vacant, the members of the Advisory Committee shall select a new Chairperson not later than 30 days after the date on which the position became vacant.

“(f) DUTIES.—(1) On a regular basis, the Secretary shall consult with and seek the advice of the Advisory Committee on the following:

“(A) Improving the accessibility of the Department for individuals with disabilities, including improving—

“(i) the accessibility of information of the Department, including electronic information;

“(ii) the accessibility of the services and benefits furnished by the Department;

“(iii) the accessibility of the facilities of the Department;

“(iv) the accessibility of facilities of health care providers furnishing care or services under the Veterans Community Care Program under section 1703 of this title; and

“(v) the acquisition process of the Department to ensure that products and services, including information technology and information and communication technology (as defined in the standards issued by the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board pursuant to section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-112; 29 U.S.C. 794d)), are accessible when purchased.

“(B) Ensuring the compliance of the Department with provisions of law that ensure equal access to Federal facilities, benefits, or services, for individuals with disabilities, including the following:

“(i) The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336; 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).

“(ii) Sections 501, 504, and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-112; 29 U.S.C. 791, 794, and 794d).

“(iii) The Plain Writing Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-274; 5 U.S.C. 301 note).

“(iv) The 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act (Public Law 115-336; 44 U.S.C. 3501 note).

“(v) The Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (Public Law 90-480; 42 U.S.C. 4151 et seq.).

“(2) In advising to the Secretary, the Advisory Committee shall, focusing on the areas of greatest need for the Department—

“(A) assess the disability access needs of veterans, the public, and Department employees, for full access to the Department’s information, services, and benefits, by reviewing relevant information, such as filed complaints by people with disabilities or physical assessments of the Department’s facilities;

“(B) provide assessments of accessibility at the Department and the compliance of the Department with applicable provisions of law relating to disability and accessibility; and

“(C) provide advice on improving accessibility at the Department, including the accessibility of all—

“(i) communications, including internal and public-facing;

“(ii) services and benefits; and

“(iii) facilities.

“(3) REPORTS.—(A) Not later than two years after the date of the first meeting of the Advisory Committee, and not less frequently than once every two years thereafter, the Advisory Committee shall submit to the Secretary a report that, focusing on areas of greatest need for the Department—

“(i) identifies and assesses access barriers affecting veterans, the public, and employees of the Department;

“(ii) determines the extent to which the programs and activities of the Department address the barriers identified in clause (i), including compliance of the Department with provisions of law relating to accessibility law and reporting;

“(iii) provides recommendations and access priorities to improve the accessibility of the Department’s services, benefits, information, technology, and facilities;

“(iv) provides a description of access improvements and assesses the Department’s implementation of recommendations from previous reports of the Advisory Committee, including any unmet recommendations that remain necessary for improving accessibility for the Department; and

“(v) provides any recommendations for legislation, administrative action, or other actions that the Advisory Committee determines appropriate.

“(B)(i) Not later than 90 days after the receipt of a report required under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a copy of such report and any comments and recommendations of the Secretary concerning such report that the Secretary determines appropriate.

“(ii) The Secretary shall publish on a publicly accessible website of the Department such report and such comments and recommendations as may have been submitted along with such report.

“(iii) In this subparagraph, the term ‘appropriate congressional committee’ means—

“(I) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives;

“(II) the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate;

“(III) the Committee on Education and Workforce of the House of Representatives; or

“(IV) the Special Committee on Aging of the Senate.

“(g) ADVISORY COMMITTEE PERSONNEL AND RESOURCE MATTERS.—(1) A member of the Commission who is not an officer or employee of the Federal Government shall not be compensated for the performance of the duties of the Advisory Committee.

“(2) A member of the Advisory Committee shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services for the Advisory Committee.

“(3) The Secretary shall ensure that such personnel, funding, and other resources are made available to the Advisory Committee as the Secretary determines appropriate to carry out the duties of the Advisory Committee.

“(4) The Secretary shall furnish to the Advisory Committee such information as the