

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

Advisory Committee may request from the Secretary, subject to applicable provisions of law.

“(h) **TERMINATION OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**—The Advisory Committee shall terminate on the date that is seven years after the date of the enactment of the Veterans Accessibility Advisory Committee Act of 2025.”

(b) **TABLE OF SECTIONS.**—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding, after the item relating to section 548, the following new item:

“549. Advisory Committee on Equal Access.”

(c) **IMPLEMENTATION; ABOLITION OF INACTIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and before establishing the Veterans Advisory Committee on Equal Access under section 549 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall—

(1) abolish an advisory committee of the Department of Veterans Affairs that—

(A) was not established by an Act of Congress; and

(B) is inactive;

(2) consolidate two advisory committees described in paragraph (1); or

(3) submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a recommendation to abolish an advisory committee of the Department that—

(A) was established by an Act of Congress; and

(B) is inactive.

**SEC. 3. EXTENSION ON LIMITATION OF CERTAIN PENSION PAYMENTS TO VETERANS ADMITTED TO NURSING FACILITIES.**

Section 5503(d)(7) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking “November 30, 2031” and inserting “January 31, 2032”.

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.

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. 1147 offered by my colleague, Representative DAVID VALADAO of California. The bill would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish a veterans advisory committee on equal access.

The committee would advise the VA Secretary on how the Department can improve access to VA benefits, services, information, and facilities for individuals with disabilities. The committee would bring together veterans with disabilities, subject matter experts, VA employees, and representatives of veterans service organizations to make sure that the Secretary is getting the best advice from the right people.

Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that this is long overdue. Americans

with disabilities are entitled to equal access to healthcare and benefits nationwide. That includes the VA. Congress made it clear, through the Americans with Disabilities Act and other laws, that this is the case.

While VA has made progress in recent years, the promise of equal access for individuals with disabilities has not been fully achieved.

We know these accessibility gaps still exist, and I thank the VSO community for their work to shine a spotlight on these issues. The goal of this legislation is to eliminate accessibility gaps and achieve universal access for veterans living with disabilities, as they are entitled to by law.

This is an important goal, and I believe the advisory committee is well justified.

I also share many of my colleagues' concerns about the growth of advisory committees in the Federal Government. There are simply too many. That is why this legislation would direct VA to eliminate or consolidate an inactive advisory committee.

I thank Representative VALADAO for his commitment to resolving this issue. This bill passed the House unanimously last Congress, and there is no reason why it should not receive the same bipartisan support this Congress and be signed into law.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 1147, 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 today in support of H.R. 1147, the Veterans Accessibility Advisory Committee Act of 2025, as amended. This bill establishes an advisory committee that brings disabled veterans' voices into the fold and provides a seat at the table with top decisionmakers at VA.

Access is an issue I have sought to champion during my time in Congress and particularly during my time with the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Disabled veterans still face many barriers in accessing the care and services they have rightfully earned. Those barriers deserve the time and attention of a VA advisory committee so that experts can come together to improve how veterans with disabilities access their care and benefits.

Advocates like the Blinded Veterans Association, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and Disabled American Veterans have been tireless voices in our communities, raising awareness of these issues. Establishing a veterans accessibility advisory committee will provide a direct line for these voices to be heard and for change to be made at VA so that all veterans can access their care and benefits with ease.

In a time of drastic change at the Department, while President Trump and Secretary Collins are at the helm, ensuring disabled veterans have a voice at the table is more important than ever.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO), who is the sponsor of this bill.

□ 1630

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for the time.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Veterans Accessibility Advisory Committee Act, which would make the Department of Veterans Affairs more accessible for our disabled veterans.

Our veterans have sacrificed so much for our country, and we have a responsibility to make sure they receive the benefits and services they have earned.

Sadly, too many disabled veterans face unnecessary obstacles in accessing care because of avoidable barriers at the VA.

This bipartisan bill would create a permanent advisory committee within the VA, made up of disabled veterans, experts, and advocates who understand these challenges firsthand.

This committee will give our veterans a direct line to the Secretary of the VA, ensuring that their voices are heard and their needs are prioritized.

This is a commonsense, bipartisan step to improve oversight, enhance accessibility, and uphold our Nation's commitment to the men and women who have sacrificed so much defending our freedoms.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman BOST and his staff at the Committee on Veterans' Affairs for their work on this important bill which makes the VA more accessible for our disabled veterans that it serves.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I have no more speakers, and I am ready to close. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 1147, the Veterans Accessibility Advisory Committee Act of 2025, as amended.

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

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, once again, I encourage all Members to support this legislation, 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. 1147, 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.

**SIMPLIFYING FORMS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS ACT**

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill