

since someone first lent someone sea-shells to buy a cave, they greatly endangered that. I am incredibly proud of the Trump administration for standing up to stop this.

As Chairman BOST noted, there was a \$25,000 problem, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs threw a \$320,000 wrench at it, and that had the potential to collapse this program over time.

I will not allow that on my watch.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman, Secretary Collins, and President Donald J. Trump for helping to ensure that every American who has served, is serving, and will serve the United States of America to protect our freedoms has the ability to fulfill the American Dream, which is homeownership.

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

Mr. Speaker, I point out that the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST), the chairman, is making a mountain out of nothing. The greater risk either way to the government, the home loan program, the VA is on the hook for these loans whether they hold them, or whether lenders hold the note.

What we are talking about here is 80,000 veterans with highly distressed loans being unnecessarily put at risk, and the Biden administration did what it could given changing circumstances from an expiring emergency authority, to having to put a second pause on any foreclosures on these veterans, to finding a solution in VASP.

I am supportive of a replacement to VASP, but it is inexplicable why the Secretary would suddenly, without notice, end the program for veterans who very much right at this very moment would have liked to have applied for VASP before it had been terminated. Yet, as we speak, there is no solution. Regardless of how quickly we move in this Chamber or in the Senate, it is going to take time to stand up this replacement program in time. Meanwhile, we will see veterans lose their homes, all for a very flimsy reason.

Mr. Speaker, I support this legislation, but context is important. This legislation is now critically important because of recent actions by this administration.

This legislation also includes funding for the homelessness programs passed as part of the Elizabeth Dole Act last Congress. The Trump-Collins VA continues to drag their feet on sections of the Dole Act that increase our ability to get homeless veterans housed and off of the streets.

Mr. Speaker, I will address Chairman BOST's remarks that the reason portions of the Dole Act were not implemented, regarding the grant and per diem sections for the homeless, were due to the Biden administration's failure.

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This is not true. The Biden administration clearly articulated the policy

needed in the Dole Act. The chairman failed to include those in the bill before passage last Congress.

Now, the Trump veteran housing crisis first cuts off foreclosure assistance, driving veterans into homelessness, then blocks aid to homelessness providers. My colleagues want to claim today that we are fixing the Trump veteran housing crisis, but if they are serious, they need to join our calls for immediate action by Secretary Collins.

First, we need to implement the Dole Act, including the section on augmentations to the grant and per diem program for getting homeless off the streets. We need to stop the firing of veterans working at VA. We need to halt veteran foreclosures until, at the very least, the legislation we are considering today has been implemented. We need to bring back VASP to offer borrowers more avenues to keep their homes; otherwise, President Trump may see the number of homeless veterans double in a single year.

I will close by saying, again, that I support H.R. 1815, the VA Home Loan Program Reform Act, as amended, but action is truly needed before it is too late.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I do think a response is necessary to clear up what was spoken of from the other side of the aisle. One is that the Veterans Home Loan program does not assume the entire loss of the existing program during VASP, but what it did is, because it is a loan guarantee, it was 25 percent. I think that needs to be clear for the record.

This bill is the cure, I believe, for the problems that we are having right now. At least it gives off-step to secure these loans to make sure that as few as possible face foreclosure. It is a good bill. It is a good bill that will receive support from both sides of the aisle. The argument before was just that. It was an argument before.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MOORE of North Carolina). 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. 1815, 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.

VA BUDGET SHORTFALL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1823) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Comptroller General of the United States to report on certain funding shortfalls in the De-

partment of Veterans Affairs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1823

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 "VA Budget Shortfall Accountability Act".

SECTION 2. FUNDING SHORTFALLS IN CERTAIN ADMINISTRATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS: REVIEWS; REPORTS.

(a) FIRST GAO REVIEW.—

(1) REVIEW REQUIRED.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall begin a review regarding the circumstances surrounding, and the causes of—

(A) the shortfall in the funding of the Veterans Benefits Administration for fiscal year 2024; and

(B) the expected shortfall in the funding of the Veterans Health Administration in fiscal year 2025.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The review under this subsection shall include the following elements:

(A) A comparison of monthly obligations and expenditures in relevant accounts against the spending plan of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(B) Any transfers between accounts described in subparagraph (A).

(C) The reasons for any significant diversions of obligations or expenditures from such spending plan.

(D) An analysis of the accuracy of any projections or estimates relevant to diversions described in subparagraph (C).

(E) Remedial actions the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may take—

(i) to improve the accuracy of supporting information submitted under section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code, with respect to the Department; and

(ii) to prevent funding shortfalls for the Department.

(3) REPORT.—Not later than 30 days after completing such review, the Comptroller General shall submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs a written report containing the results and findings of such review.

(b) SUBSEQUENT GAO REVIEWS.—In each of the five calendar years following the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall conduct a review including the elements described in subsection (a)(2), and submit a report described in subsection (a)(3), regarding the funding of the Department of Veterans Affairs for the most recent fiscal year to end before the date of such review.

(c) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—Not later than 30 days after the Secretary of Veterans Affairs receives a report of the Comptroller General under subsection (a) or (b), the Secretary shall submit such report to—

(1) the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate; and

(2) the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

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. 1823, 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. 1823, as amended.

This bill was introduced by my friend and colleague, Representative JACK BERGMAN. This bill will create good government accounting and reporting practices in handling of VA's multibillion-dollar budget.

General BERGMAN introduced this bill in response to a disastrous miscalculation during the Biden administration, which led to a fake budget shortfall.

Last July, VA informed Congress about a potential \$15 billion shortfall. VA said it needed the money for unprecedented increases in benefits claims and healthcare services. This notice came after the Biden administration had already submitted its VA budget request.

Mr. Speaker, it should go without saying that VA should have known its financial situation much earlier than the time they told us about the shortfall that ended up never existing.

Now, according to VA Office of Inspector General, the miscalculations stem from a lack of oversight, accuracy, and communication. It is time to change that. If there is anything that we have learned, it is that we need our eyes on the VA budget and their reviews. I am proud to support General BERGMAN's bill to do exactly that.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1823, 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 speak in hesitant support of H.R. 1823, the VA Budget Shortfall Accountability Act of 2025, as amended.

This bill requires the U.S. Government Accountability Office to conduct a review of the circumstances surrounding the budget shortfalls at the Veterans Benefit Administration in fiscal year 2024 and at the Veterans Health Administration in fiscal year 2025.

Upon completion, GAO will submit the report to VA, which must transmit it to the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Appropriations Committees.

GAO is then required to complete five subsequent annual reviews of VHA's and VBA's budget execution for the preceding fiscal year.

I am concerned that this legislation is duplicative of reports that have already been published by VA's Office of Inspector General, and of work GAO is currently conducting that was initiated under the Comptroller General's authority.

It is especially concerning that we are considering H.R. 1823 today, given the context of the letter Chairman BOST recently sent to the Department of Justice, urging the Attorney General to investigate three former Biden

administration officials for criminal wrongdoing in handling last year's budget shortfall.

This bill should be viewed as political retaliation. It is not serious oversight. Give me a break.

The reports recently issued by OIG have already determined that VA's existing accounting and budget technological infrastructure is a primary cause of the shortcomings in VA's monitoring of budget execution that led to the VBA and VHA shortfalls in fiscal years 2024 and 2025, respectively.

This bill does nothing to address that and other underlying causes, and instead seems to be designed to reopen investigation of previous errors.

GAO's resources could be put to better use on more meaningful oversight of VA's budget formulation and execution process to include the role of the Office of Management and Budget in determining VA's annual budget requests. This legislation will not accomplish that.

While I find the intent of the bill to be retaliatory in nature in terms of the time it will waste looking back on the Biden administration budget, I do agree with my majority colleagues that the Trump administration budget formulation and execution process warrants scrutiny.

For that reason, I am pleased that the majority added a provision to the bill before markup that requires GAO to review VA's budget each year of the Trump administration. Secretary Collins has already broken the law by redirecting funds without congressional approval, and I worry that trend will continue over the next 4 years. I hope my colleagues will join me in rigorous oversight of the Trump administration's approach to VA's budget. I will not stand in the way of this bill's passage today.

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

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN), the chief sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman and the ranking member for supporting this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of my legislation, the VA Budget Shortfall Accountability Act, a bill that puts veterans first by ensuring the systems meant to serve them are working as intended.

Last July, the VA came to Congress with a dire warning: the agency was facing major funding shortfalls, nearly \$3 billion for veterans' benefits and additional \$12 billion for healthcare.

The message was urgent: Without immediate action, benefits could be delayed for millions of veterans. Congress acted quickly and responsibly to approve supplemental funding because when it comes to our veterans and their families, there can be no margin for error.

Their peace of mind, their financial security, and their access to care are not negotiable.

Just weeks later, we learned that there were, in fact, no shortfalls. Revised financial estimates from the VA showed billions of dollars left unspent. While the shortfall didn't actually exist, the panic, confusion, and sleepless nights for the veterans wondering whether they would receive care was very real, and it was avoidable.

Mr. Speaker, the goal of H.R. 1823 is not to assign blame. It is to strengthen trust. Our veterans should never have to worry that an accounting error might prevent them from receiving their earned care and benefits. This bill simply ensures that the Comptroller General will audit the VA's budgeting and accounting systems, identify where things went wrong, and help make sure it never happens again.

Let's be clear: The VA serves millions of veterans with dedication and compassion every day, but we can always do better and our veterans deserve nothing less. They have earned the peace of mind that comes from knowing their government is not only committed to them but equipped to serve them reliably.

The VA Budget Shortfall Accountability Act is about reinforcing that commitment. This is not a partisan issue. It is about making sure we get it right for those who have served our Nation every time.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in supporting this bill, which will help ensure that our veterans never have to question whether their benefits and care will be there when they need them.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to share my position on this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, 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. 1823, 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.

IMPROVING VA TRAINING FOR MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA CLAIMS ACT

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2201) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve claims, made under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, regarding military sexual trauma, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2201

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