

goes unreported during military service.

Furthermore, evidence indicating that MST occurred is difficult to evaluate, and VA claims processors and examiners do not have sufficient training to recognize indirect evidence of MST. They are also not required to undergo annual sensitivity training to reduce the risk of retraumatizing survivors of MST.

Further, the law requires VA to help veterans filing disability benefits claims based on MST to gather evidence for their claims. However, VA does not always obtain a veteran's complete service personnel and medical records, which can provide crucial evidence to prove an MST claim.

This bipartisan bill works to improve the MST claim process by requiring VA employees working on these cases to complete annual training to better identify evidence and to ensure that veterans are not retraumatized during the examination process.

Additionally, the VA would be required to automatically obtain all service personnel and medical records for veterans filing an MST claim to ensure their cases are processed in an accurate and timely manner.

Streamlining the MST claim process and improving VA training will ensure veterans who endured MST can more easily access their earned benefits and ensure they are treated with compassion during the claims process.

I thank Representatives NIKKI BUDZINSKI, DON BACON, and CRISSY HOULAHAN for their collaboration on this commonsense, bipartisan measure that provides survivors of MST with the support and protection they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Improving VA Training for Military Sexual Trauma Claims Act.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. BUDZINSKI), the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Technology Modernization and my good friend.

Ms. BUDZINSKI. Mr. Speaker, just a few weeks ago, I was speaking in committee to celebrate the bipartisanship of this important legislation and the urgent need to pass it out of the House. Today, we are one step closer to making that a reality.

First, I thank Representative YOUNG KIM for her leadership and collaboration on this bill, and I thank our veterans for their service and bravery.

This bill is needed for so many of those veterans who have endured sexual trauma while in service. When these veterans go to file military sexual trauma claims, navigating the VA system should never add to the pain they have already endured. That is why I introduced this bipartisan legislation to ensure the VA's claims process supports rather than retraumatizes survivors of MST.

Right now, contracted disability compensation examiners are only re-

quired to complete outdated online sensitivity training before handling these deeply sensitive claims. This insufficient preparation can make the claims process retraumatizing for those who have already suffered.

MST affects veterans of all genders. While it is more common among women, many male veterans are also impacted. We must ensure that all of our survivors are treated with dignity and care.

The Improving VA Training for Military Sexual Trauma Claims Act would modernize and strengthen the training required for VA staff and contractors who work on MST claims and help cut through the red tape that too often delays justice and support.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 2201, the Improving VA Training for Military Sexual Trauma Claims 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. 2201, 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.

AUTOMOTIVE SUPPORT SERVICES TO IMPROVE SAFE TRANSPORTATION ACT OF 2025

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1364) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide clarification regarding the inclusion of medically necessary automobile adaptations in Department of Veterans Affairs definition of "medical services", as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1364

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 "Automotive Support Services to Improve Safe Transportation Act of 2025" or the "ASSIST Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. CLARIFICATION REGARDING INCLUSION OF MEDICALLY NECESSARY AUTOMOBILE ADAPTATIONS IN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DEFINITION OF "MEDICAL SERVICES".

Section 1701(6)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"(1) The provision of any medically necessary automobile adaptations for driver or passenger use, including—

"(i) ramp and kneeling systems;
"(ii) raised doors or lowered floors;
"(iii) raised roofs;
"(iv) air conditioning;
"(v) occupied and unoccupied mobility lifts;
"(vi) ingress or egress accessibility modifications;
"(vii) wheelchair tie-downs; and
"(viii) adapted seating."

SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF CERTAIN LIMITS ON PAYMENTS OF PENSION.

Section 5503(d)(7) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking "November 30, 2031" and inserting "September 30, 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 on H.R. 1364, 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. 1364, as amended. The bill was introduced by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BARRETT), my friend and a fellow veteran.

H.R. 1364, as amended, would allow eligible disabled veterans to receive adaptive automobile equipment that they may need to safely operate their vehicles. Right now, there are too many restrictions on eligible items that veterans could use under this program.

Mr. BARRETT's bill would close that loophole and give disabled veterans the flexibility that they need to live independent lives. Additionally, the bill would include adaptations for driver and passenger use to get veterans where they need to be.

This Congress, the Trump administration has committed to making VA work for veterans again. This bill would cut the bureaucracy nonsense from the last administration and do just that.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the VFW, the WWP, and PVA for supporting this bill. I also thank Representative BARRETT for introducing this bill and for his work on behalf of disabled veterans across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1364, 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. 1364, the Automotive Support Services to Improve Safe Transportation Act, or ASSIST Act, of 2025, as amended.

For disabled veterans, attending a medical appointment is often not a routine drive but, rather, can be a logistical and physical challenge. That is why Representatives LEVIN and

FLETCHER led the passage of the Veterans Auto and Education Improvement Act of 2022 into law.

This law allowed veterans to upgrade their vehicles every 10 years and authorized the Department of Veterans Affairs to offer mobility improvements to vehicles for the purposes of attending medical appointments. However, now that this landmark law has been implemented, oversight has led to the identification of some gaps in the types of mobility services currently authorized by law.

This is where the ASSIST Act comes in. This legislation, led by Representative BARRETT and co-led by Representatives MAGGIE GOODLANDER, SUSIE LEE, JASON CROW, and EUGENE VINDMAN, expands the types of equipment and services that VA is authorized to provide.

These are benefits and services these veterans have earned, and it is our duty in Congress to ensure veterans don't have to worry about how they will access the care they have earned through their service to our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support this legislation, and 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. BARRETT), the key sponsor of this bill.

□ 1730

Mr. BARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman and the ranking member for their support of my bill, H.R. 1364, the ASSIST Act.

During my 22 years in the United States Army, I was fortunate to return home without the need for assistive devices. For too many who serve or have served, that isn't the case. Too many are returning home with wounds that can't be healed, leaving them permanently disabled and in need of assistive technology.

Not only does a service-connected disability negatively impact a veteran's quality of life but it can cause barriers as they attempt to transition back to civilian life.

My bipartisan bill ensures that disabled veterans, with help from the Department of Veterans Affairs, are empowered to make the vehicle modifications they need to safely and efficiently travel. Right now, the VA is restricted to funding only a limited number of adaptive equipment devices such as wheelchair tie-downs, van lifts, and raised roofs.

Unfortunately and unintentionally, this limits and in many cases prevents altogether some veterans from being able to make necessary modifications to their vehicles such as ramp and kneeling systems, mobility device lifts, and ingress and egress accessibility modifications.

The ASSIST Act fixes this gap in assistance and would make sure that disabled veterans can continue traveling safely and freely when they return home. Specifically, this will give the VA greater flexibility to offer financial

assistance for a wider range of medically necessary vehicle adaptations.

This is a commonsense solution that removes bureaucratic red tape and gives veterans the resources they deserve to live life fully after they serve.

The bottom line is that our veterans put their bodies on the line for the very freedoms that we cherish and often take for granted. In return, they deserve to be taken care of when they take off the uniform. By passing this bill today, we can ensure that no veteran is denied essential mobility assistance because of an outdated government list that leaves many things left off.

Mr. Speaker, I specifically thank my colleague, Congresswoman MAGGIE GOODLANDER, for leading this effort with me. I look forward to working with Senator TUBERVILLE to get this to the Senate and onto the President's desk for signature.

It is time to give America's heroes the resources they need to live their lives to the fullest, and I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on this bill.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. GOODLANDER), my good friend and cosponsor of H.R. 1364.

She currently serves on the House Committee on Armed Services and the Small Business Committee.

Ms. GOODLANDER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member TAKANO and the chairman for their work today on this bill and on the other bills that I hope will soon pass the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of a bipartisan bill that I am very proud to be leading with my colleague and friend, Congressman BARRETT. It does two important things that I came to Congress to do.

Number one, it cuts some senseless red tape and updates outdated laws so that our government can work better for hardworking people. It also in equal measure delivers on what I believe is a sacred obligation that we owe to the women and men who serve our country in uniform, especially those who sustain life-changing injuries during their service to our country.

Our bipartisan bill is called the ASSIST Act. It makes commonsense changes. It is going to really cut red tape that is limiting and, as Congressman BARRETT said, preventing far too many disabled veterans in our country from accessing the medically necessary and basic equipment that they need to travel safely and freely.

The freedom to travel is just one of the many basic freedoms that our veterans fought for while they served our country in uniform. We can and must do better.

My home State of New Hampshire is home to tens of thousands of veterans who live with service-connected disabilities, including a man I am very proud to represent, Gary Gordan, from Concord, New Hampshire. He is a Vietnam veteran and a fellow Navy veteran

who today relies on a power chair to live his life.

Gary Gordon has truly dedicated his life to our country in uniform as an EMT, and as a mental health worker at our State hospital for more than two decades. He reached out to our office for help with navigating the process of getting the basic adaptive equipment that he needs to live his life and to get his power chair into his car. It is a brand new power chair.

Under current law, the VA is limited to providing the basic type of equipment that Gary Gordon needs to get his power chair into his vehicle. This is a problem that this Congress can and must solve, and we can do that by passing the ASSIST Act.

It really is a commonsense, straightforward bill that is going to make it easier and possible for the VA to cover the basic equipment that our veterans need to live their lives. It is going to help us meet the moment and provide the best possible care that our veterans deserve.

As we approach Memorial Day, I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to come together and to support this commonsense, bipartisan legislation that is really going to change the lives of veterans all across our country.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 1364, the ASSIST Act of 2025, as amended.

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

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

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 Illinois (Mr. BOST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1364, 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 CLAIMS EDUCATION ACT OF 2025

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1578) to amend title 38, United States Code, to promote assistance from persons recognized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for individuals who file certain claims under laws administered by the Secretary, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1578

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 Claims Education Act of 2025".