

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".

SEC. 2. PROMOTION OF ASSISTANCE FROM PERSONS RECOGNIZED BY THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO FILE CERTAIN CLAIMS UNDER LAWS ADMINISTERED BY THE SECRETARY.

(a) NOTICE TO CLAIMANTS OF AVAILABLE ASSISTANCE FROM RECOGNIZED PERSONS.—Section 5103A of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (g) through (i) as subsections (i) through (k), respectively;

(2) by inserting after subsection (f) the following new subsections:

“(g) Upon receipt of an initial claim by a claimant not represented by an accredited person, the Secretary shall provide notice to the claimant that—

“(1) an accredited person may be able to represent the claimant;

“(2) a veterans service organization recognized under section 5902 of this title may represent the claimant at no charge to the claimant;

“(3) provides the web address of the online tool maintained under subsection (h); and

“(4) provides the web address of an appropriate and publicly accessible website of the Department through which a claimant may report—

“(A) a person, who is not an accredited person, who represented the claimant; and

“(B) any fee charged by such person for such representation.

“(h)(1) The Secretary shall maintain an online tool that allows a claimant to search a list of accredited persons who represent claimants.

“(2) The Secretary shall ensure that such list is current at least once each calendar quarter.

“(3) The Secretary shall ensure that such tool is easily accessible to a claimant.”; and

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

“(l) In this section:

“(1) The term ‘accredited person’ means—

“(A) a veterans service organization recognized under section 5902 of this title; or

“(B) an attorney, agent, or other person recognized under section 5904 of this title.

“(2) The term ‘represent’ means to prepare, present, or prosecute a claim under a law administered by the Secretary on behalf of a claimant.”.

(b) ONLINE INFORMATION REGARDING PERSONS THAT ASSIST CLAIMANTS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall include, in each web portal of the Department of Veterans Affairs, through which an individual may file a claim for a benefit administered by the Under Secretary for Benefits or the Under Secretary for Health, a warning regarding fees an agent or attorney may charge such individual for assistance in filing such claim. Such warning shall include the following:

(1) A link to the online tool maintained under subsection (h) of section 5103A of such title, as amended by subsection (a).

(2) A link to the website of the Department described in subparagraph (D) of section 5103A(f)(1) of such title, as amended by subsection (a).

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall—

(1) complete a review the regulations, processes, and procedures of the Department of Veterans Affairs that pertain to recognition under section 5904 of title 38, United States Code;

(2) develop recommendations for legislative or administrative action to improve such regulations, processes, and procedures; and

(3) submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a report containing the findings of the Secretary with respect to the review completed under paragraph (1) and the recommendations developed under paragraph (2).

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 “March 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 on H.R. 1578, 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. 1578, as amended, introduced by my colleague from California (Mr. PETERS).

This bill would ensure veterans know about the availability of accredited representatives, including those who help with filing initial VA benefit claims at no cost. It would also give veterans the information and online resources they need to find an accredited representative who is right for them and to report any unaccredited bad actors who wrongfully charge a fee for their services.

This bill would also require the VA to review its accreditation process and give Congress recommendations for improvement. Veterans and their families deserve all the information they need to decide who will provide the best assistance with their claim. This bill ensures just that.

I thank Representative PETERS for his work on this bill, and I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 1578, as amended.

Mr. Speaker, 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 strong support of H.R. 1578, the Veterans Claims Education Act of 2025, as amended.

Obtaining veterans benefits can be confusing. The process can be cumbersome. Because of the complexity and scope of the VA and its programs, some veterans take to an internet search to figure out how to get their claims approved.

It seems certain actors have figured out that in the confusion of the process, they can make a profit or, with claims specifically, hundreds of millions of dollars in profits.

Oftentimes, when veterans log on and search how to get their claims submitted, they are greeted by a clickbait ad for claim sharks. These are the people who charge exorbitant fees, while assisting veterans in the preparation of their claims.

Current law mandates that VA has a duty to assist in the initial claims

preparation process. This duty exists to ensure that there are no financial barriers to veterans in having their claims prepared and adjudicated and that veterans experience a nonadversarial process.

Moreover, there are thousands of veterans service organizations around the country who are willing and able to assist veterans for free. Those service officers have been vetted by VA, both for their character and competence.

In the spirit of ensuring that veterans are made aware that they are entitled to this preparation assistance, the Veterans Claims Education Act mandates that VA websites prominently give veterans notice that they are entitled to free assistance from an accredited representative and how to find that assistance.

Not only does it alert the veteran that they are entitled to assistance in their claims preparation at no cost but it also provides guidance on reporting bad actors like unaccredited claim sharks.

The VA's accreditation process serves to protect our Nation's veterans from financial exploitation so that veterans are less likely to be at risk of incurring outrageous debts, as well as losing out on months of their benefits.

Mr. Speaker, few people would think there is value in letting someone take 5 months of our paychecks just for reviewing our resume, right? Then why would we ever, ever be even remotely comfortable with someone taking 5 months of earned benefits away from our veterans?

I strongly support this bipartisan bill as it would promote those actors who are doing claims preparation and processing the right way, not the ones who pay to be the first result on an internet search.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative PETERS for introducing this legislation. This bill allows us to direct veterans to representatives who have the skills, knowledge, and accreditation to help them, not to take advantage of them during the initial claims process.

Mr. Speaker, today, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1578 and not just to stop there. I also urge them to continue to push back against claim sharks and to support legislation that reinstates the penalties that were in place to hold accountable bad actors who took advantage of veterans for years.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS), the author of H.R. 1578.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 1578, the Veterans Claims Education Act.

I wrote this bill after a veteran in my district alerted my office about a challenge he faced accessing his hard-earned VA benefits. This veteran contracted with a for-profit company that promised to increase the veteran's disability benefits in exchange for a cut of the veteran's disability payment from the VA.

It is unconscionable that for-profit entities, known as claim sharks, prey on the trust and good will of our veterans to line their own pockets.

My bill takes a big step to correct this and will protect veterans in San Diego and throughout the country from similar scams in the future. The Veterans Claims Education Act provides educational resources to steer veterans toward veterans service organizations, qualified lawyers, and accredited entities who can provide not-for-profit assistance to veterans.

My bill also provides vets filing a disability claim with an online search tool to help veterans find accredited entities that can assist with claims. It creates an online portal to report claim sharks targeting veterans, which charge a fee for their services.

Republicans and Democrats may have sincere policy disagreements about how to provide world-class care to our Nation's veterans and their families, but I know we all agree that no one should be able to profit from the service and sacrifice of our veterans.

I thank the chairman and the ranking member and the entire House Veterans' Affairs Committee for advancing this legislation out of the House. I thank the numerous veterans organizations for their advocacy, including the American Legion, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the VFW, and other great organizations.

I look forward to working with these groups to make this law the law of the land, and I urge my colleagues to support the bill and our veterans.

□ 1745

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 1578, the Veterans Claims Education Act of 2025, as amended, and 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. 1578, 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.

MODIFYING RECIPROCAL TARIFF RATES TO REFLECT DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 119-54)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committees on Foreign Affairs

and Ways and Means and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with applicable law, including the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 *et seq.*), section 604 of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2483), and section 301 of title 3, United States Code, I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order on Modifying Reciprocal Tariff Rates to Reflect Discussions with the People's Republic of China.

In Executive Order 14257 of April 2, 2025 (Regulating Imports With a Reciprocal Tariff to Rectify Trade Practices that Contribute to Large and Persistent Annual United States Goods Trade Deficits), I declared a national emergency arising from conditions reflected in large and persistent annual U.S. goods trade deficits, and imposed additional *ad valorem* duties that I deemed necessary and appropriate to deal with that unusual and extraordinary threat, which has its source in whole or substantial part outside the United States, to the national security and economy of the United States. Section 4(b) of Executive Order 14257 provided that “[s]hould any trading partner retaliate against the United States in response to this action through import duties on U.S. exports or other measures, I may further modify the [Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States] to increase or expand in scope the duties imposed under this order to ensure the efficacy of this action.”

Since I signed Executive Order 14266 of April 9, 2025 (Modifying Reciprocal Tariff Rates To Reflect Trading Partner Retaliation and Alignment), the United States has entered into discussions with the People's Republic of China (PRC) to address the lack of trade reciprocity in our economic relationship and our resulting national and economic security concerns. Conducting these discussions is a significant step by the PRC toward remedying non-reciprocal trade arrangements and addressing the concerns of the United States relating to economic and national security matters.

As a result of this significant step, pursuant to section 4(c) of Executive Order 14257, this order modifies the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States to suspend for a period of 90 days application of the additional *ad valorem* duties imposed on the PRC listed in Annex I to Executive Order 14257, as amended by Executive Order 14259 of April 8, 2025 (Amendment to Reciprocal Tariffs and Updated Duties as Applied to Low-Value Imports From the People's Republic of China), and Executive Order 14266, and clarified in the Presidential Memorandum of April 11, 2025 (Clarification of Exceptions Under Executive Order 14257 of April 2, 2025, as Amended), and to instead impose on articles of the PRC an additional *ad valorem* rate of duty as set forth in the

order, pursuant to the terms of, and except as otherwise provided in, Executive Order 14257, as modified by this order.

My Administration will continue to consult with the Congress on our efforts to address extraordinary and persistent annual U.S. goods trade deficits.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

DONALD J. TRUMP.
THE WHITE HOUSE, May 19, 2025.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 49 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WEBER of Texas) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Motions to suspend the rules and pass:

H.R. 1263; and
H.R. 1286.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

STRENGTHENING THE QUAD ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1263) to require a strategy for bolstering engagement and cooperation between the United States, Australia, India, and Japan and to seek to establish a Quad Inter-Parliamentary Working Group to facilitate closer cooperation on shared interests and values, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 334, nays 51, not voting 47, as follows:

[Roll No. 132]

YEAS—334

Adams	Alford	Amo
Aderholt	Allen	Amodei (NV)