

As chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, I applaud this effort. It is exactly the kind of hands-on, forward-thinking program we need to develop the next generation of farmers, scientists, and entrepreneurs.

Agriculture puts food on our tables, clothes on our backs, and fuel in our vehicles. Programs like this ensure it continues to do so for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the leadership, educators, and students of St. Marys for their vision, and I look forward to seeing the impact of this outstanding program.

# MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2026

## GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ALFORD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 3944, and that I may include tabular material on the same.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HARIDOPOLOS). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 530 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 3944.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LOUDERMILK) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1214

## IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 3944) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026, and for other purposes, with Mr. LOUDERMILK in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations or their respective designees.

The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. ALFORD) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. ALFORD. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am honored to present the fiscal year 2026 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill to the House today.

This bill supports our troops, their families, and our Nation's veterans.

The bill includes nearly \$18 billion for military construction efforts. It is critical that our servicemembers and their families have the infrastructure and support they need. This bill delivers to construct and improve military housing, childcare centers, and other quality-of-life components that are so important to those who risk so much.

This bill continues to build on investments that strengthen our national security through the construction of modern infrastructure and improvements to critical quality-of-life facilities for our servicemembers and their families.

Additionally, we continue to provide significant funding to build upon prior years' work to enable the Department of Defense to meet the challenges in the Indo-Pacific.

The bill honors our commitment to our Nation's veterans and to our troops. To honor that commitment, the bill provides full funding for healthcare and benefits for veterans. Our veterans have earned these benefits, and we are making good on our promises to them. That includes fully funding our commitment to the PACT Act.

The bill continues robust investments in women's health, rural health, veterans' homelessness issues, and mental health. The legislation maintains all the funding for medical and prosthetic research. It increases funding for VA infrastructure and supports Arlington National Cemetery. It invests in the improvement, operations, and maintenance of burial grounds for those who have sacrificed.

I thank Ranking Member WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I am glad we are at this step in the process and hope that we continue to work together to support our troops and our veterans.

Everyone—everyone, Mr. Chair—should understand that this bill cares for our veterans. It supports our troops and their families. This bill keeps the promises that we have made to our heroes.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3944, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I, unfortunately, could not possibly disagree with the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. ALFORD), my friend, more on the description of this bill, which is why I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 3944, the fiscal year 2026 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies bill.

While I unfortunately cannot support the bill on the floor today, I will say in Chairman CARTER's absence that I am thankful and appreciative of the work that we have been able to accomplish together over the years on this subcommittee. I know he and I both prioritize quality of life for our servicemembers and their families and caring for our veterans.

Unfortunately, this bill hurtles us toward VA privatization, a top Project 2025 priority that undercuts what veterans consistently ask us for in Congress. They want high-quality medical care at the VA; not privatized care that takes longer to receive.

By transferring record funding from VA medical services to community care, which is a 67 percent increase of \$14 billion, this bill pushes veterans into private care, even though veteran polls and studies show that when given the option, veterans prefer to receive their medical care at the VA.

In 2024, veteran trust in VA healthcare rose to a record 92 percent. We should build on this success, not kick veterans to an already crowded private market. I understand that there is a need for community care, especially for veterans in rural areas and specialty care when necessary, and when appointments at the VA are scarce.

However, countless studies show that when veterans seek care at private hospitals and clinics, they wait longer to see providers, and they get worse care. They know VA medical professionals choose this work due to their mission to care for our veterans, and that is something the private sector simply cannot replicate.

We should invest more in VA provider recruitment and retention incentives, increase benefits counselors and adjudicators, not ignore veterans' wishes and speed recklessly into privatization.

On the military construction side, this bill underfunds military construction by \$904 million compared to the President's budget request, and fails to fund some specific needs such as installation resilience and NATO infrastructure commitments. As Russia continues to wage an illegal war in Ukraine and threaten Europe, we should be sending a clear sign that we stand with our NATO allies, allies who have stood by us for decades. We are talking about infrastructure for our troops who are over there, as well as our allies' troops.

We all know that warming global temperatures are having a devastating impact on our military installations, including sea level rise, recurrent flooding, hurricanes, and extreme weather, as well as extreme heat and drought, yet this bill includes zero dedicated funding to mitigate this extreme weather damage to our installations and force readiness.

We have seen time and again what devastating extreme weather can do to installations. In 2018, Hurricane Michael mauled Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida, my home State, and cost the Air Force \$4.9 billion to rebuild. When Typhoon Mawar ran through Guam and devastated the island, this Congress provided almost \$1.8 billion to begin recovering from the damage. Unfortunately, we know that future need from Typhoon Mawar will cost many billions more.

Finally, this bill includes a plethora of harmful poison pill riders. It once again prohibits the VA from implementing its interim final rule to protect a woman's right to abortion and counseling. The message sent on that is clear: Republicans want to further limit women's access to healthcare.

Never mind if an abortion is in the best medical interest for the veteran, between her and her doctor. Disturbingly, Republicans think you should only have access to abortion if you are dying.

This bill has the government making personal medical decisions for veterans, not their doctor or the veteran themselves. It is a cruel and ironic way to treat those who fight for our freedoms by taking them away.

This bill also undermines VA's ability to keep at-risk veterans safe by preventing VA from reporting a beneficiary to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. This rider prohibits VA from following Federal law to keep guns out of the hands of people who Federal law says should not have them because they are a danger to themselves or others.

My subcommittee receives notifications every time there is a suicide on VA property. Over the last year, Mr. Chairman, we received suicide notices from Asheville, Los Angeles, McAllen, Minneapolis, Las Vegas, south Texas, Puget Sound, and many, many more. Every single veteran committed suicide with a firearm. Every single one.

With all of these serious concerns, I cannot in good conscience support this bill. I urge my colleagues to oppose it, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ALFORD. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Today is the first of 12 essential steps that the House Appropriations Committee will take to restore strong, responsible governance under the golden age of the Trump administration.

Just this past weekend, Missouri's own 509th Bomb Wing and the 131st Guard Wing of Whiteman Air Force Base in my district demonstrated the vital role that our B-2 long-range strike force plays in preserving national and international security.

Drone warfare between Ukraine and Russia has shown just how vulnerable strategic assets can be. This bill emphasizes the importance of modernizing and hardening our infrastructure for the world's most advanced air wings, such as the B-21 Raider.

Our greatest asset, though, is not our aircraft. I think the ranking member would agree, it is our people. This bill makes bold strides to improve the quality of life for our servicemembers and their families. It expands childcare options. It enhances access to tutoring for children of fallen and disabled veterans, and it supports the daily needs of the men and women who wear the uniform.

Access to a VA facility is not a reality for some of our rural veterans. I hear this each and every day out in my

district, 24 counties southeast of Kansas City. This bill, though, ensures that they are not forgotten. We increased access opportunities by increasing the funds available for community care.

In a powerful act of bipartisanship, we are strengthening the Veterans Crisis Line. When a veteran calls, someone must answer. Increased staffing and resources will help ensure that support is there each and every time.

Mr. Chair, our veterans fought for us. It is time that we fight for them. This bill does that, and I urge my colleagues to vote for this bill, a vote to support our veterans. I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would certainly agree with the gentleman from Missouri if the Trump administration under Elon Musk's DOGE effort hadn't actually fired employees and interrupted the ability of employees of the Veterans Crisis Line from actually doing their job.

We have no idea how many people lost their lives as a result of that interruption in service. I would love to agree with the gentleman, but unfortunately, the facts on the ground actually reflect that they do not share the same commitment that we do to ensure the safety of our servicemembers and making sure that we look out for them.

Mr. Chair, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO), the distinguished ranking member of the Appropriations Committee.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I thank the ranking member for yielding. I thank all of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee staff on both sides of the aisle for their work, and in particular Farouk Ophaso and Tyler Coe.

I am opposed to this bill, which will transfer billions of taxpayer dollars to private hospitals and clinics, leading to longer wait lines, poorer communication and coordination, a diminished quality of care for our veterans, and higher costs for taxpayers.

This is a step toward privatization of the Veterans Administration because if you hollow out the Veterans Administration, if you make it impossible for people to be able to access their benefits, then they say: Well, we can't trust the VA. Then they will move in the direction of privatization, and that is where this administration wants to go.

This bill would worsen the quality of life for servicemembers and their families while putting veterans' safety at risk.

While our military faces massive recruitment challenges, the bill underfunds military construction by nearly \$1 billion, hurting our recruitment and retention and undermining our military readiness. By making it harder to keep guns out of the hands of those legally barred from holding them, this bill endangers veterans' safety.

The bill leaves military installations, servicemembers, and their families vulnerable to climate change and worsening natural disasters by failing to include dedicated funding to strengthen our military installations against these threats or to help them recover from past disasters.

Defense leaders, including during President Trump's first term, have warned of the danger that climate change poses to our military, and the tens of billions of dollars in damage to military installations from recent severe weather reinforces their point. Former Secretary James Mattis warned that climate change threatened American interests and our defense assets around the world and said climate change is "a challenge that requires a broader whole-of-government response."

This bill attacks women veterans, who are the fastest growing group served by the Department of Veterans Affairs, with a policy rider that limits abortion access and prohibits abortion counseling. The women who volunteer to serve and defend our Nation, to protect Americans' sacred rights and freedoms, should not come home to find their medical care and family planning decisions being made by anyone other than themselves, their families, and their doctors.

These riders do nothing but put us on a path of partisan division that will make it more difficult to come to an agreement on full-year bills that can actually become law. Ending fiscal year 2025 with an unprecedented full-year continuing resolution was a missed opportunity to invest in our veterans and in our servicemembers. We should be working toward a bipartisan bill that can actually pass this year.

Finally, the bill undercuts our commitments to our military partners. The Trump administration has already done a masterful job at alienating America on the world stage, turning our back on our closest allies. This bill goes even further. It underfunds NATO, the infrastructure, by almost \$200 million. It undermines the infrastructure projects of our own troops in Europe that they are relying on. Our credibility as a national security partner has been trashed by this administration, and now is not the time to retreat from our alliances even further.

The majority may suggest they are supporting veterans' needs with this bill alone, but we all know that it does not contain all the programs the most vulnerable of veterans depend on.

Programs and services from food assistance to education to health research, which this administration has illegally frozen and dismantled, and which their budget decimates funding for, support veterans around the country. Losing that support means abandoning our responsibilities and our promises to our Nation's veterans.

While I am glad that the Democrats on the Appropriations Committee were

successful in shaming our colleagues across the aisle into amending their original bill to include advance funding for the PACT Act, this bill still fails too many veterans in too many ways, so I cannot support it, and I urge my colleagues to vote “no.”

□ 1230

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER) will now control the time for the majority.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE), the chairman of the Appropriations Committee.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Chair, I thank my good friend, Judge CARTER, for yielding me time.

Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of this important piece of legislation. Prioritizing veterans and troops says everything about our values, and that is exactly what this first fiscal year 2026 appropriations bill does.

The Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026, is a testament to caring for those who have selflessly worn America's uniform, their families, and the defenders who follow their path of service. We meet this mission not only in words of gratitude but in policies that support them.

This legislation provides full funding for healthcare and benefits for our Nation's veterans and implements an advance for the Cost of War Toxic Exposures Fund. This marks enhanced investment under President Trump, which is also reflected in critical mental health initiatives and work to fight homelessness.

It devotes funding to improve quality of life, including childcare and housing resources for military families who help carry the weight of their loved one's service.

It reaffirms our commitment to peace through strength by providing for military base infrastructure and key deterrence efforts in the Indo-Pacific.

It also honors our heroes, ensuring the preservation of national military cemeteries and memorials.

With this legislation, our obligations to our Armed Forces, past and present, and our security are upheld. A vote “yes” is a vote to put our veterans, military families, base readiness, and America first.

I thank Chairman CARTER for his hard work on this measure, and I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting it on final passage.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP), my dear friend who is the distinguished ranking member of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Subcommittee.

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Chair, I rise today to express my continued and resolute opposition to the fiscal year 2026 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs,

and Related Agencies Appropriations Act in its current form.

I represent a district that is home to Robins Air Force Base, Fort Benning, and Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany. These installations are more than just military sites. They are the backbone of communities where servicemembers live, raise families, and eventually retire to continue serving in civilian life.

Because of this, I have a deep and personal understanding of the needs of our servicemembers, veterans, and their families. I can say unequivocally that this bill fails them.

Our veterans deserve better. Our military families deserve better. Frankly, all of us deserve a bill that reflects our shared commitment to the men and women who wear and have worn the uniform.

National defense is not just about weapons and strategy. It is about people, and this bill, as currently written, does not prioritize the needs of our people. Instead, it is laced with ideological provisions drawn from Project 2025, prioritizing political ambition over the well-being of those who have dedicated their lives to serving this country.

Let me be clear. Healthcare for veterans should not be an ideological battlefield. Yet, this bill accelerates the shift to privatized care at a time when we should be investing in the VA system itself.

Veterans overwhelmingly want to be treated in VA hospitals and clinics, facilities tailored to their unique needs and staffed by professionals who understand the physical, emotional, and psychological cost of service. Instead of fortifying these institutions, the bill undermines them.

Community care is an important tool, but it must remain just that, a supplement, not a substitute. Veterans should be referred to community care only when the VA cannot meet their needs, not as part of a systematic effort to privatize the entire system.

Occam's razor reminds us that the simplest explanation is often the correct one. Here, the simplest explanation for this unprecedented increase in outsourced care is a broader goal to dismantle the VA system itself, aligning with Project 2025's dangerous objective to privatize veterans' healthcare. The consequences of this cannot be overstated.

Equally troubling is the underfunding of military construction, particularly housing and childcare. These are not luxuries. They are necessities. A stable home and quality childcare are foundational to military readiness. When we fail to provide for the families of our servicemembers, we degrade morale, retention, and focus.

We cannot expect excellence from our Armed Forces if we do not support the very people who make excellence possible.

This bill does not build trust. It erodes it. Trust in our government, our institutions, and our promises is what

holds the fabric of this Nation together.

This legislation should be a reflection of our values. It should speak to our priorities. It should say to every servicemember, veteran, and military family: We see you. We value you. We will not let you down.

Instead, it cuts where we should invest. It deregulates where we need oversight. Perhaps most egregiously, it sows division where we desperately need unity.

This is not a partisan issue. It is an American issue. We must rise above ideology to meet this moment with courage and clarity.

I urge every one of my colleagues, especially those who may view this bill as just another line item, to pause and consider the real impact these decisions have on the people we are sworn to serve. Let their needs, not political blueprints, be our North Star today. We must do better.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT), the chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee.

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding me time.

Mr. Chair, I rise in support of the fiscal year 2026 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. It is fitting that the appropriations bill to come to the House floor this year is one that fulfills our highest priorities, honoring our commitments to those who have served and are currently serving in the United States military.

This bill delivers on our promises by fully funding veterans' healthcare programs and fully funding veterans' benefits and VA programs.

This bill addresses critical infrastructure needs for our men and women in uniform. To address deficiencies in military barracks identified by GAO and others, the bill includes a \$75 million increase. There is also a \$75 million increase for child development centers on military bases to improve the quality of life of many military families.

In closing, I thank my colleague Judge CARTER for crafting a bill that keeps our promises to the veterans and our troops.

Mr. Chair, I urge all of my colleagues to support this important bill.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. ESCOBAR), a new member of the Appropriations Committee.

Ms. ESCOBAR. Mr. Chairman, I would like to first express my gratitude. I am excited to be on the Appropriations Committee and to serve with wonderful colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

Mr. Chairman, I have been so alarmed by the attacks on hard-working Americans by the Trump administration. We are seeing, through

the Republican reconciliation bill, a historic transfer of wealth from the have-nots to the haves.

It has been equally alarming to see that our veterans have not been exempt from what we are all concerned about. In fact, if we look at the mass firings that occurred, as directed by Elon Musk and his DOGE effort, one-third of our Federal workforce is made up of veterans. They have been at risk with those firings.

We know also that there are additional firings that are coming. There are 80,000 VA employees slated to be fired. The cuts to healthcare in the reconciliation bill will impact veterans' families, which is why I was hoping we could mitigate much of that through this bill. Unfortunately, we have not, which is why I cannot support the bill.

In fact, Project 2025, which we discussed at length last year, one of the tenets of it calls for privatizing the VA. This bill lays the foundation for that. We know that our veterans demand, expect, and deserve the best, highest quality healthcare, and that is why we must do more through this bill and not privatize.

There are other components of the bill that are equally alarming. I hope we can continue to work better on both sides of the aisle to improve care for our veterans. This bill doesn't get us there.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MRVAN), a member of the Appropriations Committee. He just joined us, and I am happy to have him.

Mr. MRVAN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the ranking member for yielding me time.

Mr. Chairman, as an elected official, one of the greatest honors of my career has been standing shoulder to shoulder with veterans of northwest Indiana. I have worked tirelessly to ensure they receive the world-class care and benefits they have bravely earned in service to our Nation.

Indiana's First Congressional District is home to nearly 40,000 veterans. Every single day, I fight to ensure that the Department of Veterans Affairs fulfills its sacred promise to those who wore the uniform. That means making sure the VA has the staffing, resources, and funding necessary to deliver the high-quality care that our heroes deserve.

It is with deep regret and strong conviction that I oppose this proposal because it fails our veterans. It fails to meet the obligations we owe those who answered the call of duty.

In particular, I have heard the voices of veterans and their families in northwest Indiana, voices filled with concern and fear. They are worried that the cuts to VA staffing will strip away access to critical care and essential services. We cannot and must not allow that to happen.

Our Nation made a promise. We must honor it with action and not empty words.

I have also heard from veterans who have continued their mission of service by joining the Federal workforce only now to face uncertainty about their futures. These patriots, who once defended our freedoms, now work to uphold the very institutions they once served in uniform. Nearly 30 percent of the Federal workforce is made up of veterans. Cutting staff just doesn't jeopardize care. It threatens the jobs and livelihoods of those who have already sacrificed so much for this country.

I stand ready for the debate ahead. Let's be clear: These cuts are coming at exactly the wrong time. Instead of reducing services, we should be expanding them in the wake of the Honoring our PACT Act.

Veterans exposed to toxic substances deserve swift justice. Right now, the average time for processing a claim is 165 days. Over 2.3 million claims have been submitted, and more than 6,000 of those veterans are right in my district, Indiana's First Congressional District. That number represents hope and progress.

I have to ensure and uphold a duty to the brave men and women who have served.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO), the distinguished ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee and a champion of our Nation's veterans.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Chairman, I thank the ranking member for yielding me time.

Mr. Chair, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 3944, the fiscal year 2026 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. Unfortunately, I must ask my colleagues to oppose this fundamentally flawed legislation as well. This is not a position I take lightly, and I lament that we have gotten to this point.

As ranking member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I have a sacred duty to care for our Nation's veterans, regardless of their race, religion, creed, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, or politics. To fulfill this solemn promise, I am committed to doing all we can to ensure that we have a well-functioning Department of Veterans Affairs.

We must also ensure the VA has adequate funding to do the job we ask it to do. As such, any time veterans legislation is on the floor, I ask two main questions. One is: Does this bill improve access and delivery of care and benefits for veterans, their dependents, and their survivors? Two is: Does it provide appropriate resources to VA to get the job done?

Unfortunately, despite its price tag, this bill fails on both accounts.

□ 1245

Mr. Chair, at best, I could say this bill is premature. VA has not yet seen fit to provide Congress with full and complete justification for its budget request. We have no clear idea how VA intends to spend the money we would be appropriating through the Department.

At worst, I would say the Republican majority has rushed forward with a bill that is completely divorced from our current reality, one in which VA Secretary Collins is planning to callously fire 80,000 VA employees without regard to the impact on delivery of healthcare and other services.

My Republican colleagues have thoughtlessly rubberstamped a budget proposal that accelerates privatization of veterans' healthcare; threatens progress on ending veteran homelessness; erodes access to disability benefits; guts VA IT modernization, unless someone happens to be one of the President's tech friends; and needlessly drags VA into MAGA Republicans' culture war.

This bill contains numerous dangerous policy riders that hinder VA's ability to serve all veterans. Especially harmful are provisions that deny women veterans the full range of necessary medical care, including necessary reproductive healthcare which includes abortion care and counseling.

On top of that, this bill abandons the premise that all veterans deserve the same level of care they have earned, by cruelly and heartlessly subjecting LGBTQ+ veterans to the bigotry that characterizes this administration. The unpatriotic attack against transgender servicemembers continues in this bill as an unsparing attack against transgender veterans.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from California.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Chair, if that wasn't bad enough, this bill continues the harmful Kennedy amendment rider. This shortsighted, dangerous provision prevents VA from protecting beneficiaries and those around them from potential harm, beneficiaries with debilitating mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, Alzheimer's, dementia, and bipolar disorder.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote against this appropriations bill.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MURPHY).

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Chair, today I rise in grateful support of H.R. 3944, the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2026.

As a proud Representative of over 76,000 veterans, as well as Camp Lejeune and Military Corps Air Stations Cherry Point and New River, it is my honor to advocate for Federal funding on their behalf.

I proudly support FY 2026 appropriations to increase the VA's budget by 10

percent to ensure that our servicemembers and veterans receive the resources that they need and, more importantly, that they deserve.

North Carolina is proud to be called home by hundreds of thousands of Active-Duty members of our military and those retired from our Armed Services. I am grateful the Veterans Second Amendment Protection Act was included in this package, as well as supporting language for the F-35 sustainment center and utilities upgrade for future F-35 squadrons. I wholeheartedly support this legislation.

We live in a dangerous world now. We had an administration before that wanted to make things about social justice in our military. Military is about defending the rights and freedoms of this country. I am proud that this administration and this Congress are going to support the military in keeping us safe and free.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FROST), my colleague and friend.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Chair, the theme for congressional Republicans in Congress is putting corporations over people. That is exactly what they are doing in this bill.

Instead of focusing on supporting our veterans, they have added one of the most reckless giveaways to the gun lobby that we have ever seen, gutting the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, the very system that keeps guns out of the hands of abusers, felons, and people who might be a danger to themselves and others.

Republicans want to ensure that even if the VA determines that a veteran has a mental health condition to the point where they can't cash their own check, the check has to be given to a family member because they are going through a crisis, congressional Republicans want that person to be able to go to a gun store and buy a weapon.

Most veteran suicides involve firearms. This will deeply worsen the veteran suicide crisis. This does not protect veterans' rights. This protects the gun lobby's profits over the lives of our veterans.

If my colleagues vote for this, they are voting for veterans to die. Mr. Chair, don't let them tell you this bill is about liberty and freedom.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Chair, there is no liberty in a coffin, and there is no freedom in a funeral. Veterans will die if this passes, and anyone who votes for it should be ashamed of themselves.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Chair, I want to add some further information because the Veterans Cri-

sis Line was referenced by the gentleman from Missouri.

I want to make it very clear that the Secretary of the VA actually did a YouTube video specifically denying firing anyone from the Veterans Crisis Line when, in reality, he fired 24 people who worked on the Veterans Crisis Line.

If there was any improvement to the Veterans Crisis Line in this bill, it is thanks to my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee, the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. DEAN), who was successful in passing an amendment that added \$5 million to funding for the Veterans Crisis Line, and the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. UNDERWOOD), who actually added an amendment that prohibits any further cuts from the Veterans Crisis Line.

We are certainly appreciative of the bipartisan support for that. However, I want to make it clear that we need to remain united in fighting cuts to the Veterans Crisis Line and ensure that veterans have everything they need and a safety net firmly in place.

With all the issues raised during this debate, Mr. Chair, from the blatant push toward privatization of VA medical care to the underfunding of infrastructure and climate resiliency projects and the harmful poison pill riders, I just cannot in good conscience support this bill.

It breaks my heart because we do have such a good working relationship across the aisle with Chairman CARTER and myself. I look forward to working together to improve this bill. I know it is possible as we move forward, and I am hopeful. I urge my colleagues at this point to vote against it.

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

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chair, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Chair, I acknowledge and ask my colleagues to support the fiscal year 2026 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

This legislation provides critical funding for military bases, provides housing for our troops and their families, and makes other investments aimed at improving the quality of life of our servicemembers. It ensures that our national defense needs are met both at home and abroad.

We also uphold our pledge to our veterans. This bill fully funds healthcare and benefits for those who have valiantly served. Again, I ask my colleagues to support this bill.

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

The CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

An amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee print 119-5 shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as an

original bill for the purpose of further amendment under the 5-minute rule and shall be considered as read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 3944

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026, for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies, and for other purposes, namely:*

#### TITLE I

##### DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

##### MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY

*For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, military installations, facilities, and real property for the Army as currently authorized by law, including personnel in the Army Corps of Engineers and other personal services necessary for the purposes of this appropriation, and for construction and operation of facilities in support of the functions of the Commander in Chief, \$2,103,657,000, to remain available until September 30, 2030: Provided, That, of this amount, not to exceed \$321,838,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, architect and engineer services, and host nation support, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of the Army determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor: Provided further, That of the amount made available under this heading, \$77,300,000 shall be for the projects and activities, and in the amounts, specified in the table under the heading "Military Construction, Army" in the report accompanying this Act, in addition to amounts otherwise available for such purposes.*

##### MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

*For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, naval installations, facilities, and real property for the Navy and Marine Corps as currently authorized by law, including personnel in the Naval Facilities Engineering Command and other personal services necessary for the purposes of this appropriation, \$4,104,499,000, to remain available until September 30, 2030: Provided, That, of this amount, not to exceed \$526,821,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of the Navy determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor: Provided further, That of the amount made available under this heading, \$155,100,000 shall be for the projects and activities, and in the amounts, specified in the table under the heading "Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps" in the report accompanying this Act, in addition to amounts otherwise available for such purposes.*

##### MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE

*For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, military installations, facilities, and real property for the Air Force as currently authorized by law, \$3,169,526,000, to remain available until September 30, 2030: Provided, That, of this amount, not to exceed \$460,886,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of the Air Force determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of*

the determination and the reasons therefor: Provided further, That of the amount made available under this heading, \$32,400,000 shall be for the projects and activities, and in the amounts, specified in the table under the heading "Military Construction, Air Force" in the report accompanying this Act, in addition to amounts otherwise available for such purposes.

**MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, DEFENSE-WIDE  
(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)**

For acquisition, construction, installation, and equipment of temporary or permanent public works, installations, facilities, and real property for activities and agencies of the Department of Defense (other than the military departments), as currently authorized by law, \$3,963,383,000, to remain available until September 30, 2030: Provided, That such amounts of this appropriation as may be determined by the Secretary of Defense may be transferred to such appropriations of the Department of Defense available for military construction or family housing as the Secretary may designate, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes, and for the same time period, as the appropriation or fund to which transferred: Provided further, That, of the amount, not to exceed \$822,998,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of Defense determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor: Provided further, That of the amount made available under this heading, \$82,000,000 shall be for the projects and activities, and in the amounts, specified in the table under the heading "Military Construction, Defense-Wide" in the report accompanying this Act, in addition to amounts otherwise available for such purposes.

**MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY NATIONAL  
GUARD**

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Army National Guard, and contributions therefor, as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$358,489,000, to remain available until September 30, 2030: Provided, That, of the amount, not to exceed \$47,439,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Director of the Army National Guard determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

**MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR NATIONAL GUARD**

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Air National Guard, and contributions therefor, as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$210,492,000, to remain available until September 30, 2030: Provided, That, of the amount, not to exceed \$36,092,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Director of the Air National Guard determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor.

**MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY RESERVE**

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Army Reserve as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$305,032,000, to remain

available until September 30, 2030: Provided, That, of the amount, not to exceed \$31,508,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Chief of the Army Reserve determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor: Provided further, That of the amount made available under this heading, \$50,000,000 shall be for the projects and activities, and in the amounts, specified in the table under the heading "Military Construction, Army Reserve" in the report accompanying this Act, in addition to amounts otherwise available for such purposes.

**MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, NAVY RESERVE**

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the reserve components of the Navy and Marine Corps as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$79,829,000, to remain available until September 30, 2030: Provided, That, of the amount, not to exceed \$3,219,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Secretary of the Navy determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor: Provided further, That, of the amount made available under this heading, \$50,000,000 shall be for the projects and activities, and in the amounts, specified in the table under the heading "Military Construction, Navy Reserve" in the report accompanying this Act, in addition to amounts otherwise available for such purposes.

**MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE RESERVE**

For construction, acquisition, expansion, rehabilitation, and conversion of facilities for the training and administration of the Air Force Reserve as authorized by chapter 1803 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$37,863,000, to remain available until September 30, 2030: Provided, That, of the amount, not to exceed \$20,162,000 shall be available for study, planning, design, and architect and engineer services, as authorized by law, unless the Chief of the Air Force Reserve determines that additional obligations are necessary for such purposes and notifies the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the determination and the reasons therefor: Provided further, That of the amount made available under this heading, \$3,200,000 shall be for the projects and activities, and in the amounts, specified in the table under the heading "Military Construction, Air Force Reserve" in the report accompanying this Act, in addition to amounts otherwise made available for such purposes.

**NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION  
SECURITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM**

For the United States share of the cost of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Security Investment Program for the acquisition and construction of military facilities and installations (including international military headquarters) and for related expenses for the collective defense of the North Atlantic Treaty Area as authorized by section 2806 of title 10, United States Code, and Military Construction Authorization Acts, \$293,434,000, to remain available until expended.

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE  
ACCOUNT**

For deposit into the Department of Defense Base Closure Account, established by section 2906(a) of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (10 U.S.C. 2687 note), \$489,174,000, to remain available until expended.

**FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, ARMY**

For expenses of family housing for the Army for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, \$276,647,000, to remain available until September 30, 2030.

**FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE,  
ARMY**

For expenses of family housing for the Army for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, \$495,369,000.

**FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, NAVY AND  
MARINE CORPS**

For expenses of family housing for the Navy and Marine Corps for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, \$245,742,000, to remain available until September 30, 2030.

**FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE,  
NAVY AND MARINE CORPS**

For expenses of family housing for the Navy and Marine Corps for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, \$397,217,000.

**FAMILY HOUSING CONSTRUCTION, AIR FORCE**

For expenses of family housing for the Air Force for construction, including acquisition, replacement, addition, expansion, extension, and alteration, as authorized by law, \$221,549,000, to remain available until September 30, 2030.

**FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE,  
AIR FORCE**

For expenses of family housing for the Air Force for operation and maintenance, including debt payment, leasing, minor construction, principal and interest charges, and insurance premiums, as authorized by law, \$346,250,000.

**FAMILY HOUSING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE,  
DEFENSE-WIDE**

For expenses of family housing for the activities and agencies of the Department of Defense (other than the military departments) for operation and maintenance, leasing, and minor construction, as authorized by law, \$52,156,000.

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

**FAMILY HOUSING IMPROVEMENT FUND**

For the Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund, \$8,195,000, to remain available until expended, for family housing initiatives undertaken pursuant to section 2883 of title 10, United States Code, providing alternative means of acquiring and improving military family housing and supporting facilities.

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

**MILITARY UNACCOMPANIED HOUSING  
IMPROVEMENT FUND**

For the Department of Defense Military Unaccompanied Housing Improvement Fund, \$497,000, to remain available until expended, for unaccompanied housing initiatives undertaken pursuant to section 2883 of title 10, United States Code, providing alternative means of acquiring and improving military unaccompanied housing and supporting facilities.

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS**

SEC. 101. None of the funds made available in this title shall be expended for payments under a cost-plus-a-fixed-fee contract for construction, where cost estimates exceed \$25,000, to be performed within the United States, except Alaska, without the specific approval in writing of the Secretary of Defense setting forth the reasons therefor.

SEC. 102. Funds made available in this title for construction shall be available for hire of passenger motor vehicles.



SEC. 103. Funds made available in this title for construction may be used for advances to the Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, for the construction of access roads as authorized by section 210 of title 23, United States Code, when projects authorized therein are certified as important to the national defense by the Secretary of Defense.

SEC. 104. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to begin construction of new bases in the United States for which specific appropriations have not been made.

SEC. 105. None of the funds made available in this title shall be used for purchase of land or land easements in excess of 100 percent of the value as determined by the Army Corps of Engineers or the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, except: (1) where there is a determination of value by a Federal court; (2) purchases negotiated by the Attorney General or the designee of the Attorney General; (3) where the estimated value is less than \$25,000; or (4) as otherwise determined by the Secretary of Defense to be in the public interest.

SEC. 106. None of the funds made available in this title shall be used to: (1) acquire land; (2) provide for site preparation; or (3) install utilities for any family housing, except housing for which funds have been made available in annual Acts making appropriations for military construction.

SEC. 107. None of the funds made available in this title for minor construction may be used to transfer or relocate any activity from one base or installation to another, without prior notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 108. None of the funds made available in this title may be used for the procurement of steel for any construction project or activity for which American steel producers, fabricators, and manufacturers have been denied the opportunity to compete for such steel procurement.

SEC. 109. None of the funds available to the Department of Defense for military construction or family housing during the current fiscal year may be used to pay real property taxes in any foreign nation.

SEC. 110. None of the funds made available in this title may be used to initiate a new installation overseas without prior notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 111. None of the funds made available in this title may be obligated for architect and engineer contracts estimated by the Government to exceed \$500,000 for projects to be accomplished in Japan, in any North Atlantic Treaty Organization member country, or in countries bordering the Arabian Gulf, unless such contracts are awarded to United States firms or United States firms in joint venture with host nation firms.

SEC. 112. None of the funds made available in this title for military construction in the United States territories and possessions in the Pacific and on Kwajalein Atoll, or in countries bordering the Arabian Gulf, may be used to award any contract estimated by the Government to exceed \$1,000,000 to a foreign contractor: Provided, That this section shall not be applicable to contract awards for which the lowest responsive and responsible bid of a United States contractor exceeds the lowest responsive and responsible bid of a foreign contractor by greater than 20 percent: Provided further, That this section shall not apply to contract awards for military construction on Kwajalein Atoll for which the lowest responsive and responsible bid is submitted by a Marshallese contractor.

SEC. 113. The Secretary of Defense shall inform the appropriate committees of both Houses of Congress, including the Committees on Appropriations, of plans and scope of any proposed military exercise involving United States personnel 30 days prior to its occurring, if amounts expended for construction, either temporary or permanent, are anticipated to exceed \$100,000.

SEC. 114. Funds appropriated to the Department of Defense for construction in prior years shall be available for construction authorized for each such military department by the authorizations enacted into law during the current session of Congress.

SEC. 115. For military construction or family housing projects that are being completed with funds otherwise expired or lapsed for obligation, expired or lapsed funds may be used to pay the cost of associated supervision, inspection, overhead, engineering and design on those projects and on subsequent claims, if any.

SEC. 116. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any funds made available to a military department or defense agency for the construction of military projects may be obligated for a military construction project or contract, or for any portion of such a project or contract, at any time before the end of the fourth fiscal year after the fiscal year for which funds for such project were made available, if the funds obligated for such project: (1) are obligated from funds available for military construction projects; and (2) do not exceed the amount appropriated for such project, plus any amount by which the cost of such project is increased pursuant to law.

SEC. 117. Subject to 30 days prior notification, or 14 days for a notification provided in an electronic medium pursuant to sections 480 and 2883 of title 10, United States Code, to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, such additional amounts as may be determined by the Secretary of Defense may be transferred to: (1) the Department of Defense Family Housing Improvement Fund from amounts appropriated for construction in "Family Housing" accounts, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same period of time as amounts appropriated directly to the Fund; or (2) the Department of Defense Military Unaccompanied Housing Improvement Fund from amounts appropriated for construction of military unaccompanied housing in "Military Construction" accounts, to be merged with and to be available for the same purposes and for the same period of time as amounts appropriated directly to the Fund: Provided, That appropriations made available to the Funds shall be available to cover the costs, as defined in section 502(5) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, of direct loans or loan guarantees issued by the Department of Defense pursuant to the provisions of subchapter IV of chapter 169 of title 10, United States Code, pertaining to alternative means of acquiring and improving military family housing, military unaccompanied housing, and supporting facilities.

SEC. 118. In addition to any other transfer authority available to the Department of Defense, amounts may be transferred from the Department of Defense Base Closure Account to the fund established by section 1013(d) of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 3374) to pay for expenses associated with the Homeowners Assistance Program incurred under 42 U.S.C. 3374(a)(1)(A). Any amounts transferred shall be merged with and be available for the same purposes and for the same time period as the fund to which transferred.

SEC. 119. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, funds made available in this title for operation and maintenance of family housing shall be the exclusive source of funds for repair and maintenance of all family housing units, including general or flag officer quarters: Provided, That not more than \$20,000 per unit may be spent annually for the maintenance and repair of any general or flag officer quarters without 30 days prior notification, or 14 days for a notification provided in an electronic medium pursuant to sections 480 and 2883 of title 10, United States Code, to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress, except that an after-the-fact notification shall be submitted if the limitation is exceeded solely due to

costs associated with environmental remediation that could not be reasonably anticipated at the time of the budget submission: Provided further, That the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) is to report annually to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress all operation and maintenance expenditures for each individual general or flag officer quarters for the prior fiscal year.

SEC. 120. Amounts contained in the Ford Island Improvement Account established by subsection (h) of section 2814 of title 10, United States Code, are appropriated and shall be available until expended for the purposes specified in subsection (i)(1) of such section or until transferred pursuant to subsection (i)(3) of such section.

SEC. 121. During the 5-year period after appropriations available in this Act to the Department of Defense for military construction and family housing operation and maintenance and construction have expired for obligation, upon a determination that such appropriations will not be necessary for the liquidation of obligations or for making authorized adjustments to such appropriations for obligations incurred during the period of availability of such appropriations, unobligated balances of such appropriations may be transferred into the appropriation "Foreign Currency Fluctuations, Construction, Defense", to be merged with and to be available for the same time period and for the same purposes as the appropriation to which transferred.

SEC. 122. Amounts appropriated or otherwise made available in an account funded under the headings in this title may be transferred among projects and activities within the account in accordance with the reprogramming guidelines for military construction and family housing construction contained in Department of Defense Financial Management Regulation 7000.14-R, Volume 3, Chapter 7, of April 2021, as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 123. None of the funds made available in this title may be obligated or expended for planning and design and construction of projects at Arlington National Cemetery.

SEC. 124. For an additional amount for the accounts and in the amounts specified, to remain available until September 30, 2030:

"Military Construction, Army", \$100,000,000;  
 "Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps", \$100,000,000;  
 "Military Construction, Air Force", \$100,000,000;  
 "Military Construction, Army National Guard", \$40,000,000;  
 "Military Construction, Air National Guard", \$80,000,000;  
 "Military Construction, Army Reserve", \$40,000,000;  
 "Military Construction, Air Force Reserve", \$40,000,000; and

Provided, That such funds may only be obligated to carry out construction and cost to complete projects identified in the respective military department's unfunded priority list for fiscal year 2025 or fiscal year 2026 submitted to Congress: Provided further, That such projects are subject to authorization prior to obligation and expenditure of funds to carry out construction: Provided further, That not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the military department concerned, or their designee, shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

SEC. 125. All amounts appropriated to the "Department of Defense—Military Construction, Army", "Department of Defense—Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps", "Department of Defense—Military Construction, Air Force", and "Department of Defense—Military Construction, Defense-Wide" accounts pursuant to the authorization of appropriations in a National Defense Authorization Act specified for fiscal year 2026 in the funding table in section

4601 of that Act shall be immediately available and allotted to contract for the full scope of authorized projects.

SEC. 126. Notwithstanding section 116 of this Act, funds made available in this Act or any available unobligated balances from prior appropriations Acts may be obligated before October 1, 2027, for fiscal year 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 military construction projects for which project authorization has not lapsed or for which authorization is extended for fiscal year 2026 by a National Defense Authorization Act: Provided, That no amounts may be obligated pursuant to this section from amounts that were designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to a concurrent resolution on the budget or the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

SEC. 127. For the purposes of this Act, the term "congressional defense committees" means the Committees on Armed Services of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, and the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 128. For an additional amount for the accounts and in the amounts specified for planning and design and for construction improvements to Department of Defense laboratory facilities, to remain available until September 30, 2030:

"Military Construction, Army" \$35,000,000;  
"Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps", \$35,000,000; and  
"Military Construction, Air Force", \$35,000,000;

Provided, That not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the military department concerned, or their designee, shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section: Provided further, That the Secretary of the military department concerned may not obligate or expend any funds prior to approval by the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the expenditure plan required by this section.

SEC. 129. For an additional amount for the accounts and in the amounts specified for planning and design, for child development centers, to remain available until September 30, 2030:

"Military Construction, Army", \$25,000,000;  
"Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps", \$25,000,000; and  
"Military Construction, Air Force", \$25,000,000;

Provided, That not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the military department concerned, or their designee, shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

SEC. 130. For an additional amount for the accounts and amounts specified for planning and design, for barracks, to remain available until September 30, 2030:

"Military Construction, Army", \$25,000,000;  
"Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps", \$25,000,000; and  
"Military Construction, Air Force", \$25,000,000;

Provided, That not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the military department concerned, or their designee, shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section.

SEC. 131. For an additional amount for the accounts and in the amounts specified for unspecified minor construction for demolition, to remain available until September 30, 2029:

"Military Construction, Army", \$25,000,000;  
"Military Construction, Navy and Marine Corps", \$25,000,000;  
"Military Construction, Air Force", \$25,000,000;

Provided, That not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the military department concerned, or their designee, shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress an expenditure plan for funds provided under this section: Provided further, That the Secretary of the military department concerned may not obligate or expend any funds prior to approval by the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the expenditure plan required by this section.

SEC. 132. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to carry out the closure or realignment of the United States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

## TITLE II

### DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

#### VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

##### COMPENSATION AND PENSIONS

##### (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For the payment of compensation benefits to or on behalf of veterans and a pilot program for disability examinations as authorized by section 107 and chapters 11, 13, 18, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code; pension benefits to or on behalf of veterans as authorized by chapters 15, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code; and burial benefits, the Reinstated Entitlement Program for Survivors, emergency and other officers' retirement pay, adjusted-service credits and certificates, payment of premiums due on commercial life insurance policies guaranteed under the provisions of title IV of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 541 et seq.) and for other benefits as authorized by sections 107, 1312, 1977, and 2106, and chapters 23, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code, \$241,947,603,000 which shall become available on October 1, 2026, to remain available until expended: Provided, That not to exceed \$29,454,647 of the amount made available for fiscal year 2027 under this heading shall be reimbursed to "General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration", and "Information Technology Systems" for necessary expenses in implementing the provisions of chapters 51, 53, and 55 of title 38, United States Code, the funding source for which is specifically provided as the "Compensation and Pensions" appropriation: Provided further, That such sums as may be earned on an actual qualifying patient basis, shall be reimbursed to "Medical Care Collections Fund" to augment the funding of individual medical facilities for nursing home care provided to pensioners as authorized.

##### READJUSTMENT BENEFITS

For the payment of readjustment and rehabilitation benefits to or on behalf of veterans as authorized by chapters 21, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 39, 41, 51, 53, 55, and 61 of title 38, United States Code, \$20,057,841,000, which shall become available on October 1, 2026, to remain available until expended: Provided, That expenses for rehabilitation program services and assistance which the Secretary is authorized to provide under subsection (a) of section 3104 of title 38, United States Code, other than under paragraphs (1), (2), (5), and (11) of that subsection, shall be charged to this account.

##### VETERANS INSURANCE AND INDEMNITIES

For military and naval insurance, national service life insurance, servicemen's indemnities, service-disabled veterans insurance, and veterans mortgage life insurance as authorized by chapters 19 and 21 of title 38, United States Code, \$97,893,000, which shall become available on October 1, 2026, to remain available until expended.

##### VETERANS HOUSING BENEFIT PROGRAM FUND

For the cost of direct and guaranteed loans, such sums as may be necessary to carry out the program, as authorized by subchapters I through III of chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code: Provided, That such costs, includ-

ing the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974: Provided further, That, during fiscal year 2026, within the resources available, not to exceed \$500,000 in gross obligations for direct loans are authorized for specially adapted housing loans.

In addition, for administrative expenses to carry out the direct and guaranteed loan programs, \$266,736,842.

##### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION LOANS PROGRAM

##### ACCOUNT

For the cost of direct loans, \$45,428, as authorized by chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code: Provided, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974: Provided further, That funds made available under this heading are available to subsidize gross obligations for the principal amount of direct loans not to exceed \$1,394,442.

In addition, for administrative expenses necessary to carry out the direct loan program, \$507,254, which may be paid to the appropriation for "General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration".

##### NATIVE AMERICAN VETERAN HOUSING LOAN

##### PROGRAM ACCOUNT

For the principal amount of direct loans, \$6,865,235, as authorized by subchapter V of chapter 37 of title 38, United States Code: Provided, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974: Provided further, That funds made available under this heading are available to subsidize gross obligations for the principal amount of the direct loans not to exceed \$75,000,000.

In addition, for administrative expenses necessary to carry out the direct loan program, \$5,007,265, which shall be paid as appropriate to the appropriations for "General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration" and "General Administration".

##### GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES, VETERANS

##### BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

For necessary operating expenses of the Veterans Benefits Administration, not otherwise provided for, including hire of passenger motor vehicles, reimbursement of the General Services Administration for security guard services, and reimbursement of the Department of Defense for the cost of overseas employee mail, \$3,876,425,000: Provided, That expenses for services and assistance authorized under paragraphs (1), (2), (5), and (11) of section 3104(a) of title 38, United States Code, that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines are necessary to enable entitled veterans: (1) to the maximum extent feasible, to become employable and to obtain and maintain suitable employment; or (2) to achieve maximum independence in daily living, shall be charged to this account: Provided further, That, of the funds made available under this heading, not to exceed 10 percent shall remain available until September 30, 2027.

##### VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

##### MEDICAL SERVICES

For necessary expenses for furnishing, as authorized by law, inpatient and outpatient care and treatment to beneficiaries of the Department of Veterans Affairs and veterans described in section 1705(a) of title 38, United States Code, including care and treatment in facilities not under the jurisdiction of the Department, and including medical supplies and equipment, bio-engineering services, food services, and salaries and expenses of healthcare employees hired under title 38, United States Code, assistance and support services for caregivers as authorized by section 1720G of title 38, United States Code, loan repayments authorized by section 604 of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-163; 124 Stat. 1174; 38 U.S.C. 7681 note), monthly assistance allowances authorized by section 322(d) of



title 38, United States Code, grants authorized by section 521A of title 38, United States Code, and administrative expenses necessary to carry out sections 322(d) and 521A of title 38, United States Code, and hospital care and medical services authorized by section 1787 of title 38, United States Code: \$59,858,000,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2026, and shall remain available until September 30, 2027: Provided, That of the amount made available on October 1, 2026, under this heading, \$2,000,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2028: Provided further, That notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a priority for the provision of medical treatment for veterans who have service-connected disabilities, lower income, or have special needs: Provided further, That notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall give priority funding for the provision of basic medical benefits to veterans in enrollment priority groups 1 through 6: Provided further, That notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may authorize the dispensing of prescription drugs from Veterans Health Administration facilities to enrolled veterans with privately written prescriptions based on requirements established by the Secretary: Provided further, That the implementation of the program described in the previous proviso shall incur no additional cost to the Department of Veterans Affairs: Provided further, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that sufficient amounts appropriated under this heading for medical supplies and equipment are available for the acquisition of prosthetics designed specifically for female veterans: Provided further, That nothing in section 2044(e)(1) of title 38, United States Code, may be construed as limiting amounts that may be made available under this heading for fiscal years 2026 and 2027 in this or prior Acts.

#### MEDICAL COMMUNITY CARE

For necessary expenses for furnishing health care to individuals pursuant to chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, at non-Department facilities, \$3,000,000,000 to remain available until September 30, 2027; and in addition \$38,700,000,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2026, and shall remain available until September 30, 2027: Provided, That, of the amount made available on October 1, 2026, under this heading, \$2,000,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2028. Provided further, That of the \$34,000,000,000 that became available on October 1, 2025, previously appropriated under this heading in the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2025 (division A of P.L. 119-4), \$3,000,000,000 is hereby permanently cancelled.

#### MEDICAL SUPPORT AND COMPLIANCE

For necessary expenses in the administration of the medical, hospital, nursing home, domiciliary, construction, supply, and research activities, as authorized by law; administrative expenses in support of capital policy activities; and administrative and legal expenses of the Department for collecting and recovering amounts owed the Department as authorized under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, and the Federal Medical Care Recovery Act (42 U.S.C. 2651 et seq.), \$12,000,000,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2026, and shall remain available until September 30, 2027: Provided, That, of the amount made available on October 1, 2026, under this heading, \$350,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2028.

#### MEDICAL FACILITIES

For necessary expenses for the maintenance and operation of hospitals, nursing homes, domiciliary facilities, and other necessary facilities of the Veterans Health Administration; for administrative expenses in support of planning, design, project management, real property ac-

quisition and disposition, construction, and renovation of any facility under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department; for oversight, engineering, and architectural activities not charged to project costs; for repairing, altering, improving, or providing facilities in the several hospitals and homes under the jurisdiction of the Department, not otherwise provided for, either by contract or by the hire of temporary employees and purchase of materials; for leases of facilities; and for laundry services; \$11,700,000,000, plus reimbursements, shall become available on October 1, 2026, and shall remain available until September 30, 2027: Provided, That of the amount made available on October 1, 2026, under this heading, \$500,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2028.

#### BRIDGING RENTAL ASSISTANCE FOR VETERAN EMPOWERMENT

Contingent upon enactment of authorizing legislation to create a rental assistance voucher program for homeless veterans at the Department of Veterans Affairs, for necessary expenses to carry out the Bridging Rental Assistance for Veteran Empowerment program, \$970,000,000 to remain available until September 30, 2029, of which up to \$75,000,000 shall be available to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out pilot programs, including any necessary administrative expenses, that aim to end homelessness among veterans.

#### MEDICAL AND PROSTHETIC RESEARCH

For necessary expenses in carrying out programs of medical and prosthetic research and development as authorized by chapter 73 of title 38, United States Code, \$943,000,000, plus reimbursements, shall remain available until September 30, 2027: Provided, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that sufficient amounts appropriated under this heading are available for prosthetic research specifically for female veterans, and for toxic exposure research.

#### NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION

For necessary expenses of the National Cemetery Administration for operations and maintenance, not otherwise provided for, including uniforms or allowances therefor; cemetery expenses as authorized by law; purchase of one passenger motor vehicle for use in cemetery operations; hire of passenger motor vehicles; and repair, alteration or improvement of facilities under the jurisdiction of the National Cemetery Administration, \$497,000,000, of which not to exceed 10 percent shall remain available until September 30, 2027.

#### DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

##### GENERAL ADMINISTRATION (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For necessary operating expenses of the Department of Veterans Affairs, not otherwise provided for, including administrative expenses in support of Department-wide capital planning, management and policy activities, uniforms, or allowances therefor; not to exceed \$25,000 for official reception and representation expenses; hire of passenger motor vehicles; and reimbursement of the General Services Administration for security guard services, \$450,000,000, of which not to exceed 10 percent shall remain available until September 30, 2027: Provided, That funds provided under this heading may be transferred to "General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration".

##### BOARD OF VETERANS APPEALS

For necessary operating expenses of the Board of Veterans Appeals, \$287,000,000 of which not to exceed 10 percent shall remain available until September 30, 2027.

##### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For necessary expenses for information technology systems and telecommunications support, including developmental information systems

and operational information systems; for pay and associated costs; and for the capital asset acquisition of information technology systems, including management and related contractual costs of said acquisitions, including contractual costs associated with operations authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code, \$5,882,000,000, plus reimbursements: Provided, That \$1,350,000,000 shall be for pay and associated costs, of which not to exceed 3 percent shall remain available until September 30, 2027: Provided further, That \$4,531,000,000 shall be for operations and maintenance, of which not to exceed 5 percent shall remain available until September 30, 2027, and of which \$118,900,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2030, for the purpose of facility activations related to projects funded by the "Construction, Major Projects", "Construction, Minor Projects", "Medical Facilities", "National Cemetery Administration", "General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration", and "General Administration" accounts: Provided further, That \$1,000,000 shall be for information technology systems development, and shall remain available until September 30, 2027: Provided further, That amounts made available for salaries and expenses, operations and maintenance, and information technology systems development may be transferred among the three subaccounts after the Secretary of Veterans Affairs requests from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued: Provided further, That amounts made available for the "Information Technology Systems" account for development may be transferred among projects or to newly defined projects: Provided further, That no project may be increased or decreased by more than \$3,000,000 of cost prior to submitting a request to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress to make the transfer and an approval is issued, or absent a response, a period of 30 days has elapsed: Provided further, That the funds made available under this heading for information technology systems development shall be for the projects, and in the amounts, specified in the table entitled "Information Technology Development Projects" under this heading in the report accompanying this Act.

##### VETERANS ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD

For activities related to implementation, preparation, development, interface, management, rollout, and maintenance of a Veterans Electronic Health Record system, including contractual costs associated with operations authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code, and salaries and expenses of employees hired under titles 5 and 38, United States Code, \$2,515,893,000, to remain available until September 30, 2028: Provided, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress quarterly reports detailing obligations, expenditures, and deployment implementation by facility, including any changes from the deployment plan or schedule: Provided further, That the funds provided in this account shall only be available to the Office of the Deputy Secretary, to be administered by that Office: Provided further, That 25 percent of the funds made available under this heading shall not be available until July 1, 2026, and are contingent upon the Secretary of Veterans Affairs—

(1) providing the Committees on Appropriations certifying and detailing any changes to the full deployment schedule, no later than 60 days prior to July 1, 2027; and

(2) certifying in writing no later than 30 days prior to July 1, 2027, the following—

(A) the status of issues included in the report referenced in paragraph (1), including issues that have not been closed but have been suitably resolved or mitigated in a manner that will enhance provider productivity and minimize the potential for patient harm; and

(B) whether the system is stable, and optimized for further deployment at VA sites.

#### OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

For necessary expenses of the Office of Inspector General, to include information technology, in carrying out the provisions of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.), \$295,000,000, of which not to exceed 10 percent shall remain available until September 30, 2027.

#### CONSTRUCTION, MAJOR PROJECTS

For constructing, altering, extending, and improving any of the facilities, including parking projects, under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or for any of the purposes set forth in sections 316, 2404, 2406 and chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, not otherwise provided for, including planning, architectural and engineering services, construction management services, maintenance or guarantee period services costs associated with equipment guarantees provided under the project, services of claims analysts, offsite utility and storm drainage system construction costs, and site acquisition, where the estimated cost of a project is more than the amount set forth in section 8104(a)(3)(A) of title 38, United States Code, or where funds for a project were made available in a previous major project appropriation, \$1,750,000,000, which shall remain available until September 30, 2030; Provided, That except for advance planning activities, including needs assessments which may or may not lead to capital investments, and other capital asset management related activities, including portfolio development and management activities, and planning, cost estimating, and design for major medical facility projects and major medical facility leases and investment strategy studies funded through the advance planning fund and the planning and design activities funded through the design fund, staffing expenses, and funds provided for the purchase, security, and maintenance of land for the National Cemetery Administration and the Veterans Health Administration through the land acquisition line item, none of the funds made available under this heading shall be used for any project that has not been notified to Congress through the budgetary process or that has not been approved by the Congress through statute, joint resolution, or in the explanatory statement accompanying such Act and presented to the President at the time of enrollment; Provided further, That funds provided for the Veterans Health Administration through the land acquisition line item shall only be for projects included on the five year development plan notified to Congress through the budgetary process; Provided further, That such sums as may be necessary shall be available to reimburse the "General Administration" account for payment of salaries and expenses of all Office of Construction and Facilities Management employees to support the full range of capital infrastructure services provided, including minor construction and leasing services; Provided further, That funds made available under this heading for fiscal year 2026, for each approved project shall be obligated: (1) by the awarding of a construction documents contract by September 30, 2026; and (2) by the awarding of a construction contract by September 30, 2027; Provided further, That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall promptly submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a written report on any approved major construction project for which obligations are not incurred within the time limitations established above.

#### CONSTRUCTION, MINOR PROJECTS

For constructing, altering, extending, and improving any of the facilities, including parking projects, under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including planning and assessments of needs which may lead to capital investments, architectural and engineering services, maintenance or guarantee

period services costs associated with equipment guarantees provided under the project, services of claims analysts, offsite utility and storm drainage system construction costs, and site acquisition, or for any of the purposes set forth in sections 316, 2404, 2406 and chapter 81 of title 38, United States Code, not otherwise provided for, where the estimated cost of a project is equal to or less than the amount set forth in section 8104(a)(3)(A) of title 38, United States Code, \$232,000,000, of which \$200,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2030, and of which \$32,000,000 shall remain available until expended, along with unobligated balances of previous "Construction, Minor Projects" appropriations which are hereby made available for any project where the estimated cost is equal to or less than the amount set forth in such section: Provided, That funds made available under this heading shall be for: (1) repairs to any of the nonmedical facilities under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department which are necessary because of loss or damage caused by any natural disaster or catastrophe; and (2) temporary measures necessary to prevent or to minimize further loss by such causes.

#### GRANTS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF STATE EXTENDED CARE FACILITIES

For grants to assist States to acquire or construct State nursing home and domiciliary facilities and to remodel, modify, or alter existing hospital, nursing home, and domiciliary facilities in State homes, for furnishing care to veterans as authorized by sections 8131 through 8137 of title 38, United States Code, \$171,000,000, to remain available until expended.

#### GRANTS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF VETERANS CEMETERIES

For grants to assist States and tribal organizations in establishing, expanding, or improving veterans cemeteries as authorized by section 2408 of title 38, United States Code, \$60,000,000, to remain available until expended.

#### COST OF WAR TOXIC EXPOSURES FUND

For investment in the delivery of veterans' health care associated with exposure to environmental hazards, the expenses incident to the delivery of veterans' health care and benefits associated with exposure to environmental hazards, and medical and other research relating to exposure to environmental hazards, as authorized by section 324 of title 38, United States Code, and in addition to the amounts otherwise available for such purposes in the appropriations provided in this or prior Acts, \$52,676,000,000, which shall become available on October 1, 2025, and shall remain available until expended; and, in addition, \$51,742,000,000, which shall become available on October 1, 2026, and shall remain available until September 30, 2028.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 201. Any appropriation for fiscal year 2026 for "Compensation and Pensions", "Readjustment Benefits", and "Veterans Insurance and Indemnities" may be transferred as necessary to any other of the mentioned appropriations: Provided, That, before a transfer may take place, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall request from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and such Committees issue an approval, or absent a response, a period of 30 days has elapsed.

#### (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 202. Amounts made available for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2026, in this or any other Act, under the "Medical Services", "Medical Community Care", "Medical Support and Compliance", and "Medical Facilities" accounts may be transferred among the accounts: Provided, That any transfers among the "Medical Services", "Medical Community Care", and "Medical Support and Compliance" accounts of 1 percent or less of the

total amount appropriated to the account in this or any other Act may take place subject to notification from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of the amount and purpose of the transfer: Provided further, That any transfers among the "Medical Services", "Medical Community Care", and "Medical Support and Compliance" accounts in excess of 1 percent, or exceeding the cumulative 1 percent for the fiscal year, may take place only after the Secretary requests from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued: Provided further, That any transfers to or from the "Medical Facilities" account may take place only after the Secretary requests from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued.

SEC. 203. Appropriations available in this title for salaries and expenses shall be available for services authorized by section 3109 of title 5, United States Code; hire of passenger motor vehicles; lease of a facility or land or both; and uniforms or allowances therefore, as authorized by sections 5901 through 5902 of title 5, United States Code.

SEC. 204. No appropriations in this title (except the appropriations for "Construction, Major Projects", and "Construction, Minor Projects") shall be available for the purchase of any site for or toward the construction of any new hospital or home.

SEC. 205. No appropriations in this title shall be available for hospitalization or examination of any persons (except beneficiaries entitled to such hospitalization or examination under the laws providing such benefits to veterans, and persons receiving such treatment under sections 7901 through 7904 of title 5, United States Code, or the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.)), unless reimbursement of the cost of such hospitalization or examination is made to the "Medical Services" account at such rates as may be fixed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

SEC. 206. Appropriations available in this title for "Compensation and Pensions", "Readjustment Benefits", and "Veterans Insurance and Indemnities" shall be available for payment of prior year accrued obligations required to be recorded by law against the corresponding prior year accounts within the last quarter of fiscal year 2025.

SEC. 207. Appropriations available in this title shall be available to pay prior year obligations of corresponding prior year appropriations accounts resulting from sections 3328(a), 3334, and 3712(a) of title 31, United States Code, except that if such obligations are from trust fund accounts they shall be payable only from "Compensation and Pensions".

#### (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 208. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, during fiscal year 2026, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, from the National Service Life Insurance Fund under section 1920 of title 38, United States Code, the Veterans' Special Life Insurance Fund under section 1923 of title 38, United States Code, and the United States Government Life Insurance Fund under section 1955 of title 38, United States Code, reimburse the "General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration" and "Information Technology Systems" accounts for the cost of administration of the insurance programs financed through those accounts: Provided, That reimbursement shall be made only from the surplus earnings accumulated in such an insurance program during fiscal year 2025 that are available for dividends in that program after claims have been paid and actuarially determined reserves have been set aside: Provided further, That if the cost of administration of such an insurance program exceeds the amount of surplus

earnings accumulated in that program, reimbursement shall be made only to the extent of such surplus earnings: Provided further, That the Secretary shall determine the cost of administration for fiscal year 2025 which is properly allocable to the provision of each such insurance program and to the provision of any total disability income insurance included in that insurance program.

SEC. 209. Amounts deducted from enhanced-use lease proceeds to reimburse an account for expenses incurred by that account during a prior fiscal year for providing enhanced-use lease services shall be available until expended.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 210. Funds available in this title or funds for salaries and other administrative expenses shall also be available to reimburse the Office of Resolution Management, the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication, and the Alternative Dispute Resolution function within the Office of Human Resources and Administration for all services provided at rates which will recover actual costs but not to exceed \$134,343,000 for the Office of Resolution Management, \$7,607,000 for the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication, and \$7,686,000 for the Alternative Dispute Resolution function within the Office of Human Resources and Administration: Provided, That payments may be made in advance for services to be furnished based on estimated costs: Provided further, That amounts received shall be credited to the "General Administration" and "Information Technology Systems" accounts for use by the office that provided the service.

SEC. 211. No funds of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall be available for hospital care, nursing home care, or medical services provided to any person under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, for a non-service-connected disability described in section 1729(a)(2) of such title, unless that person has disclosed to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in such form as the Secretary may require, current, accurate third-party reimbursement information for purposes of section 1729 of such title: Provided, That the Secretary may recover, in the same manner as any other debt due the United States, the reasonable charges for such care or services from any person who does not make such disclosure as required: Provided further, That any amounts so recovered for care or services provided in a prior fiscal year may be obligated by the Secretary during the fiscal year in which amounts are received.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 212. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, proceeds or revenues derived from enhanced-use leasing activities (including disposal) may be deposited into the "Construction, Major Projects" and "Construction, Minor Projects" accounts and be used for construction (including site acquisition and disposition), alterations, and improvements of any medical facility under the jurisdiction or for the use of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Such sums as realized are in addition to the amount provided for in "Construction, Major Projects" and "Construction, Minor Projects".

SEC. 213. Amounts made available under "Medical Services" are available—

(1) for furnishing recreational facilities, supplies, and equipment; and

(2) for funeral expenses, burial expenses, and other expenses incidental to funerals and burials for beneficiaries receiving care in the Department.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 214. Such sums as may be deposited into the Medical Care Collections Fund pursuant to section 1729A of title 38, United States Code, may be transferred to the "Medical Services" and "Medical Community Care" accounts to remain available until expended for the purposes of these accounts.

SEC. 215. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may enter into agreements with Federally Qualified Health Centers in the State of Alaska and Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations which are party to the Alaska Native Health Compact with the Indian Health Service, to provide healthcare, including behavioral health and dental care, to veterans in rural Alaska. The Secretary shall require participating veterans and facilities to comply with all appropriate rules and regulations, as established by the Secretary. The term "rural Alaska" shall mean those lands which are not within the boundaries of the municipality of Anchorage or the Fairbanks North Star Borough.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 216. Such sums as may be deposited into the Department of Veterans Affairs Capital Asset Fund pursuant to section 8118 of title 38, United States Code, may be transferred to the "Construction, Major Projects" and "Construction, Minor Projects" accounts, to remain available until expended for the purposes of these accounts.

SEC. 217. Not later than 30 days after the end of each fiscal quarter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a report on the financial status of the Department of Veterans Affairs for the preceding quarter: Provided, That, at a minimum, the report shall include the direction contained in the paragraph entitled "Quarterly reporting", under the heading "General Administration" in the joint explanatory statement accompanying Public Law 114-223.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 218. Amounts made available under the "Medical Services", "Medical Community Care", "Medical Support and Compliance", "Medical Facilities", "General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration", "Board of Veterans Appeals", "General Administration", and "National Cemetery Administration" accounts for fiscal year 2026 may be transferred to or from the "Information Technology Systems" account: Provided, That such transfers may not result in a more than 10 percent aggregate increase in the total amount made available by this Act for the "Information Technology Systems" account: Provided further, That, before a transfer may take place, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall request from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and an approval is issued.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 219. Of the amounts appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2026 for "Medical Services", "Medical Community Care", "Medical Support and Compliance", "Medical Facilities", "Construction, Minor Projects", and "Information Technology Systems", up to \$654,954,000, plus reimbursements, may be transferred to the Joint Department of Defense—Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund, established by section 1704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111-84; 123 Stat. 2571) and may be used for operation of the facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110-417; 122 Stat. 4500): Provided, That additional funds may be transferred from accounts designated in this section to the Joint Department of Defense—Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund upon written notification by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress: Provided further, That section 220 of title II of division A of Public Law 118-42, as continued by division A of Public Law 119-4 is repealed.

SEC. 220. Of the amounts appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs which become

available on October 1, 2026, for "Medical Services", "Medical Community Care", "Medical Support and Compliance", and "Medical Facilities", up to \$739,918,000, plus reimbursements, may be transferred to the Joint Department of Defense—Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund, established by section 1704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111-84; 123 Stat. 2571) and may be used for operation of the facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110-417; 122 Stat. 4500): Provided, That additional funds may be transferred from accounts designated in this section to the Joint Department of Defense—Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund upon written notification by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 221. Such sums as may be deposited into the Medical Care Collections Fund pursuant to section 1729A of title 38, United States Code, for healthcare provided at facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110-417; 122 Stat. 4500) shall also be available: (1) for transfer to the Joint Department of Defense—Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund, established by section 1704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111-84; 123 Stat. 2571); and (2) for operations of the facilities designated as combined Federal medical facilities as described by section 706 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (Public Law 110-417; 122 Stat. 4500): Provided, That, notwithstanding section 1704(b)(3) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111-84; 123 Stat. 2573), amounts transferred to the Joint Department of Defense—Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Demonstration Fund shall remain available until expended.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 222. Of the amounts available in this title for "Medical Services", "Medical Community Care", "Medical Support and Compliance", and "Medical Facilities", a minimum of \$15,000,000 shall be transferred to the DOD-VA Health Care Sharing Incentive Fund, as authorized by section 8111(d) of title 38, United States Code, to remain available until expended, for any purpose authorized by section 8111 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 223. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall notify the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress of all bid savings in a major construction project that total at least \$5,000,000, or 5 percent of the programmed amount of the project, whichever is less: Provided, That such notification shall occur within 14 days of a contract identifying the programmed amount: Provided further, That the Secretary shall notify the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress 14 days prior to the obligation of such bid savings and shall describe the anticipated use of such savings.

SEC. 224. None of the funds made available for "Construction, Major Projects" may be used for a project in excess of the scope specified for that project in the original justification data provided to the Congress as part of the request for appropriations unless the Secretary of Veterans Affairs receives approval from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 225. Not later than 30 days after the end of each fiscal quarter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a quarterly report containing performance measures

and data from each Veterans Benefits Administration Regional Office: Provided, That, at a minimum, the report shall include the direction contained in the section entitled “Disability claims backlog”, under the heading “General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration” in the joint explanatory statement accompanying Public Law 114–223: Provided further, That the report shall also include information on the number of appeals pending at the Veterans Benefits Administration as well as the Board of Veterans Appeals on a quarterly basis.

SEC. 226. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide written notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress 15 days prior to organizational changes which result in the transfer of 25 or more full-time equivalents from one organizational unit of the Department of Veterans Affairs to another.

SEC. 227. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide on a quarterly basis to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress notification of any single national outreach and awareness marketing campaign in which obligations exceed \$1,000,000.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 228. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, upon determination that such action is necessary to address needs of the Veterans Health Administration, may transfer to the “Medical Services” account any discretionary appropriations made available for fiscal year 2026 in this title (except appropriations made to the “General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration” account) or any discretionary unobligated balances within the Department of Veterans Affairs, including those appropriated for fiscal year 2026, that were provided in advance by appropriations Acts: Provided, That transfers shall be made only with the approval of the Office of Management and Budget: Provided further, That the transfer authority provided in this section is in addition to any other transfer authority provided by law: Provided further, That no amounts may be transferred from amounts that were designated by Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to a concurrent resolution on the budget or the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985: Provided further, That such authority to transfer may not be used unless for higher priority items, based on emergent healthcare requirements, than those for which originally appropriated and in no case where the item for which funds are requested has been denied by Congress: Provided further, That, upon determination that all or part of the funds transferred from an appropriation are not necessary, such amounts may be transferred back to that appropriation and shall be available for the same purposes as originally appropriated: Provided further, That before a transfer may take place, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall request from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and receive approval of that request.

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

SEC. 229. Amounts made available for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2026, under the “Board of Veterans Appeals” and the “General Operating Expenses, Veterans Benefits Administration” accounts may be transferred between such accounts: Provided, That before a transfer may take place, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall request from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to make the transfer and receive approval of that request.

SEC. 230. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may not reprogram funds among major construction projects or programs if such instance of reprogramming will exceed \$7,000,000, unless such reprogramming is approved by the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

SEC. 231. (a) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that the toll-free suicide hotline

under section 1720F(h) of title 38, United States Code—

(1) provides to individuals who contact the hotline immediate assistance from a trained professional; and

(2) adheres to all requirements of the American Association of Suicidology.

(b)(1) None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enforce or otherwise carry out any Executive action that prohibits the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from appointing an individual to occupy a vacant civil service position, or establishing a new civil service position, at the Department of Veterans Affairs with respect to such a position relating to the hotline specified in subsection (a).

(2) In this subsection—

(A) the term “civil service” has the meaning given such term in section 2101(1) of title 5, United States Code; and

(B) the term “Executive action” includes—

(i) any Executive order, Presidential memorandum, or other action by the President; and

(ii) any agency policy, order, or other directive.

(c)(1) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a study on the effectiveness of the hotline specified in subsection (a) during the 5-year period beginning on January 1, 2016, based on an analysis of national suicide data and data collected from such hotline.

(2) At a minimum, the study required by paragraph (1) shall—

(A) determine the number of veterans who contact the hotline specified in subsection (a) and who receive follow up services from the hotline or mental health services from the Department of Veterans Affairs thereafter;

(B) determine the number of veterans who contact the hotline who are not referred to, or do not continue receiving, mental health care who commit suicide; and

(C) determine the number of veterans described in subparagraph (A) who commit or attempt suicide.

SEC. 232. Effective during the period beginning on October 1, 2018, and ending on January 1, 2026, none of the funds made available to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs by this or any other Act may be obligated or expended in contravention of the “Veterans Health Administration Clinical Preventive Services Guidance Statement on the Veterans Health Administration’s Screening for Breast Cancer Guidance” published on May 10, 2017, as issued by the Veterans Health Administration National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention.

SEC. 233. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the “Medical Services” account may be used to provide—

(1) fertility counseling and treatment using assisted reproductive technology to a covered veteran or the spouse of a covered veteran; or

(2) adoption reimbursement to a covered veteran.

(b) In this section:

(1) The term “service-connected” has the meaning given such term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term “covered veteran” means a veteran, as such term is defined in section 101 of title 38, United States Code, who has a service-connected disability that results in the inability of the veteran to procreate without the use of fertility treatment.

(3) The term “assisted reproductive technology” means benefits relating to reproductive assistance provided to a member of the Armed Forces who incurs a serious injury or illness on active duty pursuant to section 1074(c)(4)(A) of title 10, United States Code, as described in the memorandum on the subject of “Policy for Assisted Reproductive Services for the Benefit of Seriously or Severely Ill/Injured (Category II or III) Active Duty Service Members” issued by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Af-

fairs on April 3, 2012, and the guidance issued to implement such policy, including any limitations on the amount of such benefits available to such a member except that—

(A) the time periods regarding embryo cryopreservation and storage set forth in part III(G) and in part IV(H) of such memorandum shall not apply; and

(B) such term includes embryo cryopreservation and storage without limitation on the duration of such cryopreservation and storage.

(4) The term “adoption reimbursement” means reimbursement for the adoption-related expenses for an adoption that is finalized after the date of the enactment of this Act under the same terms as apply under the adoption reimbursement program of the Department of Defense, as authorized in Department of Defense Instruction 1341.09, including the reimbursement limits and requirements set forth in such instruction.

(c) Amounts made available for the purposes specified in subsection (a) of this section are subject to the requirements for funds contained in section 508 of division H of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (Public Law 115–141).

SEC. 234. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act or any other Act for the Department of Veterans Affairs may be used in a manner that is inconsistent with: (1) section 842 of the Transportation, Treasury, Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary, the District of Columbia, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 2006 (Public Law 109–115; 119 Stat. 2506); or (2) section 8110(a)(5) of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 235. Section 842 of Public Law 109–115 shall not apply to conversion of an activity or function of the Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration, or National Cemetery Administration to contractor performance by a business concern that is at least 51 percent owned by one or more Indian Tribes as defined in section 5304(e) of title 25, United States Code, or one or more Native Hawaiian Organizations as defined in section 637(a)(15) of title 15, United States Code.

SEC. 236. (a) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Labor, shall discontinue using Social Security account numbers to authenticate individuals in all information systems of the Department of Veterans Affairs for all individuals not later than September 30, 2026:

(b) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may collect and use a Social Security account number to identify an individual, in accordance with section 552a of title 5, United States Code, in an information system of the Department of Veterans Affairs if and only if the use of such number is necessary to:

(1) obtain or provide information the Secretary requires from an information system that is not under the jurisdiction of the Secretary;

(2) comply with a law, regulation, or court order;

(3) perform anti-fraud activities; or

(4) identify a specific individual where no adequate substitute is available.

(c) The matter in subsections (a) and (b) shall supersede section 237 of division J of Public Law 117–328.

SEC. 237. For funds provided to the Department of Veterans Affairs for each of fiscal year 2026 and 2027 for “Medical Services”, section 239 of division A of Public Law 114–223 shall apply.

SEC. 238. None of the funds appropriated in this or prior appropriations Acts or otherwise made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs may be used to transfer any amounts from the Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation Fund to any other account within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

SEC. 239. Of the funds provided to the Department of Veterans Affairs for each of fiscal year 2026 and fiscal year 2027 for “Medical Services”, funds may be used in each year to carry out and

expand the child care program authorized by section 205 of Public Law 111-163, notwithstanding subsection (e) of such section.

SEC. 240. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available in this title may be used by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into an agreement related to resolving a dispute or claim with an individual that would restrict in any way the individual from speaking to members of Congress or their staff on any topic not otherwise prohibited from disclosure by Federal law or required by Executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or the conduct of foreign affairs.

SEC. 241. For funds provided to the Department of Veterans Affairs for each of fiscal year 2026 and 2027, section 258 of division A of Public Law 114-223 shall apply.

SEC. 242. (a) None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used to deny an Inspector General funded under this Act timely access to any records, documents, or other materials available to the department or agency over which that Inspector General has responsibilities under the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.), or to prevent or impede the access of the Inspector General to such records, documents, or other materials, under any provision of law, except a provision of law that expressly refers to such Inspector General and expressly limits the right of access.

(b) A department or agency covered by this section shall provide its Inspector General access to all records, documents, and other materials in a timely manner.

(c) Each Inspector General shall ensure compliance with statutory limitations on disclosure relevant to the information provided by the establishment over which that Inspector General has responsibilities under the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

(d) Each Inspector General covered by this section shall report to the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives within 5 calendar days of any failure by any department or agency covered by this section to comply with this requirement.

SEC. 243. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used in a manner that would increase wait times for veterans who seek care at medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

SEC. 244. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act to the Veterans Health Administration may be used in fiscal year 2026 to convert any program which received specific purpose funds in fiscal year 2025 to a general purpose funded program unless the Secretary of Veterans Affairs submits written notification of any such proposal to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress at least 30 days prior to any such action and an approval is issued by the Committees.

SEC. 245. For funds provided to the Department of Veterans Affairs for each of fiscal year 2026 and 2027, section 248 of division A of Public Law 114-223 shall apply.

SEC. 246. (a) None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used to conduct research commencing on or after July 1, 2025, that uses any canine, feline, or non-human primate unless the Secretary of Veterans Affairs approves such research specifically and in writing pursuant to subsection (b).

(b)(1) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may approve the conduct of research commencing on or after July 1, 2025, using canines, felines, or non-human primates if the Secretary certifies that—

(A) the scientific objectives of the research can only be met by using such canines, felines, or non-human primates and cannot be met using other animal models, in vitro models, computational models, human clinical studies, or other research alternatives;

(B) such scientific objectives are necessary to advance research benefiting veterans and are

directly related to an illness or injury that is combat-related as defined by 10 U.S.C. 1413(e);

(C) the research is consistent with the revised Department of Veterans Affairs canine research policy document dated December 15, 2017, including any subsequent revisions to such document; and

(D) ethical considerations regarding minimizing the harm experienced by canines, felines, or non-human primates are included in evaluating the scientific necessity of the research.

(2) The Secretary may not delegate the authority under this subsection.

(c) If the Secretary approves any new research pursuant to subsection (b), not later than 30 days before the commencement of such research, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of the Senate and House of Representatives a report describing—

(1) the nature of the research to be conducted using canines, felines, or non-human primates;

(2) the date on which the Secretary approved the research

(3) the USDA pain category on the approved use

(4) the justification for the determination of the Secretary that the scientific objectives of such research could only be met using canines, felines, or non-human primates, and methods used to make such determination;

(5) the frequency and duration of such research; and

(6) the protocols in place to ensure the necessity, safety, and efficacy of the research, and animal welfare.

(d) Not later than December 31, 2025, and bi-annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to such Committees a report describing—

(1) any research being conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs using canines, felines, or non-human primates as of the date of the submittal of the report;

(2) the circumstances under which such research was conducted using canines, felines, or non-human primates;

(3) the justification for using canines, felines, or non-human primates to conduct such research;

(4) the protocols in place to ensure the necessity, safety, and efficacy of such research; and

(5) the development and adoption of alternatives to canines, felines, or non-human primates research.

(e) Not later than December 31, 2025, and annually thereafter, the Department of Veterans Affairs must submit to voluntary U.S. Department of Agriculture inspections of canine, feline, and non-human primate research facilities.

(f) Not later than December 31, 2025, and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to such Committees a report describing —

(1) any violations of the Animal Welfare Act, the Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, or other Department of Veterans Affairs policies related to oversight of animal research found during that quarter in VA research facilities;

(2) immediate corrective actions taken; and

(3) specific actions taken to prevent their recurrence.

(g) The Department shall implement a plan under which the Secretary will eliminate the research conducted using canines, felines, or non-human primates by not later than September 20, 2026.

SEC. 247. (a) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may use amounts appropriated or otherwise made available in this title to ensure that the ratio of veterans to full-time employment equivalents within any program of rehabilitation conducted under chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code, does not exceed 125 veterans to one full-time employment equivalent.

(b) Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the programs of rehabilitation conducted under chapter 31 of title 38, United States Code, including—

(1) an assessment of the veteran-to-staff ratio for each such program; and

(2) recommendations for such action as the Secretary considers necessary to reduce the veteran-to-staff ratio for each such program.

SEC. 248. Amounts made available for the “Veterans Health Administration, Medical Community Care” account in this or any other Act for fiscal years 2025 and 2026 may be used for expenses that would otherwise be payable from the Veterans Choice Fund established by section 802 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act, as amended (38 U.S.C. 1701 note).

SEC. 249. Obligations and expenditures applicable to the “Medical Services” account in fiscal years 2017 through 2019 for aid to state homes (as authorized by section 1741 of title 38, United States Code) shall remain in the “Medical Community Care” account for such fiscal years.

SEC. 250. Of the amounts made available for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2024, in this or any other Act, under the “Veterans Health Administration—Medical Services”, “Veterans Health Administration—Medical Community Care”, “Veterans Health Administration—Medical Support and Compliance”, and “Veterans Health Administration—Medical Facilities” accounts, \$1,323,444,000 shall be made available for gender-specific care and programmatic efforts to deliver care for women veterans.

SEC. 251. Notwithstanding any other law, unless prevented by an order issued by a federal or state court, by no later than September 30, 2026, the Secretary shall commence construction of the Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Bakersfield, California authorized in section 1(a)(3) of Public Law 111-82 and in accordance with Lease No.36C10F20L0008 or successor lease.

SEC. 252. Not later than 30 days after the end of each fiscal quarter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress a quarterly report on the status of the “Veterans Medical Care and Health Fund”, established to execute section 8002 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Public Law 117-2): Provided, That, at a minimum, the report shall include an update on obligations by program, project or activity and a plan for expending the remaining funds.

SEC. 253. Any amounts transferred to the Secretary and administered by a corporation referred to in section 7364(b) of title 38, United States Code, between October 1, 2018 and September 30, 2019 for purposes of carrying out an order placed with the Department of Veterans Affairs pursuant to section 1535 of title 31, United States Code, that are available for obligation pursuant to section 7364(b)(1) of title 38, United States Code, are to remain available for the liquidation of valid obligations incurred by such corporation during the period of performance of such order, provided that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines that such amounts need to remain available for such liquidation.

SEC. 254. Unobligated balances available under the headings “Construction, Major Projects” and “Construction, Minor Projects” may be obligated by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for a facility pursuant to section 2(e)(1) 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), as amended, to provide additional funds or to fund an escalation clause under such section of such Act: Provided, That before such unobligated balances are obligated pursuant to this section, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall request from the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress the authority to obligate such unobligated balances and such Committees issue an approval, or absent a response, a period of 30 days has elapsed: Provided further, That the request to obligate such unobligated balances must provide Congress notice that the entity described in section 2(a)(2) of

Public Law 114–294, as amended, has exhausted available cost containment approaches as set forth in the agreement under section 2(c) of such Public Law.

SEC. 255. (a) None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to implement, administer, or otherwise carry out the Department of Veterans Affairs interim final rule published on September 9, 2022, or any successor to such rule, or to propose, promulgate, or implement any substantially similar rule or policy.

(b) None of the funds appropriated in this Act shall be expended for any abortion, including through a medical benefits package or health benefits program that includes coverage of abortion.

(c) The limitations established in subsection (b) shall not apply to an abortion—

(1) if the pregnancy is the result of an act of rape or incest; or

(2) in the case where a woman suffers from a physical disorder, physical injury, or physical illness, including a life-endangering physical condition caused by or arising from the pregnancy itself, that would, as certified by a physician, place the woman in danger of death unless an abortion is performed.

SEC. 256. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used for surgical procedures or hormone therapies for the purposes of gender affirming care.

SEC. 257. During the period beginning on October 1, 2025 and ending on September 30, 2026, none of the funds made available by this Act may be used to administer, implement, or enforce the final rule issued by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs relating to “Change in Rates VA Pays for Special Modes of Transportation” (88 Fed. Reg. 10032) and published on February 16, 2023.

SEC. 258. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to carry out VHA Directive 1193.01, “Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination Program for Veterans Health Administration Health Care Personnel”.

SEC. 259. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to provide any services to any individual unlawfully present in the United States who is not eligible for health care under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

SEC. 260. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under section 5502 of title 38, United States Code, in any case arising out of the administration by the Secretary of laws and benefits under such title, to report a person who is deemed mentally incapacitated, mentally incompetent, or to be experiencing an extended loss of consciousness as a person who has been adjudicated as a mental defective under subsection (d)(4) or (g)(4) of section 922 of title 18, United States Code, without the order or finding a judge, magistrate, or other judicial authority of competent jurisdiction that such person is a danger to himself or herself or others.

SEC. 261. Of the unobligated balances from amounts made available under the heading “Veterans Health Administration” from prior appropriations Acts, including any funds transferred from the Medical Care Collections Fund to accounts under such heading, \$15,889,000,000 is hereby permanently rescinded: Provided, That no amounts may be rescinded from amounts that were provided under the heading “Medical and Prosthetic Research” or amounts that were designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to a concurrent resolution on the budget or the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985: Provided further; That the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate a plan for rescinding amounts pursuant to this section not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

## TITLE III

## RELATED AGENCIES

## AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

## SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses, not otherwise provided for, of the American Battle Monuments Commission, including the acquisition of land or interest in land in foreign countries; purchases and repair of uniforms for caretakers of national cemeteries and monuments outside of the United States and its territories and possessions; rent of office and garage space in foreign countries; purchase (one-for-one replacement basis only) and hire of passenger motor vehicles; not to exceed \$15,000 for official reception and representation expenses; and insurance of official motor vehicles in foreign countries, when required by law of such countries, \$106,000,000, to remain available until expended.

## FOREIGN CURRENCY FLUCTUATIONS ACCOUNT

For necessary expenses, not otherwise provided for, of the American Battle Monuments Commission, such sums as may be necessary, to remain available until expended, for purposes authorized by section 2109 of title 36, United States Code.

## UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS

## SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses for the operation of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims as authorized by sections 7251 through 7298 of title 38, United States Code, \$49,000,000: Provided, That \$3,800,000 shall be available for the purpose of providing financial assistance as described and in accordance with the process and reporting procedures set forth under this heading in Public Law 102–229.

## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE—CIVIL

## CEMETERIAL EXPENSES, ARMY

## SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses for maintenance, operation, and improvement of Arlington National Cemetery and Soldiers’ and Airmen’s Home National Cemetery, including the purchase or lease of passenger motor vehicles for replacement on a one-for-one basis only, and not to exceed \$2,000 for official reception and representation expenses, \$115,000,000, of which not to exceed \$15,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2028. In addition, such sums as may be necessary for parking maintenance, repairs and replacement, to be derived from the “Lease of Department of Defense Real Property for Defense Agencies” account.

## ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME

## TRUST FUND

For expenses necessary for the Armed Forces Retirement Home to operate and maintain the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Washington, District of Columbia, and the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Gulfport, Mississippi, to be paid from funds available in the Armed Forces Retirement Home Trust Fund, \$70,520,000, to remain available until September 30, 2027, of which \$1,000,000 shall remain available until expended for construction and renovation of the physical plants at the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Washington, District of Columbia, and the Armed Forces Retirement Home—Gulfport, Mississippi: Provided, That of the amounts made available under this heading from funds available in the Armed Forces Retirement Home Trust Fund, \$25,000,000 shall be paid from the general fund of the Treasury to the Trust Fund.

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISION

SEC. 301. Amounts deposited into the special account established under 10 U.S.C. 7727 are appropriated and shall be available until expended to support activities at the Army National Military Cemeteries.

## TITLE IV

## GENERAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 401. No part of any appropriation contained in this Act shall remain available for obligation beyond the current fiscal year unless expressly so provided herein.

SEC. 402. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used for any program, project, or activity, when it is made known to the Federal entity or official to which the funds are made available that the program, project, or activity is not in compliance with any Federal law relating to risk assessment, the protection of private property rights, or unfunded mandates.

SEC. 403. All departments and agencies funded under this Act are encouraged, within the limits of the existing statutory authorities and funding, to expand their use of “E-Commerce” technologies and procedures in the conduct of their business practices and public service activities.

SEC. 404. Unless stated otherwise, all reports and notifications required by this Act shall be submitted to the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

SEC. 405. None of the funds made available in this Act may be transferred to any department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States Government except pursuant to a transfer made by, or transfer authority provided in, this or any other appropriations Act.

SEC. 406. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used for a project or program named for an individual serving as a Member, Delegate, or Resident Commissioner of the United States House of Representatives.

SEC. 407. (a) Any agency receiving funds made available in this Act, shall, subject to subsections (b) and (c), post on the public Web site of that agency any report required to be submitted by the Congress in this or any other Act, upon the determination by the head of the agency that it shall serve the national interest.

(b) Subsection (a) shall not apply to a report if—

(1) the public posting of the report compromises national security; or

(2) the report contains confidential or proprietary information.

(c) The head of the agency posting such report shall do so only after such report has been made available to the requesting Committee or Committees of Congress for no less than 30 days.

SEC. 408. (a) None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to maintain or establish a computer network unless such network blocks the viewing, downloading, and exchanging of pornography.

(b) Nothing in subsection (a) shall limit the use of funds necessary for any Federal, State, tribal, or local law enforcement agency or any other entity carrying out criminal investigations, prosecution, or adjudication activities.

SEC. 409. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used by an agency of the executive branch to pay for first-class travel by an employee of the agency in contravention of sections 301–10.122 through 301–10.124 of title 41, Code of Federal Regulations.

SEC. 410. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to execute a contract for goods or services, including construction services, where the contractor has not complied with Executive Order No. 12989.

SEC. 411. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used in contravention of section 101(e)(8) of title 10, United States Code.

SEC. 412. (a) IN GENERAL.—None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Defense in this Act may be used to construct, renovate, or expand any facility in the United States, its territories, or possessions to house any individual detained at United



States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, for the purposes of detention or imprisonment in the custody or under the control of the Department of Defense.

(b) The prohibition in subsection (a) shall not apply to any modification of facilities at United States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

(c) An individual described in this subsection is any individual who, as of June 24, 2009, is located at United States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and who—

(1) is not a citizen of the United States or a member of the Armed Forces of the United States; and

(2) is—

(A) in the custody or under the effective control of the Department of Defense; or

(B) otherwise under detention at United States Naval Station, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

SEC. 413. None of the funds appropriated by this Act may be used in any way, directly or indirectly, to influence congressional action on any legislation or appropriation matter pending before Congress, other than to communicate to Members of Congress as described in 18 U.S.C. 1913.

SEC. 414. For an additional amount for the “Office of the Secretary”, \$1,500,000, to remain available until expended, for the Secretary to enter into an agreement with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to conduct a study on the prevalence and mortality of cancers among individuals who served as active-duty aircrew in the Armed Forces: Provided, That the panel or panels established by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to conduct the study shall identify exposures associated with military occupations of covered individuals, including relating to chemicals, compounds, agents, and other phenomena: Provided further, the study shall review the literature to determine associations between exposures and the incidence of overall cancer morbidity, cancer mortality and increased prevalence of brain cancer, colon and rectal cancers, kidney cancer, lung cancer, melanoma skin cancer, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, pancreatic cancer, prostate cancer, testicular cancer, thyroid cancer, urinary bladder cancer and any other cancers determined appropriate by the Department of Veterans Affairs: Provided further, That not later than eighteen months after the date of enactment of this Act, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine shall submit its report to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Congress of its systematic review and data analysis of the research topics.

SEC. 415. There is hereby appropriated \$1,500,000, to remain available until expended, for a pilot program for the Secretary to partner with a private laboratory to utilize Forensic Genetic Genealogy sequencing technology to identify the remains of fallen soldiers buried at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

SEC. 416. (a) None of the funds appropriated by this Act or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2026 for the Department of Veterans Affairs may be obligated, awarded, or expended to procure or purchase covered information technology equipment in cases where the manufacturer, bidder, or offeror, or any subsidiary or parent entity of the manufacturer, bidder, or offeror, of the equipment is an entity or parent company of an entity listed on any of the following:

(1) The Chinese Military Company List of the Department of Defense.

(2) The Non-SDN Chinese Military Industrial Complex Companies List of the Department of the Treasury.

(3) The Denied Persons List, Entity List, or Military End User List of the Department of Commerce, if the entity is—

(A) an agency or instrumentality of the People's Republic of China;

(B) an entity headquartered in the People's Republic of China; or

(C) directly or indirectly owned or controlled by an agency, instrumentality, or entity described in subparagraph (A) or (B).

(4) The Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act Entity List of the Department of Homeland Security.

(b) The prohibition under subsection (a) shall apply to a case in which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs has entered into a contract with a non-Department entity for the procurement or purchase of, or the expenditure of funds on, covered information technology equipment.

(c) In this section, the term “covered information technology equipment”—

(1) means a computer, printer, or interoperable videoconferencing equipment for direct use by employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs in an office environment; and

(2) does not include services that use such equipment, including cloud services.

SEC. 417. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available in this Act may be used to—

(1) Classify or facilitate the classification of any communications by a United States person as a mis-, dis-, or mal-information; or

(2) Partner with or fund nonprofit or other private organizations that in any way instruct, influence, direct, or recommend that private companies in any way censor, prohibit, or obstruct lawful and constitutionally protected speech of United States persons, including recommending the censoring or removal of content on social media platforms.

SEC. 418. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that the policies and requirements described in the transmittal sheet of the Veterans Health Administration published on August 8, 2019, titled “Smoke-Free Policy for Employees at VA Health Care Facilities (VHA Directive 1085.01)” remain in effect.

SEC. 419. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to reduce the staffing, hours of operation, or services of the Veterans Crisis Line or any other suicide prevention program of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

#### SPENDING REDUCTION ACCOUNT

SEC. 420. \$0.

This Act may be cited as the “Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026”.

The CHAIR. No further amendment to the bill, as amended, shall be in order except those printed in House Report 119-167, amendments en bloc, and pro forma amendments described in section 4 of House Resolution 530.

Each further amendment printed in House Report 119-167 shall be considered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment except as provided by section 4 of House Resolution 530, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

It shall be in order at any time for the chair of the Committee on Appropriations or his designee to offer amendments en bloc consisting of further amendments printed in House Report 119-167 not earlier disposed of.

Amendments en bloc offered pursuant to section 3 of House Resolution 530 shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations or their respective

designees, shall not be subject to amendment except as provided by section 4 of House Resolution 530, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

During consideration of the bill for amendment, the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations or their respective designees may offer up to 10 pro forma amendments each at any point for the purpose of debate.

AMENDMENTS EN BLOC NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. CARTER OF TEXAS

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chair, pursuant to House Resolution 530, I offer amendments en bloc.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendments en bloc.

Amendments en bloc No. 1 consisting of amendment Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 29, and 30 printed in House Report 119-167, offered by Mr. CARTER of Texas:

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MS. BOEBERT OF COLORADO

Page 35, line 17, after the dollar amount, insert “(increased by \$2,000,000)”.

Page 36, line 20, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$2,000,000)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MS. BOEBERT OF COLORADO

Page 36, line 20, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$3,000,000)”.

Page 40, line 17, after the dollar amount, insert “(increased by \$2,000,000)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 4 OFFERED BY MS. BOEBERT OF COLORADO

Page 36, line 20, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$3,500,000)”.

Page 44, line 12, after the dollar amount, insert “(increased by \$2,000,000)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 5 OFFERED BY MS. BOEBERT OF COLORADO

Page 36, line 20, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$2,000,000)”.

Page 44, line 18, after the dollar amount, insert “(increased by \$2,000,000)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 6 OFFERED BY MS. BOEBERT OF COLORADO

Page 36, line 20, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$3,500,000)”.

Page 37, line 3, after the dollar amount, insert “(increased by \$2,000,000)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MS. CASTOR OF FLORIDA

Page 4, line 13, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$360,000,000) (increased by \$360,000,000)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 9 OFFERED BY MS. GOODLANDER OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

Page 34, line 18, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 10 OFFERED BY MR. GOTTHEIMER OF NEW JERSEY

Page 31, line 17, after the dollar amount, insert the following “(reduced by \$5,000,000) (increased by \$5,000,000)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 11 OFFERED BY MR. GOTTHEIMER OF NEW JERSEY

Page 31, line 17, after the dollar amount, insert the following “(reduced by \$5,000,000) (increased by \$5,000,000)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 12 OFFERED BY MR. GOTTHEIMER OF NEW JERSEY

Page 31, line 17, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$285,000,000) (increased by \$285,000,000)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 16 OFFERED BY MRS. KIGGANS OF VIRGINIA

Page 31, line 17, after the dollar amount, insert “(decreased by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 17 OFFERED BY MRS. KIGGANS OF VIRGINIA

Page 31, line 17, after the dollar amount, insert “(decreased by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 18 OFFERED BY MRS. KIGGANS OF VIRGINIA

Page 2, line 22, after the dollar amount, insert “(decreased by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 20 OFFERED BY MRS. KIGGANS OF VIRGINIA

Page 4, line 13, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 22 OFFERED BY MR. MOYLAN OF GUAM

Page 30, line 9, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 23 OFFERED BY MR. OGLES OF TENNESSEE

Page 31, line 17, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 24 OFFERED BY MR. OGLES OF TENNESSEE

Page 37, line 3, after the first dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 26 OFFERED BY MR. OGLES OF TENNESSEE

Page 44, line 12, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 27 OFFERED BY MR. OGLES OF TENNESSEE

Page 28, line 17, after the dollar amount, insert “(decreased by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 29 OFFERED BY MR. SCHWEIKERT OF ARIZONA

Page 39, line 10, after the dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 30 OFFERED BY MR. SCHWEIKERT OF ARIZONA

Page 31, line 17, after the first dollar amount, insert “(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)”.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 530, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chair, I rise in favor of this en bloc package. It includes bipartisan amendments that both sides have agreed to.

I appreciate Ranking Member WASSERMAN SCHULTZ working with us on this amendment. I ask my colleagues to support it, and I urge its adoption.

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of this amendment. This amendment contains non-controversial amendments that raise awareness on programs that we all care about. That includes the need to ad-

dress a variety of medical care issues at the VA, the need to build more childcare development centers, construct more State extended-care facilities, expediting claims processing, and many others.

Mr. Chair, I encourage my colleagues to support this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GOTTHEIMER), a fearless defender of our Nation's veterans.

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of the en bloc package which includes three amendments I offered to the FY 2026 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

My first amendment requires a resident advocate in every veterans home across the country. This advocate will be a direct line of contact for our veterans and their families, ensuring that they have someone who can immediately help with any concerns and respond without delay.

In my home State of New Jersey, 190 veterans tragically lost their lives because of the COVID outbreak at the veterans homes in Paramus, New Jersey, and Menlo Park. This tragedy was preventable and unacceptable. My amendment will help ensure catastrophes like that never happen again.

My second amendment will help VA hospitals provide kosher meal options for Jewish veterans. Right now, many Jewish inpatient veterans are only served frozen, prepackaged kosher meals that severely lack quality nutrition.

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We must ensure that no veteran has to choose between their religion and their health.

Finally, my third amendment will encourage continued funding for the Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program, which has delivered millions in grants for mental health services to help prevent veteran suicide. Without additional funding, this critical program will expire later this year. We cannot and must not let that happen.

After sacrificing so much, our great veterans should never struggle to get the care, recognition, and respect they have rightfully earned. That is why I strongly urge my colleagues to support the en bloc package.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Guam (Mr. MOYLAN).

Mr. MOYLAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of my amendment urging the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop a comprehensive plan to relocate the VA regional office from Manila to Guam.

Guam is home to one of the highest per capita populations of veterans in the United States, but our role doesn't stop there. We serve as a critical hub

for veterans across the western Pacific, from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to the Freely Associated States. Yet, despite this regional responsibility, Guam still lacks a full-service VA regional office.

Today, veterans throughout our region are forced to rely on remote services or travel thousands of miles to Honolulu, more than 3,800 miles away, just to meet with a benefits counselor or resolve a claim. That is not just inconvenient. It is unjust, and it is unacceptable.

My amendment seeks to change that. It would direct the VA to develop a plan within 1 year for transitioning its regional office from Manila to Guam. This isn't about turning off the lights in the Philippines overnight. It is about creating a deliberate, responsible roadmap that ensures veterans in the western Pacific and the Philippines continue to receive care while aligning the VA's footprint with our evolving strategic reality.

The men and women who sacrificed for our country did not do so with an expiration date on their service. Our commitment to them must be equally enduring. We have a duty to ensure they are not forgotten or left behind.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. GOODLANDER), who is a new Member and a veteran of our Armed Forces.

Ms. GOODLANDER. Mr. Chair, I thank Congresswoman WASSERMAN SCHULTZ for her leadership.

Mr. Chair, I rise today on behalf of the 88,000 brave American heroes, veterans, who call the State of New Hampshire home.

We owe a sacred obligation to the women and men who served our country in uniform. We have got to make sure that they receive the high-quality healthcare they have earned.

There are 48 States here in the continental United States, and my home State of New Hampshire is the only one without a full-service VA hospital. My amendment before the House today would change that. It will ensure the Trump administration follows through on its promise to expand services to support a full-service VA medical center in New Hampshire.

It is past time that we right this wrong and fill this gap.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues here in Congress to support my amendment which will do just that.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT).

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I rise today with deep respect and unwavering gratitude for the brave men and women who have worn the uniform of the United States of America. My support for the members of our military does not end when their service is complete, and I will always take steps to ensure that our Nation's veterans and their families receive the benefits that they were promised and are owed.

My amendments included in this package today ensure our Nation keeps its sacred promise to those who have served our great country.

From providing additional funding for the construction of new State extended care facilities to increasing funds for medical and prosthetic research, and from reducing the backlog at the Board of Veterans' Appeals to providing burial services and benefits for veterans in rural areas lacking a VA national cemetery, my amendments will directly improve the quality of life for veterans throughout Colorado and America.

This bill makes good on President Trump's promises that he made to our veterans. It mirrors his executive orders on no funds for DEI and on radical transgender surgeries while also supporting the President's efforts to combat veteran homelessness through investment in the new Bridging Rental Assistance For Veteran Empowerment program.

This bill protects the Second Amendment rights of veterans by preventing the VA from sending information to the Federal Bureau of Investigation about veterans without a judge's consent.

It also prohibits the VA from processing medical care claims for illegal aliens.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this bipartisan en bloc and for this critical piece of legislation. Our veterans are the living embodiment of duty, honor, and sacrifice. They have stood on the front lines for our freedom, and this bill is a great opportunity to now stand for them.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, I do not have any additional speakers, and I also yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendments en bloc offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER).

The en bloc amendments were agreed to.

#### AMENDMENTS EN BLOC NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. CARTER OF TEXAS

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chairman, pursuant to House Resolution 530, I offer amendments en bloc as the designee of Chairman COLE.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendments en bloc.

Amendments en bloc No. 2 consisting of amendment Nos. 1, 14, 15, 19, 25, 28, and 32 printed in House Report 119-167, offered by Mr. CARTER of Texas:

#### AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. ARRINGTON OF TEXAS

Page 3, line 16, after the dollar amount, insert "(increased by \$4,100,000)".

Page 3, line 18, after the dollar amount, insert "(increased by \$4,100,000)".

Page 9, line 10, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$4,100,000)".

#### AMENDMENT NO. 14 OFFERED BY MRS. HOUCHIN OF INDIANA

Page 30, line 9, after the first dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$5,000,000)".

Page 31, line 17, after the first dollar amount, insert "(increased by \$5,000,000)".

#### AMENDMENT NO. 15 OFFERED BY MRS. KIGGANS OF VIRGINIA

Page 12, line 5, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)".

#### AMENDMENT NO. 19 OFFERED BY MRS. KIGGANS OF VIRGINIA

Page 2, line 22, after the dollar amount, insert "(decreased by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)".

#### AMENDMENT NO. 25 OFFERED BY MR. OGLES OF TENNESSEE

Page 33, line 3, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$1,000,000) (increased by \$1,000,000)".

#### AMENDMENT NO. 28 OFFERED BY MR. PERRY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Page 31, line 17, after the dollar amount, insert "(increased by \$1,000,000) (reduced by \$1,000,000)".

#### AMENDMENT NO. 32 OFFERED BY MR. SHREVE OF INDIANA

Page 5, line 15, after the dollar amount, insert "(reduced by \$55,000,000) (increased by \$55,000,000)".

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 530, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I rise in favor of the amendment. It includes various priorities related to veterans' health care and benefits and calls for improvements to our military bases.

Mr. Chairman, I urge its adoption, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARRINGTON).

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Chairman, I thank my good friend from the great State of Texas, "the judge," as we call him back in the freest and greatest State in the Union, for his leadership.

I have an amendment, Mr. Chair, and it is one I think all of my colleagues would want to support.

In the last week, the world witnessed the might of America's unparalleled air superiority and what a critical role our strategic bombers and the men and women who pilot and maintain them play in keeping our enemies, like Iran, in check.

For nearly 40 years, the B-1 has been the tip of the spear of America's air superiority. The B-1 has served us well, but at a time when our adversaries like China are making their own historic investments in their own military, it is time we roll out America's next generation warfighter.

That is why I rise in strong support of this amendment that would direct a little over \$4 million to enhance gate security at military installations set

to receive the B-21 Raider, including Dyess Air Force Base in the key city of Abilene, Texas.

The B-21 Raider represents the most capable and lethal bomber this world and this planet has ever known and seen. It is the future of our long-range strike capability, designed to evade modern air defenses and deliver both nuclear and conventional payloads across the globe.

Dyess, the base in Abilene, Texas, will soon become a key platform for deploying this cutting-edge aircraft. We have a responsibility to ensure that this investment in national defense is protected accordingly.

Let's be clear: This is not a theoretical threat. In 2023 alone, U.S. officials reported over 100 incidents of Chinese nationals attempting to unlawfully access Department of Defense facilities.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chair, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Mr. Chair, in May of this year, two foreign nationals, here illegally under President Biden's open-border crisis, attempted to breach the Marine Corps base in Quantico in a box truck. These are not isolated incidents, Mr. Chair. They are part of a disturbing trend that put our installations, our technology, and, most importantly, our servicemembers at risk.

This amendment is straightforward. It funds the necessary upgrades to the gate infrastructure at bases like Dyess to comply with the Department of Defense force protection standards. Reinforcing access control preventing unauthorized entry is common sense. As I said, it is straightforward, and it will help both our servicemembers, our air arsenal, and our overall national security posture.

Mr. Chair, I thank the judge for his leadership, and I urge adoption of this amendment.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, this en bloc contains eight amendments that will make this bill worse than it already is.

It includes a funding cut to the Veterans Benefits Administration, further exacerbating the backlogs in processing disability compensation claims, leading to long waits for veterans.

The Republican MILCON-VA bill already cuts the NATO Security Investment Program by \$188 million. This amendment would further cut it by another \$4.1 million. It is shocking that my Republican colleagues would condone this, especially while they are offering amendments encouraging the speedier processes of claims and lamenting the delays in countless Republican speeches.

NATO infrastructure investment receives robust funding from our NATO

partners, but there is an illegal Russian war going on, so it would seem that we need more investments in NATO infrastructure now more than ever. Yet, this amendment would further cut into it.

The amendment also seeks to continue the Republican push to privatize VA medical care. The bill already includes a 67 percent increase to medical community care which is an increase without justification or rationale. We received no backup information from the administration whatsoever as to why they proposed this or why it is necessary because it isn't. It is a simple additional attempt to march the VA toward prioritization and away from what we know veterans want.

The amendment promotes untested and dangerous medical treatment for our veterans. It makes a bad bill even worse.

Mr. Chair, I encourage my colleagues to oppose this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I move the adoption of this en bloc, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, this en bloc doesn't do a single thing to improve this bill. In fact, it makes it worse. It cuts the Veterans Benefits Administration. It discriminates against veterans and doubles down on privatization of VA medical care.

Mr. Chair, I urge a "no" vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendments en bloc offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER).

The question was taken; and the Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendments en bloc offered by the gentleman from Texas will be postponed.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, I rise as the designee of the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO), and I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIR. The gentlewoman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chair, I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR), who is the distinguished ranking member of the Energy and Water Development Subcommittee and the dean of women of the House of Representatives.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentlewoman (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) from the great State of Florida very much for yielding. She certainly has educated us about Florida, among other things, and she is a proud, proud ranking member on this bill.

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This bill punishes our veterans by pushing out professionals from the De-

partment of Veterans Affairs. It promotes premature retirements, and it paves the way for private equity takeovers, leaving care delayed, denied, and diminished.

For this reason, at the appropriate time I will offer a motion to recommit this bill back to committee. If the House rules permitted, I would have offered the motion with an important amendment to this bill.

My amendment would mandate metrics requiring a report on veteran employee separations, deferred resignations, early retirements, and contractor-driven cuts exposing employment erosion and salary shortfalls of those who have served our Nation. Veterans deserve data not desertion.

I will vote "no" on the military construction bill also because the underlying bill underfunds our military construction accounts by nearly \$1 billion. This hurts our military readiness at a time when our enemies like China choose to invest in themselves. I also can't support a bill that paves the road to VA privatization. Perish that thought.

While I have the time, it is long overdue for the Department of Veterans Affairs to approve the request from northwest Ohio to expedite the dual affiliation of the University of Toledo Medical Center and the VA Ann Arbor Health Care System. Our VA community clinic in Toledo stands ready to support this effort, and over 83,000 veterans in the northwest quadrant of Ohio deserve the convenience of access to the State of Ohio's medical center and academic center at Toledo.

In Toledo, to level funding in this account will not allow us to grow and fully support the needs of all of our veterans.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for the motion to recommit, and I include in the RECORD the text of my amendment.

Ms. Kaptur moves to recommit the bill H.R. 3944 to the Committee on Appropriations with the following amendment:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

#### VETERANS FIRINGS ACCOUNTABILITY

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. Not later than 15 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall transmit to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report detailing, for calendar year 2025 and the comparable periods of time for the last five calendar years, the number of veterans separated from Federal service; the number of veterans participating in a Deferred Resignation Program or who have left Federal service under a Voluntary Early Retirement Authority; and the number of veterans employed by contractors or subcontractors performing work for the Federal government who have seen their working hours, wages, or employment reduced or terminated.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. HERNÁNDEZ).

Mr. HERNÁNDEZ. Mr. Chair, I rise today in strong support of Congresswoman KIGGANS' amendment No. 79, which ensures sufficient VA medical

care for veterans in the U.S. territories, Commonwealths, and Freely Associated States.

This amendment is critical for places like Puerto Rico where over 79,000 veterans reside on the island and have served our Nation with honor and distinction. Yet far too often, they face unequal access to the care they have earned, whether it is limited specialty services, understaffed facilities, or long wait times for off-island referrals.

The same is true in Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands, as well as the Freely Associated States in the Pacific. Veterans in these communities, no matter where they live, should have access to quality medical care owed to them.

This amendment sends a clear message: Our commitment to veterans does not stop at the mainland. It reinforces the principle that all who served deserve timely, high-quality care, regardless of where they live.

I thank the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. KIGGANS) for her leadership, and I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

Ms. WASSERMAN-SCHULTZ. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Puerto Rico for his fierce advocacy of the veterans from Puerto Rico, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SHREVE. Mr. Chairman, as the designee of Chairman COLE, I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Indiana is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHREVE. Mr. Chair, my amendment provides \$55 million to build a new aviation maintenance hangar and operations building and renovate the existing hangar space at our Shelbyville, Indiana, Army Aviation Support Facility.

Mr. Chair, 900 Indiana guardsmen assigned to the 38th Combat Aviation Brigade have supported 16 deployments since 2001, including to Iraq, Kuwait, and Bosnia. Our Shelbyville facility remains a crown jewel of Indiana and Midwest Army aviation.

This proud combat aviation unit has one of the oldest Army aviation flight facilities in the National Guard. Built in 1972, it currently supports 11 aircraft and more than 50 full-time personnel.

Upgrading the facility will save over 500 man-hours and prevent more than \$200,000 in annual damage to blades and equipment. A new facility supports rapid homeland response and will sustain recruitment and retention of Indiana's finest soldiers. This amendment serves to equip our next generation of guardsmen to protect our homeland both at home and abroad.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

AMENDMENT NO. 8 OFFERED BY MR. CORREA

The CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 8 printed in House Report 119-167.

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 35, line 17, after the dollar amount, insert the following: “(increased by \$1,000,000) (reduced by \$1,000,000)”.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 530, the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Chair, I rise in strong support of amendment No. 8 directing the Department of Veterans Affairs to make recommendations on changes that are needed to its existing healthcare infrastructure so veterans can receive psychedelic-assisted therapies upon FDA approval.

In December of 2024, the VA announced \$1.5 million in funding for clinical research on MDMA-assisted therapy for veterans with PTSD and alcohol disorder, as well.

This is the first time the VA has funded research on psychedelic compounds since the 1960s.

My fellow Psychedelics Advancing Therapies Caucus co-chair, General JACK BERGMAN, and I are encouraged by the promising results so far that we have seen in treating veterans with PTSD and other disorders.

However, these therapies are different from traditional therapies in many ways. Psychedelic therapies involve hours-long sessions with multiple therapists, additional safety issues, and special training considerations for providers.

We introduced this amendment because we need to be ready and be proactive to make sure that when the VA is ready to administer these therapies they actually can.

While MDMA-assisted therapy did not receive FDA approval last summer, approval of certain psychedelic therapies will likely come very soon. We owe it to our veterans to make sure that they can access these therapies upon approval.

Every day we lose nearly 20 veterans to suicide. One suicide is way too many. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment to make sure that our veterans have the best care they need as soon as possible.

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

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition, although I am not opposed to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. FINE). Without objection, the gentleman from Michigan is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Chairman, I thank my dear friend and fellow PATH Caucus co-chair, Congressman CORREA, for his work on this amendment.

Washington, D.C., has built its success on good partnerships, especially across the aisle, on issues that benefit all of our Americans, not just a few.

I rise in strong support of this amendment, which directs the Vet-

erans Administration to begin preparing for the rollout of breakthrough treatments for veterans battling PTSD, depression, and substance abuse disorders.

President Trump's first administration took a bold and necessary step by granting breakthrough therapy status to MDMA and psilocybin acknowledging their potential to transform mental health care.

Last December, the VA followed suit funding its first psychedelic-assisted therapy study in over 60 years. That was a critical milestone, but research alone is not enough.

Without a plan to turn findings into frontline care, we risk failing the very people this research is meant to help: our veterans.

We know the stakes. Too many servicemembers come home bearing invisible wounds. While traditional treatments work for some, far too many are left cycling through ineffective medications, suffering in silence, or worse, giving up entirely.

Emerging VA studies involving MDMA and psilocybin show remarkable potential not just for improvement but for truly lasting healing. They offer hope, but hope alone doesn't heal.

Washington has a bad habit of funding studies without ever building the systems needed to implement the results. We cannot afford to repeat that cycle here.

This amendment sends a clear message to the VA: Don't just study. Prepare. Prepare to implement new therapies and newfound ways to improve the lives of veterans now, not 5 or 10 years from now.

That means identifying the clinical infrastructure needed to deliver these treatments, training and certifying providers, and launching pilot programs to bring these therapies from the lab into real world care settings. Again, we can't wait 5 or 10 years while veterans continue to suffer.

Every day we delay is a day someone loses hope or their life.

If there is a treatment that works, we have a responsibility to be ready to deliver it. This isn't about politics. It is about promises kept. We owe our veterans more than research. We owe them results. We owe them implementation. This amendment moves us one step closer to delivering.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. The Chair understands that amendment No. 13 will not be offered.

AMENDMENT NO. 21 OFFERED BY MR. JOYCE OF OHIO

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 21 printed in House Report 119-167.

Mr. JOYCE of Ohio. Mr. Chair, as the designee of Mr. MAST, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title) insert the following:

**SEC. XXX. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs in this Act may be used to enforce Veterans Health Directive 1315 as it relates to—**

(1) the policy stating that “VHA providers are prohibited from completing forms or registering Veterans for participation in a State-approved marijuana program”;

(2) the directive for the “Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management” to ensure that “medical facility Directors are aware that it is VHA policy for providers to assess Veteran use of marijuana but providers are prohibited from recommending, making referrals to or completing paperwork for Veteran participation in State marijuana programs”; and

(3) the directive for the “VA Medical Facility Director” to ensure that “VA facility staff are aware of the following” “[t]he prohibition recommending, making referrals to or completing forms and registering Veterans for participation in State-approved marijuana programs”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 530, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JOYCE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. JOYCE of Ohio. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAST), the true sponsor of this amendment who has just arrived to state his position.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Chair, I am here to speak on my amendment No. 21. This is something that we have dealt with here in Congress before. Specifically it relates to veterans' access to cannabis.

The story that I will tell in advance of this is simply this: I woke up in Walter Reed Army Medical Center not too far from here a number of years ago, and when I woke up, I was missing two legs and a finger. I had been out of consciousness for a week plus.

What I woke up to was being on a laundry list of medications. I had an epidural. I had oral morphines and oxies. I had antidepressants, anti-inflammatories, and heavy sleep sedatives. I had a Dilaudid drip and a number of other things that I can't even remember at this point all at once. I had never been on any of these things before in my life.

Immediately, as soon as I woke up, I started to wean myself off of these drugs because I was saying to myself: I might be very uncomfortable, but I don't want to be dependent on sleep sedatives. I might be in a lot of pain, but let's start by getting off of this painkiller and this painkiller and this painkiller. I am not depressed, so take this antidepressant away.

These narcotics were beyond painful to come off of. I was down to the lowest amount after about 6 months of the last narcotic, which was an oral morphine. Going from the lowest amount twice a day 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. to nothing, I spent the next several months

miserable, suffering the gamut of withdrawal symptoms: irritability to say the least, food going through me, up all night. You name it. That was just after 6 months.

The state that these narcotics, in many cases, leave our veterans in are, at the most extreme end of it, states of suicide and, at the other end of it, just extreme states of dissatisfaction and lacking purpose in life. In some cases it does leave them in a better condition.

The point I am making with this true story is that veterans need to have options outside of these narcotics.

□ 1330

In many States, there are legal cannabis medical programs. They need to have the ability when they are being seen by their primary care physician inside of the VA to have discussions about whether cannabis is or is not right for them. They have access to it in their State. They need to be able to talk to their medical provider about what they fill out on the paperwork, what the right dosage amount is, how that is going to interact with any other medications that they might be on, and how it might affect their blood pressure or other things going on with them personally.

If we are not giving that option to have that conversation at the most serious level without worrying about some kind of reprisal for the doctor or otherwise, then we are doing our veterans a disservice in, certainly, at minimum, all of these States where there are legal cannabis programs.

I am not a doctor. I would not purport to know when this is a good treatment for somebody, when it is not, or the amounts that they should take. Yet, I know that as long as it is available in these various States, their doctors need to have the opportunity to discuss that treatment with them. The fact of the matter is, while I have heard of many of my brothers- and sisters-in-arms being in a state of suicide because of the narcotics they have been on, I have yet to hear about any of them attributing a state of suicide to the cannabis that they have had as a part of their life.

Mr. Chairman, I ask for support on amendment No. 21.

Mr. JOYCE of Ohio. Mr. Chairman, what else can I say after hearing the true story of a true American hero and why it should be important for all people—Floridians, every veteran—to be able to access cannabis if, in fact, it is necessary and prescribed by a doctor and if it helps them treat whatever they have come home with?

My father was wounded and left for dead in World War II, and he came home. I know what it takes for these people and the hurt that they have gone through on behalf of our country. They deserve every option available to bring them back to what they were before they left on our behalf.

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

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JOYCE).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. The Chair understands that amendment No. 31 will not be offered.

Mr. CARTER of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ALFORD) having assumed the chair, Mr. FINE, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3944) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

## RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 34 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1615

## AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. NUNN of Iowa) at 4 o'clock and 15 minutes p.m.

## CONDEMNING THE ATTACKS ON MINNESOTA LAWMAKERS IN BROOKLYN PARK AND CHAMPLIN, MINNESOTA, AND CALLING FOR UNITY AND THE REJECTION OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN MINNESOTA AND ACROSS THE UNITED STATES

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 agree to the resolution (H. Res. 519) condemning the attacks on Minnesota lawmakers in Brooklyn Park and Champlin, Minnesota, and calling for unity and the rejection of political violence in Minnesota and across the United States, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. COMER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 424, nays 0, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 179]

YEAS—424

Adams	Diaz-Balart	Johnson (GA)
Aderholt	Dingell	Johnson (LA)
Aguilar	Doggett	Johnson (SD)
Alford	Donalds	Johnson (TX)
Allen	Downing	Jordan
Amo	Dunn (FL)	Joyce (OH)
Amodei (NV)	Edwards	Joyce (PA)
Ansari	Elfreth	Kamlager-Dove
Arrington	Ellzey	Kaptur
Auchincloss	Emmer	Kean
Babin	Escobar	Keating
Bacon	Espallat	Kelly (IL)
Baird	Estes	Kelly (MS)
Balderson	Evans (CO)	Kelly (PA)
Balint	Evans (PA)	Kennedy (NY)
Barr	Ezell	Kennedy (UT)
Barragán	Fallon	Khanna
Barrett	Fedorchak	Kiggans (VA)
Baumgartner	Feenstra	Kiley (CA)
Bean (FL)	Fields	Kim
Begich	Figures	Knott
Bell	Fine	Krishnamoorthi
Bentz	Finstad	Kustoff
Bera	Fischbach	LaHood
Bergman	Fitzgerald	LaLota
Beyer	Fitzpatrick	LaMalfa
Bice	Fleischmann	Landsman
Biggs (AZ)	Fletcher	Langworthy
Biggs (SC)	Flood	Larsen (WA)
Bishop	Fong	Larson (CT)
Boebert	Foster	Latimer
Bonamici	Foushee	Latta
Bost	Fox	Lawler
Boyle (PA)	Frankel, Lois	Lee (FL)
Bresnahan	Franklin, Scott	Lee (NV)
Brown	Friedman	Lee (PA)
Brownley	Frost	Leger Fernandez
Buchanan	Fry	Letlow
Budzinski	Fulcher	Levin
Burchett	Garamendi	Liccardo
Burlison	Garbarino	Lieu
Bynum	Garcia (CA)	Lofgren
Calvert	Garcia (IL)	Loudermilk
Cammack	Garcia (TX)	Lucas
Carbajal	Gill (TX)	Luna
Carey	Gillen	Luttrell
Carson	Jimenez	Lynch
Carter (GA)	Golden (ME)	Mace
Carter (LA)	Goldman (NY)	Mackenzie
Carter (TX)	Goldman (TX)	Magaziner
Casar	Gomez	Malliotakis
Case	Gonzales, Tony	Maloy
Casten	Gonzalez, V.	Mann
Castor (FL)	Gooden	Mannion
Castro (TX)	Goodlander	Massie
Cherfilus-	Gosar	Mast
McCormick	Gottheimer	Matsui
Chu	Graves	McBath
Ciscomani	Gray	McBride
Cisneros	Green (TN)	McCaul
Clark (MA)	Green, Al (TX)	McClain
Clarke (NY)	Griffith	McClain Delaney
Cleaver	Grothman	McClellan
Cline	Guest	McClintock
Cloud	Guthrie	McCollum
Clyburn	Hageman	McCormick
Clyde	Hamadeh (AZ)	McDonald Rivet
Cohen	Harder (CA)	McDowell
Cole	Haridopolos	McGarvey
Collins	Harrigan	McGovern
Comer	Harris (MD)	McGuire
Conaway	Harris (NC)	McIver
Correa	Harshbarger	Meeks
Costa	Hayes	Menendez
Courtney	Hern (OK)	Meng
Craig	Higgins (LA)	Messmer
Crane	Hill (AR)	Meuser
Crank	Himes	Mfume
Crawford	Hinson	Miller (IL)
Crenshaw	Horsford	Miller (OH)
Crockett	Houchin	Miller (WV)
Crow	Houlahan	Miller-Meeks
Cuellar	Hoyle (OR)	Mills
Davids (KS)	Hudson	Min
Davidson	Huffman	Moolenaar
Davis (IL)	Huizenga	Moore (AL)
Davis (NC)	Hunt	Moore (NC)
De La Cruz	Hurd (CO)	Moore (UT)
Dean (PA)	Issa	Moore (WI)
DeGette	Ivey	Moore (WV)
DeLauro	Jack	Moran
DelBene	Jackson (TX)	Morelle
Deluzio	Jacobs	Morrison
DeSaulnier	James	Moskowitz
DesJarlais	Jayapal	Moulton
Dexter	Jeffries	Mrvan