

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### FALLEN SERVICEMEMBERS RELIGIOUS HERITAGE RESTORATION ACT

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2701) to direct the American Battle Monuments Commission to establish a program to identify American-Jewish servicemembers buried in United States military cemeteries overseas under markers that incorrectly represent their religion and heritage, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2701

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

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Fallen Servicemembers Religious Heritage Restoration Act".

#### SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) An estimated 900 American-Jewish servicemembers of the Armed Forces, killed in World War I and World War II and buried overseas in United States military cemeteries were, for various reasons, mistakenly buried under Latin Crosses. In most instances, those mistakes were made inadvertently.

(2) In 2022, more than 2,000,000 people visited the United States World War I and World War II cemeteries in foreign countries.

(3) American-Jewish servicemembers played a vital role in the Allied victories in World War I and World War II.

(4) American-Jewish servicemembers who fought and died for the United States must have their heritage properly recognized and honored.

(5) The United States Government has a solemn responsibility to ensure that every American servicemember killed in action and buried overseas is properly honored.

(6) The work of properly identifying American-Jewish servicemembers buried overseas is vital and integral to the responsibility of the American Battle Monuments Commission to ensure that past mistakes in honoring those servicemembers who died in the line of duty are corrected.

#### SEC. 3. FALLEN SERVICEMEMBERS RELIGIOUS HERITAGE RESTORATION PROGRAM.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The American Battle Monuments Commission shall establish a program to identify covered members and to contact survivors and descendants of such covered members. Such program shall be known as the "Fallen Servicemembers Religious Heritage Restoration Program".

(b) DURATION.—The Commission shall carry out the Fallen Servicemembers Religious Heritage Restoration Program during the first five fiscal years that begin after the date of the enactment of this Act.

#### (c) CONTRACTS.—

(1) AUTHORITY.—During each fiscal year described in subsection (b), the Commission shall seek to enter into a contract with a nonprofit organization under which such nonprofit organization shall carry out the purpose described in subsection (a).

(2) TERM; AMOUNT.—Each contract under this subsection shall be for one year and in the amount of \$500,000 to the nonprofit organization.

(3) PRIORITY.—In awarding a contract under this subsection, the Commission shall give priority to a nonprofit organization that has demonstrated capability and expertise in carrying out the purpose described in subsection (a).

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term "covered member" means a deceased member of the Armed Forces who was Jewish and buried—

(A) in a United States military cemetery located outside the United States; and

(B) under a marker that indicates such member was not Jewish.

(2) The term "nonprofit organization" means an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of such Code.

#### SEC. 4. EXTENSION OF CERTAIN LIMITS ON PAYMENTS OF PENSION.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) and the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 2701.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2701, as amended, offered by Representative WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

This bill would propel VA to identify and correct the gravestones of fallen American-Jewish servicemembers who were killed in World War I and World War II.

An estimated 900 American-Jewish servicemembers were mistakenly buried under a Latin cross headstone at overseas U.S. veterans cemeteries. This bill would seek to right this wrong by creating the Fallen Servicemembers Religious Heritage Restoration Program. It would direct the ABMC, which maintains our cemeteries overseas, to contract with nonprofit organizations to identify these servicemembers and correct this to properly honor them.

Since the Revolutionary War, Jewish Americans have fought to defend our Nation's freedoms. Madam Speaker, it should go without saying that they deserve to be honored properly with the dignity that they have earned.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, H.R. 2701, as amended, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2701, the Fallen Servicemembers

Religious Heritage Restoration Act, as amended. I thank my good friend and colleague Representative DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ for introducing this bill.

Madam Speaker, oftentimes veterans who were buried overseas during World Wars I and II were put to rest on foreign soil without the full picture of who they were as people. In life, these servicemen and -women showed courage, honor, respect, dignity, and sacrifice. In death, some have been unfortunately misrepresented.

Not because of malice, but more often circumstances of time, space, and uncertainty, roughly 900 American-Jewish servicemembers were buried under a Latin cross that does not accurately reflect their religious heritage.

The Fallen Servicemembers Religious Heritage Restoration Act seeks to correct this oversight. It formalizes a program with the American Battle Monuments Commission to identify and establish contact with descendants of those fallen servicemembers who were mistakenly buried under the Latin cross and works in partnership with a nonprofit organization to obtain the grave marker that accurately represents their religious heritage and replace the inaccurate headstone.

Acts like this provide a structure to identify our veterans not merely as markers in cemeteries, but as whole humans, with their belief in something greater than even their service—their creator.

I am thankful to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) for championing this effort and for ensuring we are accurately capturing the history and dignity of those who served overseas in some of our most trying conflicts.

Far too often, we think of Arlington National Cemetery or maybe your local veterans cemetery and don't even realize that we have servicemembers buried overseas in plots around the world.

The work of the American Battle Monuments Commission is broad, reaching across 26 permanent American military cemeteries, over 30 memorials, monuments, and markers, in 17 different countries. I encourage all those who have the opportunity to do so to visit one of these cemeteries.

If you find yourself overseas, do an internet search and see if you can stop by an ABMC location. You will be awed and humbled by the emotional sight of seeing the true cost of freedom and sacrifice. I can assure you, you will find a passionate group of caretakers, educators, historians, and advocates who take such care to keep these lands sacred.

It is people like this who continually work to ensure those buried far from home are done so in dignity and with their true heritage represented. Their efforts and the efforts of those who have worked so hard to bring this program and legislation to this point assure that we, as a nation, with our

overseas partners, will work continuously for accurate representation and history for our veteran community.

Madam Speaker, I support this legislation and urge my colleagues to do the same, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ), my very good friend and author of H.R. 2701. She serves as ranking member on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, I thank the ranking member for his indulgence in yielding time to speak in support of my bill, the Fallen Servicemembers Religious Heritage Restoration Act. I thank Chairman BOST for advancing this legislation through his committee and for his indulgence in reordering its consideration on the floor so that I could make it here to actually speak on the bill. I very much appreciate it.

My bill, as you have heard, is straightforward and bipartisan. It rights a wrong that occurred in some cases by accident where a Jewish servicemember was laid to rest under a headstone misidentifying their religion.

It ensures the United States properly honors the religion and heritage of the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for our Nation. It does so by creating a program with the American Battle Monuments Commission to identify American-Jewish servicemembers buried in U.S. military cemeteries in ABMC purview under headstones that incorrectly represent their religion and heritage.

World War I and World War II were brutal and devastating, leading to challenges of ensuring every fallen American servicemember received the honor and respect of a proper burial.

From World War II alone, it is estimated that 600 American-Jewish servicemembers killed in action remain improperly buried under Latin crosses rather than Stars of David. While some of these improper burials were due to clerical errors, we have heard many stories of Jewish war heroes not wanting to display their faith on their dog tags while fighting against the anti-Semitic and genocidal Nazi regime.

Sadly, this issue is not limited to World War II.

This past spring, I had the honor of participating in a ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery to properly honor two World War I fallen American-Jewish servicemembers, Private David Moser and Private First Class Adolph Hanf. Both were laid to rest for over 100 years under a headstone etched with a Latin cross.

In a moving ceremony sponsored by Private Moser's family, these American heroes' headstones were replaced,

properly honoring their heritage after all these years. It was so moving to honor the tremendous sacrifices Jewish Americans paid in service to our Nation, fighting for the same rights and freedoms every American cherishes.

At a moment when anti-Semitism is at record highs, this moment of healing was incredibly special. Knowing that there are hundreds of additional fallen Jewish servicemembers who deserve the same recognition as Private Moser and Private First Class Hanf makes this bill all the more important.

□ 1730

I have been honored by all the wide-ranging organizational support for the bill and for my colleagues who have partnered with me on this mission.

Madam Speaker, I thank Congressman MAX MILLER for being my co-lead and Senators MORAN and ROSEN for championing this bill in the Senate.

As the ranking member of Appropriations' Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Subcommittee, which provides funding for the ABMC, I am acutely aware that the programs that Congress authorizes require funding to ensure proper implementation.

In both fiscal year 2026 House and Senate MILCON-VA appropriations bills, we secured \$500,000 to carry out this mission with ABMC, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure that it stays in the bill as we continue consideration during conference negotiations.

It is critical that Jewish Americans who served our Nation in uniform and paid the ultimate price are able to be laid to rest honoring their religious heritage. Unfortunately, due to the fog of war, hundreds of Jewish servicemembers were denied that last opportunity.

This bill is an important step to allow for the research necessary to correct these errors and ensure there are resources for that work. This will make it possible for these brave Jewish servicemembers' descendants to know that their loved one's military service, life, and religious heritage are properly honored.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support passage of H.R. 2701 so we can properly honor our fallen Jewish-American servicemembers.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 2701, the Fallen Servicemembers Religious Heritage Restoration Act, as amended.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST)

that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2701, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### DELIVERING DIGITALLY TO OUR VETERANS ACT OF 2025

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3481) to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for electronic communication relating to educational assistance benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3481

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

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

*This Act may be cited as the "Delivering Digitally to Our Veterans Act of 2025".*

#### SEC. 2. IMPROVEMENT TO CERTAIN OUTREACH UNDER SOLID START PROGRAM OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

*Section 6320(b) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—*

*(1) in paragraph (1)(B)—*

*(A) by striking "calling" and inserting "communicating with"; and*

*(B) by inserting "through the use of tailored lines of communication, including mailings, text messaging, virtual chatting, and other electronic forms of messaging" after "Armed Forces"; and*

*(2) in paragraph (2), by striking "tailored mailings" and inserting "tailored lines of communication, including mailings, text messaging, virtual chatting, and other electronic forms of messaging,".*

#### SEC. 3. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS USE OF TAILORED LINES OF COMMUNICATION FOR CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS.

*Section 3680 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:*

*"(i)(1) The Secretary shall provide a mechanism by which an eligible veteran or eligible person may use tailored lines of communication to send and receive correspondence with the Department of Veterans related to entitlement to and use of educational assistance benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary. The Secretary shall ensure that an eligible veteran or eligible person is provided with an opportunity to opt into sending and receiving such correspondence using such lines of communication rather than by mail.*

*"(2) The Secretary shall provide to eligible veterans and eligible persons who are enrolled in a course or program of education or training notice of the opportunity to opt in to sending and receiving correspondence using tailored lines of communication pursuant to paragraph (1).*

*"(3) In this subsection, the term 'tailored lines of communication' includes mailings, text messaging, virtual chatting, and other electronic forms of messaging."*

#### SEC. 4. EXTENSION OF CERTAIN LIMITS ON PAYMENTS OF PENSION.

*Section 5503(d)(7) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking "November 30, 2031" and inserting "January 31, 2033".*