

and unveiled his big plan. On day 38, he came with the Democrats' first plan to get the American people out of this government shutdown.

Why would he wait 38 days? Why would he wait?

If you were serious about a bipartisan solution to lower the cost of healthcare for the American people, I don't believe you would sit idle for 38 days before making an offer.

I have shared the pain the shutdown has inflicted upon Iowans, but it bears repeating. I have families calling my office asking where they can get food. Our food banks are overrun as Thanksgiving is just a few weeks away.

I want to give you an example that was reported by the person behind this constituent in the checkout line. One of my constituents, while grocery shopping in Walmart in Marion, IA, was left with no groceries for her family when she found out at the cash register that her food stamps were not on her debit card. That kind of uncertainty has real-world impacts.

The realization brought this constituent to tears, it was reported to me. And why wouldn't you go into tears?

Let's just take a moment to think about how you would feel coming home emptyhanded from the grocery store and the stress it inflicts on families. Perhaps your kids are crying because they are hungry.

Young farmers can't get their loan money from the Department of Agriculture during this government shutdown. These young farmers are already in an ag economy that is underwater. How are they going to keep their business going?

Then, I don't know what percentage of the American public flies every day, but it is significant that flights are being canceled left and right because air traffic controllers aren't being paid. That means people who are trying to get to a sick family member or attend a sister's wedding may not make it on time.

Law enforcement, including our own Capitol Police whom we rub shoulders with every day here, are working overtime and not being paid.

The entire Federal workforce is not being paid—3 million people who have families and bills to pay.

Those are just four or five examples. Unfortunately, the list could go on.

I often say Washington, DC, right where we are standing now—this town and the people who are in it—live and work in an island surrounded by reality.

I have been begging Leader SCHUMER to give just five Democrats the go-ahead to join us in a commonsense clean funding bill.

Let me remind you that Democrats voted for this same structure of a clean funding resolution at least 13 times during the 4 years of President Biden. So I would ask them: What is wrong with voting for a clean funding resolution during this year and during this shutdown or to prevent this shutdown?

The answer is, The American people elected a new President, and that President is not a Democrat. Well, elections have consequences. In a democratic republic, the will of the people is exercised by voters, and congressional leaders must respect that and live with the consequences.

It is past time the Democrat leaders cut loose their Members who want to work in a bipartisan way.

Iowans at my town meetings want more bipartisanship out of Washington. They are cynical that all we do is fight and nothing ever gets done. I tried to educate them on how it is not as bad as what they see on TV, and Senators really do want to legislate and serve the American people.

So let's roll up our sleeves and get the job done. The American people deserve better.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). The Senator from Kansas.

VETERANS' COMPENSATION COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 2025

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I have introduced legislation, as is introduced on an annual basis. We have done so again this year to make certain that the rate of disability compensation and other financial benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs for veterans and military survivors keeps pace with the rate of inflation.

The annual Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2025 will increase certain VA benefits by 2.8 percent, including disability compensation, clothing allowances, and dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children. That is to better reflect the changes in the everyday cost of living and align with the annual benefit increase by the Social Security Administration.

This adjustment allows veterans and their families to have the peace of mind of knowing that their VA benefits will keep up with our Nation's economy and that the VA can continue delivering support for those who have served while alleviating the stress of financial uncertainty due to circumstances that are out of their control.

In addition to the Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act, the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs has also reported out Senator ROSEN's—the Senator from Nevada—Lactation Spaces for Veteran Moms Act, which would make certain that each VA medical center has an appropriate space for veteran moms to pump or to breastfeed.

Women veterans are the fastest growing patient demographic, and we must make certain that VA facilities can meet their needs.

Mr. President, I, therefore, ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 202, S. 2392.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2392) to increase, effective as of December 1, 2025, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Veterans Affairs.

Mr. MORAN. I ask unanimous consent, then, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 2392) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 2392

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. INCREASE IN RATES OF DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION.

(a) RATE ADJUSTMENT.—Effective on December 1, 2025, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall increase, in accordance with subsection (c), the dollar amounts in effect on November 30, 2025, for the payment of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation under the provisions specified in subsection (b).

(b) AMOUNTS TO BE INCREASED.—The dollar amounts to be increased pursuant to subsection (a) are the following:

(1) WARTIME DISABILITY COMPENSATION.—Each of the dollar amounts under section 1114 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR DEPENDENTS.—Each of the dollar amounts under section 1115(1) of such title.

(3) CLOTHING ALLOWANCE.—The dollar amount under section 1162 of such title.

(4) DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION TO SURVIVING SPOUSE.—Each of the dollar amounts under subsections (a) through (d) of section 1311 of such title.

(5) DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION TO CHILDREN.—Each of the dollar amounts under sections 1313(a) and 1314 of such title.

(c) DETERMINATION OF INCREASE.—Each dollar amount described in subsection (b) shall be increased by the same percentage as the percentage by which benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) are increased effective December 1, 2025, as a result of a determination under section 215(i) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)).

(d) SPECIAL RULE.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may adjust administratively, consistent with the increases made under subsection (a), the rates of disability compensation payable to persons under section 10 of Public Law 85-857 (72 Stat. 1263) who have not received compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 3. PUBLICATION OF ADJUSTED RATES.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish in the Federal Register the amounts specified in section 2(b), as increased under that section, not later than the date on which the matters specified in section 215(i)(2)(D) of the Social Security Act (42

U.S.C. 415(i)(2)(D)) are required to be published by reason of a determination made under section 215(i) of such Act during fiscal year 2026.

LACTATION SPACES FOR VETERAN MOMS ACT

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 200, S. 778.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 778) to amend title 38, United States Code, to require a lactation space in each medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic, as follows:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Lactation Spaces for Veteran Moms Act".

SEC. 2. LACTATION SPACES IN MEDICAL CENTERS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Subchapter II of chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§ 1720M. Lactation spaces in medical centers of the Department

"(a) LACTATION SPACE REQUIRED.—The Secretary shall ensure that each medical center of the Department contains a lactation space.

"(b) NO UNAUTHORIZED ENTRY.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize an individual to enter a medical center of the Department or portion thereof that the individual is not otherwise authorized to enter.

"(c) LACTATION SPACE DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'lactation space' means a hygienic place, other than a bathroom, that—

- "(1) is shielded from view;*
- "(2) is free from intrusion;*
- "(3) is accessible to disabled individuals (including such individuals who use wheelchairs);*
- "(4) contains a chair and a working surface;*
- "(5) is easy to locate;*
- "(6) is clearly identified with signage; and*
- "(7) is available for use by women veterans and members of the public to express breast milk."*

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item related to section 1720L the following new item:

"1720M. Lactation spaces in medical centers of the Department."

(c) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that—

(1) not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, not fewer than 80 percent of medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs are in compliance with section 1720M of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a); and

(2) not later than three years after such date of enactment, all medical centers of the Department are in compliance with such section.

(d) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the progress of the Secretary in meeting the requirements under section 1720M of title

38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), including—

(A) a list of which medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs currently have a lactation space;

(B) a list of which medical centers of the Department do not have a lactation space; and

(C) for each medical center listed under subparagraph (B), a description of actions the Department has taken to design and plan a lactation space and a timeline for such lactation space to be fully functional and open for use within the time periods specified under subsection (c).

(2) TERMINATION.—The Secretary is not required to submit a report under paragraph (1) on or after the date on which the Secretary confirms in a report submitted under such paragraph that each medical center of the Department contains a lactation space.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The bill (S. 778), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS AND EXTENSIONS ACT, 2026—Motion to Proceed

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The Marine Corps Senator from Connecticut, welcome.

RECOGNIZING THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am honored and proud to be here today with the Presiding Officer in the Chair, a veteran—albeit of the Navy, not the Marine Corps—and to be accompanied by a fellow marine, Senator SULLIVAN, to whom I will yield shortly.

I am especially honored to pay tribute to one of the Nation's most storied and steadfast institutions in the history—the entire history—of our Nation, the U.S. Marine Corps, which marks its 250th anniversary on Monday.

As legend and history have it, 250 years ago, in the back room of Tun Tavern in Philadelphia, a new fighting force was born, a force of grit, determination, and unshakable loyalty. Since that day in 1775, marines have answered every call, without any exception, with courage and conviction, not because it was easy but because it was right.

The motto of the Marine Corps, "Semper Fidelis"—"Always Faithful"—is more than just a phrase; it is a lifelong commitment. As we know, there are no former marines, and there are no ex-marines. It is a lifelong com-

mitment and identity. "Semper Fidelis" speaks to the bond between marines, to the cause they serve, and to the Nation that they protect. That bond by no means ends with Active Duty. It continues in communities across America where marines continue to serve, living out the values of America as teachers, first responders, public servants, and leaders.

The Marine Corps has fought in every American conflict from the Revolutionary War to the War on Terror. On the beaches of Iwo Jima, in the frozen mountains of Korea, in the jungles of Vietnam, and in the sands of Fallujah, marines have stood their ground. They have led from the front, often at great personal cost, with no expectation of glory.

Telling the story of America is impossible without telling the story of the U.S. Marine Corps. Their sacrifices have safeguarded our freedom. Their discipline has inspired generations. Their traditions of toughness, honor, and duty have stood the test of time. Historic battles exemplify the Marine Corps' unyielding commitment to courage, sacrifice, and duty, and they define the very character of our military: Derna, Chapultepec, First Bull Run, Belleau Wood, Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Peleliu, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, the Chosin Reservoir, Khe Sanh, Hue, the liberation of Kuwait, Fallujah, and Helmand Province.

Marines have not only fought our wars, they have also responded to humanitarian crises, assisted in natural disasters, and stood sentry in times of peace. They are not just warfighters; they are ambassadors of American resolve and resilience. This milestone of 250 years is an opportunity to reflect, to honor, and to recommit.

We honor the thousands of marines who never made it home, who gave their last full measure of devotion, as the saying goes. We honor the Gold Star families who carry their memory every single day. We honor the wounded in body and some in spirit whose lives are forever shaped by their service. We honor every marine, past and present, who has earned the title with sweat, sacrifice, and a fierce sense of purpose.

Let me acknowledge, as well, the families who stand behind every marine: spouses, children, parents. They serve quietly, often without any recognition, but always with deep devotion. Their strength sustains the Corps, those families, those friends, those loved ones. Their sacrifices, too, must be honored.

The 250th anniversary is not only a celebration; it is a solemn reminder we make to all who wear the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor that we will never forget their service and that we will always fight to give them the support, care, and respect they have earned.

This milestone is a chance to educate future generations about what it means to serve and why the Marine Corps' legacy matters not just in history books but in the daily defense of