

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 572) honoring the service and sacrifice of United States Army Sergeant William Nathaniel Howard and United States Army Sergeant Edgar Brian Torres-Tovar, who were killed in action in Palmyra, Syria, in a targeted assault against United States servicemembers on December 13, 2025.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. THUNE. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 572) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS RELIEF ACT

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 4323, which was received from the House.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4323) to provide for the vacating of certain convictions and expungement of certain arrests of victims of human trafficking.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. THUNE. I ask unanimous consent 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 (H.R. 4323) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

VETERANS ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT OF 2025

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 276, S. 1383.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1383) to establish the Veterans Accessibility Committee on Equal Access, 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, 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 "Veterans Accessibility Advisory Committee Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EQUAL ACCESS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

(1) *IN GENERAL.*—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish within the Department of Veterans Affairs an advisory committee on matters relating to accessibility of the Department for individuals with disabilities.

(2) *DESIGNATION.*—The advisory committee established by paragraph (1) shall be known as the "Veterans Advisory Committee on Equal Access" (in this section the "Advisory Committee").

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) *VOTING MEMBERS.*—The Advisory Committee shall be composed of 15 voting members, appointed by the Secretary. In appointing such members, the Secretary shall ensure the following:

(A) Four are veterans with disabilities, including mobility impairment, hearing, visual, and mental or cognitive disabilities.

(B) Four are experts on issues described in subsection (f)(1)(A) or the provisions of law set forth under subsection (f)(1)(B).

(C) Two are employees of the Department, one from the Section 508 Office and one from the Architectural Accessibility Program, or successor programs or offices, who oversee the compliance of the Department with Federal accessibility laws.

(D) Five are representatives nominated by national veterans service organizations that advocate for veterans with physical, sensory, mental, or cognitive disabilities.

(2) *EX OFFICIO MEMBERS.*—The Advisory Committee shall also include four ex officio members (or their designees):

(A) The Under Secretary for Health.

(B) The Under Secretary for Benefits.

(C) The Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs.

(D) The chairperson of the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (known as the "Access Board").

(3) *QUALIFICATIONS.*—In selecting members under paragraph (1), in addition to any qualifications described in such paragraph, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that members are selected based on their ability to support the success of the Advisory Committee.

(c) TERMS; VACANCIES.—

(1) *TERMS.*—A member of the Advisory Committee shall be appointed for a term of two years. The Secretary may reappoint members to the Advisory Committee for such additional two-year terms as the Secretary determines appropriate.

(2) *VACANCIES.*—The Secretary shall fill a vacancy in the Advisory Committee in the same manner as the original appointment not later than 180 days after such vacancy occurs.

(d) MEETINGS.—

(1) *FREQUENCY.*—The Advisory Committee shall meet not less frequently than twice each year.

(2) *SUBCOMMITTEES.*—The Advisory Committee may form subcommittees, which shall meet as often as required.

(3) *QUORUM.*—A majority of the members of the Advisory Committee shall constitute a quorum.

(e) *CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON.*—The Secretary shall select a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson from among the members of the Advisory Committee. If the position of Chairperson or Vice Chairperson becomes vacant, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall select a new Chairperson or Vice Chairperson, as the case may be, not later than 30 days after the date on which the position became vacant.

(f) DUTIES.—

(1) *REQUIREMENT TO CONSULT AND SEEK ADVICE.*—On a regular basis, the Secretary shall consult with and seek the advice of the Advisory Committee—

(A) on improving the accessibility of the Department for individuals with disabilities, including improving—

(i) the accessibility of information of the Department, including electronic information;

(ii) the accessibility of the services and benefits furnished by the Department;

(iii) the accessibility in facilities or on property of the Department;

(iv) the accessibility of facilities of non-Department benefits services providers or health care providers furnishing care or services under programs administered by the Department, including under the Veterans Community Care Program under section 1703 of title 38, United States Code; and

(v) the acquisition process of the Department to ensure that products and services, including information technology and information and communication technology (as defined in the standards issued by the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board pursuant to section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794d)), are accessible when purchased; and

(B) for ensuring the compliance of the Department with provisions of law, where applicable, relating to disability and accessibility, including—

(i) the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12184 et seq.);

(ii) sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 791, 794, and 794d);

(iii) the Plain Writing Act of 2010 (5 U.S.C. 301 note);

(iv) the 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 note);

(v) the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (Public Law 90-480); and

(vi) such other provisions of Federal law as may be that ensure equal access to Federal properties and facilities, benefits, or services for individuals with disabilities.

(2) *PROVISION OF ADVICE.*—In providing advice to the Secretary, the Advisory Committee shall, focusing on the areas of greatest need for the Department—

(A) assess the disability access needs of veterans, the public, and Department employees for full access to the Department's information, services, and benefits by reviewing relevant information, such as filed complaints by people with disabilities or physical assessments of the Department's properties and facilities;

(B) provide assessments of accessibility at the Department and the compliance of the Department with applicable provisions of law relating to disability and accessibility; and

(C) provide advice on improving accessibility at the Department, including the accessibility of all—

(i) communications, including internal and public facing;

(ii) services and benefits; and

(iii) facilities.

(3) REPORTS.—

(A) *REPORTS TO THE SECRETARY.*—Not later than two years after the date of the first meeting of the Advisory Committee, and not less frequently than once every two years thereafter, the Advisory Committee shall submit to the Secretary a report that, focusing on areas of greatest need for the Department—

(i) identifies and assesses access barriers affecting veterans, the public, and employees of the Department;

(ii) determines the extent to which the programs and activities of the Department address the barriers identified in clause (i), including compliance of the Department with provisions of law relating to accessibility law and reporting;

(iii) provides recommendations and access priorities to improve the accessibility of the Department's services, benefits, information, technology, and facilities;

(iv) provides a description of access improvements and assesses the Department's implementation of recommendations from previous reports of the Advisory Committee, including any unmet recommendations that remain necessary for improving accessibility for the Department; and

(v) provides any recommendations for legislation, administrative action, or other actions that the Advisory Committee determines appropriate.

(B) REPORTS TO CONGRESS AND FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the receipt of a report required under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a copy of such report and any comments and recommendations of the Secretary concerning such report that the Secretary determines appropriate.

(ii) AVAILABILITY TO THE PUBLIC.—The Secretary shall publish on a publicly accessible website of the Department such report and such comments and recommendations as may have been submitted along with such report.

(iii) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—In this subparagraph, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(I) the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives;

(II) the Special Committee on Aging of the Senate; and

(III) the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives.

(g) ADVISORY COMMITTEE PERSONNEL AND RESOURCE MATTERS.—

(1) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—(A) A member of the Advisory Committee who is not an officer or employee of the Federal Government shall not be compensated for the performance of the duties of the Advisory Committee.

(B) Members of the Advisory Committee who are officers or employees of the Federal Government shall not receive additional compensation beyond travel for the performance of the duties of the Advisory Committee.

(2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the Advisory Committee shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services for the Advisory Committee.

(3) RESOURCES.—The Secretary shall ensure that such personnel, funding, and other resources are made available to the Advisory Committee as the Secretary determines appropriate to carry out the duties of the Advisory Committee.

(4) INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall furnish to the Advisory Committee such information as the Advisory Committee may request from the Secretary, subject to applicable provisions of law.

(h) TERMINATION OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—The Advisory Committee shall terminate on the date that is 10 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

Mr. THUNE. Madam 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. 1383), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

GOLD STAR AND SURVIVING SPOUSE CAREER SERVICES ACT

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous

consent that the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 1204 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1204) to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain spouses eligible for services under the disabled veterans’ outreach program, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent 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. 1204) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 1204

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 “Gold Star and Surviving Spouse Career Services Act”.

SEC. 2. ELIGIBILITY OF SPOUSES FOR SERVICES UNDER THE DISABLED VETERANS’ OUTREACH PROGRAM.

Section 4103A of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting “and eligible persons” after “eligible veterans”; and

(ii) in subparagraph (C), by inserting “, and eligible persons,” after “Other eligible veterans”;

(B) in paragraph (2), by inserting “and eligible persons” after “veterans” each place it appears; and

(C) in paragraph (3)—

(i) by inserting “or eligible person” after “veteran” each place it appears; and

(ii) by inserting “or eligible person’s” after “veteran’s”;

(2) in subsection (d)(1)—

(A) by inserting “and eligible persons” after “eligible veterans” each place it appears; and

(B) by striking “non-veteran-related”; and

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

“(e) ELIGIBLE PERSON DEFINED.—In this section, the term ‘eligible person’ means—

“(1) any spouse described in section 4101(5) of this title; or

“(2) the spouse of any person who died while a member of the Armed Forces.”.

FOCUSED ASSISTANCE AND SKILLS TRAINING FOR VETERANS’ EMPLOYMENT AND TRANSITION SUCCESS ACT

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 4446 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4446) to amend title 38, United States Code, to modify the conditions under which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs is required to redevelop the individualized vocational rehabilitation plan for a veteran, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent 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 (H.R. 4446) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

VA BUDGET SHORTFALL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1823 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1823) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Comptroller General of the United States to report on certain funding shortfalls in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. THUNE. I further ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (H.R. 1823) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

VETPAC ACT OF 2025

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 279, S. 787.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 787) to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a commission to review operations at the Veterans Health Administration and submit to Congress reports with respect to that review, 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 with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic, as follows: