

understand this project is critical for the veterans of St. Louis and will expand capacity through the addition of a new bed tower, a clinical building expansion, and the construction of several administrative and infrastructure updates.

I will continue to strongly support investments in VA's infrastructure. While this project represents only a small fraction of the VA's overall infrastructure investment needs, this is an important project, and I am glad to support it today.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation to authorize a critical project for veterans, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing S. 2393, the Fiscal Year 2025 Veterans Affairs Major Medical Facility Authorization Act, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 2393.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

VETERANS' TRANSITION TO TRUCKING ACT OF 2025

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2954) to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to approve multi-State apprenticeship programs for purposes of veterans educational assistance, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2954

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' Transition to Trucking Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION FOR SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO APPROVE MULTI-STATE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY COMMERCIAL TRUCK DRIVING SCHOOLS FOR PURPOSES OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

Section 3672(c)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraph (B) as subparagraph (C);

(2) in subparagraph (A), in the matter before clause (i), by striking "The State" and inserting "Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the State"; and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (A) the following new subparagraph (B):

"(B) The Secretary may act in the role of a State approving agency for purposes of approval of a multi-State apprenticeship program provided by a commercial truck driving school."

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 2954, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2954, as amended, offered by my colleagues, the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. PAPPAS) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mrs. KIGGANS).

This bill, as amended, would allow the VA to approve the commercial driver's license apprenticeship program that operates in more than one State.

This bill would cut the red tape and stop an interstate company from having to seek approval in every State they operate in.

This bill would also allow more veterans to pursue careers in the trucking industry.

I come from a trucking family. As a former driver and a manager and operator of the family trucking business, I know how important it is to have qualified drivers. Trust me, I know.

The American Trucking Institute publishes a report that shows there is a shortage of 82,000 drivers and an anticipated shortage of 160,000 drivers by 2031. This bill would allow veterans to meet the demand by using their education benefits through the VA apprenticeship programs.

I am supportive of the intent of this bill as we must ensure that veterans find meaningful employment, while meeting the demand of an important industry in our Nation's economy. My committee will continue to seek ways to help create meaningful employment for veterans and streamlining veterans' programs.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 2954, as amend-

ed, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2954, the Veterans' Transition to Trucking Act.

The first year of a servicemember's transition to civilian life is often one of the most stressful. This period is marked by huge shifts in responsibilities, new family duties and new costs, like housing, food, and childcare. Veterans also must navigate finding employment which may involve translating military experience into something civilian employers will understand.

The Veterans' Transition to Trucking Act proposes to improve hiring through expediting training programs. By coordinating approvals for training institutions, more veterans can find employment faster.

Representative PAPPAS, a longtime member of our committee, authored this legislation. Trucking is the primary means for moving goods through his State. In New Hampshire, it is not uncommon to see a load of timber or even heating oil moving on the road. His constituents depend on this industry, and veterans seek employment in trucking.

While trucking isn't the fit for all veterans, I recognize that veterans who seek a role in the industry shouldn't have to fight to find a training institution.

With the price of goods and now fuel skyrocketing in the Trump economy, the last thing we should be doing is making it harder for veterans to find employment in logistics and shipping.

I thank Representative PAPPAS for serving as the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity where he is a strong voice for veteran employment opportunities.

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

Mr. BOST. I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. PAPPAS), my good friend and the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity and the author of this legislation.

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for yielding, and I thank the chairman for his leadership and his endorsement of this common-sense legislation, the Veterans' Transition to Trucking Act, which is a bipartisan bill I introduced last year.

I have met too many veterans who struggle to find careers that are aligned with their goals and their skills when their military service ends.

We know that we all owe it to our heroes to do everything we can to support their transition to civilian life, including helping them find rewarding jobs and financial security.

Trucking is an essential sector of our economy, and they continue to hire more drivers.

Through the apprenticeship programs offered by motor carriers, veterans can use GI Bill education benefits to launch a career in trucking.

Right now, a patchwork of State laws make it difficult for the VA to approve certain trucking apprenticeships.

Some companies opt out of offering apprenticeships due to the bureaucratic hurdles of obtaining approval from more than 20 different State approving agencies.

This legislation would allow interstate commercial carriers to obtain a single VA approval for all of their apprenticeships, simplifying program administration for motor carriers and increasing the number of opportunities that are available to veterans.

Cutting red tape so trucking companies can employ veterans and help our economy is just common sense.

This legislation is bipartisan and also has the support of the Disabled American Veterans and the American Trucking Association.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I couldn't resist saying it, but this legislation will help our veterans keep on trucking. I know the chairman gets the gist of that.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 2954, the Veterans' Transition to Trucking Act, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I encourage all Members to support this legislation. Let the veterans and the truckers roll.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2954, as amended.

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

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veteran Affairs to approve multi-State apprenticeship programs provided by commercial truck driving schools for purposes of Department of Veterans Affairs educational assistance programs, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1630

FISHER HOUSE AVAILABILITY ACT OF 2026

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3726) to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of

Veterans Affairs to make temporary lodging facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs available for certain TRICARE beneficiaries on a space-available basis, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3726

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 "Fisher House Availability Act of 2026".

SEC. 2. AVAILABILITY OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TEMPORARY LODGING TO CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS.

Section 1708 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking "in connection with" and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting "in accordance with this section.";

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by inserting "described in paragraph (1)" after "family of a veteran"; and

(ii) by inserting "such" after "accompany"; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

"(3) On a space-available basis, a covered beneficiary who must travel a significant distance to receive care or services at a Department or non-Department facility.

"(4) On a space-available basis, a member of the family of a covered beneficiary described in paragraph (3) and others who accompany such a covered beneficiary who is receiving care or services and provide the equivalent of familial support for such beneficiary when the covered beneficiary or the family member is traveling to receive care or services at a Department or non-Department facility.

"(5) On a space-available basis, a veteran and a member of the family of a veteran and others who must travel a significant distance for a member of the veteran's family to receive care or services at a Department or non-Department facility.

"(6) On a space available basis, a covered beneficiary and a member of the family of a covered beneficiary and others who must travel a significant distance for a member of the covered beneficiary's family to receive care or services at a Department or non-Department facility.";

(3) by striking subsection (c) and redesignating subsections (d) and (e) as subsections (c) and (d), respectively;

(4) in subsection (d), as so redesignated—

(A) in paragraph (2), by striking "subsection (d)" and inserting "subsection (c)";

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking "under subsection (b)(2)" and inserting "or a covered beneficiary under subsection (b)";

(C) in paragraph (4), by striking "and" after the semicolon;

(D) by redesignating paragraph (5) as paragraph (6); and

(E) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following new paragraph (5):

"(5) establishing criteria for providing access to temporary lodging facilities on a space-available basis under paragraphs (3) through (6) of subsection (b); and"; and

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

"(e) In this section:

"(1) The term 'covered beneficiary' means a member of the uniformed services performing active duty.

"(2) The term 'Fisher house' means a housing facility that—

"(A) is located at, or in proximity to, a Department medical facility;

"(B) is available for residential use on a temporary basis by patients of that facility and others described in subsection (b); and

"(C) is constructed by, and donated to the Secretary by, the Zachary and Elizabeth M. Fisher Armed Services Foundation or the Fisher House Foundation, Inc.".

SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF CERTAIN LIMITS ON PAYMENTS OF PENSION.

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

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 3726, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3726, the Fisher House Availability Act of 2026, offered by Representative Dr. MILLER-MEEKS.

The Fisher House Foundation has done great work for our military and veteran families by providing a place to stay while their loved one received medical care.

Helping to ease the emotional and financial burdens, this bill would further that mission by extending eligibility to servicemembers' families, allowing them to stay in these temporary VA lodging facilities.

Simply put, if these homes have space, our military families should be able to use them.

Dr. MILLER-MEEKS' bill would also improve coordination between VA and DOW, so that we can ensure our military families have the best quality of life.

This bill would also maximize the use of existing resources and help ensure veterans' families have access to safe and affordable lodging when they need it most.

This is a practical solution that makes better use of resources already available to support both those who have served our Nation and their families.

I thank my friend, our Health Subcommittee chairwoman, Dr. Miller-Meeks, for her work on expanding healthcare access.

Mr. Speaker, our servicemembers, veterans, and their families have sacrificed greatly on behalf of this country. I believe we should ensure they have the support and stability they have earned while receiving medical care. This bill answers the call.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 3726, as amended.

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