

including businesses in rural communities like my home district in central and eastern Montana, often lack the resources and information needed to facilitate technology adoption.

For example, according to a 2025 report from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 59 percent of small businesses in Montana have adopted AI into their operations. While this figure may seem significant, it pales in comparison to the near-universal adoption of AI that is seen with Fortune 500 companies. That is why I am proud to co-lead H.R. 5784, the AI-WISE Act, with my colleague, Representative SCHOLTEN.

The AI-WISE Act directs the Small Business Administration, the SBA, to establish educational resources on AI for small businesses through its online learning platform. In doing so, this legislation seeks to provide small businesses with the technical and practical knowledge needed to best navigate AI adoption.

The scope of this educational material will include resources for small businesses on how AI models work, how businesses can identify tasks that AI can effectively perform, and the best practices for coordinating with third-party providers and protecting data privacy.

Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, Representative SCHOLTEN, for co-leading this legislation with me. The AI-WISE Act will ensure small businesses have the information that they need to most effectively utilize AI to bolster their entrepreneurship.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in support of this legislation.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I commend Ms. SCHOLTEN and Mr. DOWNING for their dedication to our Nation's innovative small enterprises, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5784.

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

Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas. Madam Speaker, we cannot leave Main Street behind in the adoption of AI. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on 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 Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5784.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VETERANS LAW JUDGE EXPERIENCE ACT OF 2025

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 659) to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals to give priority to individuals with certain

professional experience in recommending such individuals to serve as members of the Board of Veterans' Appeals, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 659

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 Law Judge Experience Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. PRIORITY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH CERTAIN PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE IN APPOINTMENTS TO BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS.

Subsection (a) of section 7101A of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(3) In recommending individuals to the Secretary to serve as members of the Board, the Chairman shall give priority to individuals with three or more years of legal professional experience in areas that pertain to the laws administered by the Secretary."

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. 659.

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. 659.

This bill would require the chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals to prioritize people with at least 3 years of relevant experience working in veterans law when recommending new veteran law judges to the VA Secretary for positions at the VA.

□ 1620

This legislation does not alter the criteria the board currently uses to evaluate judges, and it does not restrict the board chairman from recommending other qualified candidates.

Madam Speaker, this bill would ensure that the best judges with vitally important firsthand experience are serving our veterans at the VA.

Veterans expect that those who are hearing their appeal or reviewing evidence in support of their appeal, have the skills, knowledge, and experience in veterans law to make sound decisions.

I support this commonsense legislation, and I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 659. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise to express my support for H.R. 659, the Veterans Law Judge Experience Act of 2025.

Madam Speaker, contrary to what the American public often thinks, sometimes in this body we actually do things that make sense.

That is very much the case with H.R. 659, the Veterans Law Judge Experience Act introduced by my friend and colleague, Representative JULIA BROWNLEY.

This bill is simple and straightforward.

It states that when recommending individuals to serve on the Board of Veterans' Appeals, priority should be given to those who have 3 or more years of experience in practicing veterans law.

The Veterans' Affairs Committee hears often about the complex nature of the disability compensation system at the Department of Veterans Affairs. That complexity, unfortunately, leads to mistakes and errors that cause our veterans' disability claims to be denied prematurely. Especially now at a time when we have seen that Secretary Collins has shifted the Department's focus from getting claims right to simply getting them fast, we are seeing higher rates of processing errors, higher denial rates, and consequently higher rates of appeals to the Board of Veterans' Appeals, the BVA.

In that context, it is imperative that the BVA has the staffing levels and experience levels to get things right for our veterans. I, along with everyone else, support efforts to ensure that veterans and beneficiaries are being served at every point of contact in VA by the best talent we can muster.

One way we can do that is by ensuring we have the right folks in the right roles. This legislation seeks to help that at BVA by focusing on hiring those with sufficient experience to best serve our veterans.

We can and should look to staff the Board of Veterans' Appeals with attorneys that have demonstrated expertise in this area, attorneys who are experienced and who can see beyond quotas and metrics to apply the law to the maximum benefit of veterans at the heart of the process.

So, Madam Speaker, I strongly support H.R. 659 and urge my colleagues to do the same.

I also want to mention another bill that the House should take up which would further improve the BVA. H.R. 2303, introduced by Representative MORGAN MCGARVEY, increases the promotion potential for attorneys at the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

I know that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle balk at anything that might result in civil servants receiving more compensation, but if we agree that we need to hire board attorneys with greater experience, and we are asking them to do more work and more complex work at that, we ought to see fit to pay them what they are worth. I hope that my colleagues see fit to advance that bill very soon, as well.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, before I actually yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BROWNLEY), I want to—in recognition of her announced retirement, though she is going to be with us for the rest of the year, but I don't know if I will ever have this chance of a moment on the floor with her again—point out that she was the leader of the very first Women Veterans Task Force that resulted in the Deborah Sampson Act, which unfortunately, is really substantively the bill that she put forward and is really the real author of, but it carries somebody else's name. It is the same with the Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act. It is an amazing piece of legislation and amazingly substantive. The Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act has laid the groundwork for our senior veterans who want to age in place at home. Congresswoman BROWNLEY has worked on that and many other pieces of legislation as the chair and then ranking member of the Subcommittee on Health.

It is with a heavy heart that I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BROWNLEY), my good friend and colleague, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Health, and the author of this legislation.

Ms. BROWNLEY. Madam Speaker, I thank the ranking member for yielding, and I thank him for the very kind words. I appreciate it very much. I thank the chairman and the ranking member for their support of this bill, the Veterans Law Judge Experience Act, and for their work to bring it to the floor today.

Every day, far too many veterans across this country are waiting for a VA benefit decision, but not only for the benefits they are due, but for the stability, the security, and the relief that comes with these benefits.

Too often, that wait stretches from months and sometimes into years. During that time, veterans are left in limbo, unable to work, struggling to support their families, and forced to navigate a system that moves far too slowly for the urgency of their lives.

Across our district offices, our caseworkers hear directly from veterans who are desperate for answers about their claims and appeals. In many cases, a timely VA decision could change a veteran's life. Yet, even after waiting for an initial decision, they may need to appeal their case to the Board of Veterans' Appeals where they face more months and often years of additional delay.

Veterans deserve a system that works with the same urgency and seriousness with which they served our Nation. In recent years, despite hiring new veteran law judges, the board has often lacked the experienced personnel needed to move cases efficiently and

accurately. This is in part due to the fact that in February 2020 the long-standing experience requirement for the veteran law judges was eliminated, opening the door to hiring judges without a background in veterans law.

While we respect the commitment of those entering this workforce, the reality is that lengthy training periods slow decisions, increase errors, and leave veterans waiting even longer for answers.

The Veterans Law Judge Experience Act takes a practical, commonsense, and targeted step to address this challenge to encourage the Board of Veterans' Appeals to prioritize hiring judges with at least 3 years of veterans' law experience. That means more cases decided, fewer delays, and stronger retention of professionals who already understand this complex and deeply consequential area of the law.

Hiring experienced veteran law judges will help speed the appeals process, improve the accuracy of decisions, and reduce unnecessary appeals to the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veteran Claims.

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, there are approximately 200,000 pending appeals before the board today—200,000 pending appeals before the board today.

Further, a GAO audit spanning 2019 to 2022, showed the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veteran Claims either partially or fully remanded more than 80 percent of veteran cases back to the board, resting the clock and compounding delays.

□ 1630

Madam Speaker, our obligation to veterans does not end when they no longer serve in uniform. It continues in how we care for them, how we honor their service, and how seriously we take the responsibility to deliver the benefits they have earned. That is what guides my work on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and why I am proud to see this bipartisan bill move forward.

By strengthening the expertise of the Board of Veterans' Appeals, we can reduce the backlog, restore trust in the system, and ensure veterans receive the timely and fair decisions they deserve.

Madam Speaker, I respectfully urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on this bill which passed the House Veterans' Affairs Committee with overwhelming bipartisan support.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I encourage my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 659, the Veterans Law Judge Experience Act of 2025. It is clear to me from the words on the floor from the ranking member of the House subcommittee, JULIA BROWNLEY, that this bill is wise, it is warranted, and it is well-thought-out.

The arguments for it are about helping our veterans receive their claims and get their claims approved in a timely manner. Again, I repeat my sen-

timent that we appreciate her service to this body. She has left an indelible mark on veterans' policy, on veterans' affairs, and I look forward to serving the balance of this year with my colleague and congratulate her on a brilliant career in the House of Representatives.

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

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the gentlewoman from California for her time in service here. I wish her the best. Hopefully, we will continue working together, as we still have a lot of things to get done. This bill is a very good bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NEWHOUSE). 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. 659.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VETERANS SCAM AND FRAUD EVASION ACT OF 2025

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1663) to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a Veterans Scam and Fraud Evasion Officer, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1663

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 Scam and Fraud Evasion Act of 2025" or the "VSAFE Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. VETERANS SCAM AND FRAUD EVASION OFFICER.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 3 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 326. Veterans Scam and Fraud Evasion Officer

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is in the Department a Veterans Scam and Fraud Evasion Officer, who shall—

“(1) be responsible for fraud and scam prevention, reporting, and incident response plans at the Department; and

“(2) serve as a central point of contact to direct veterans to resources to prevent and mitigate fraud and scams.

“(b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Veterans Scam and Fraud Evasion Officer shall carry out the following responsibilities:

“(1) Providing comprehensive communication from the Secretary to employees of the Department and veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors during strategic and time-sensitive fraud and scam incidents.

“(2) Establishing consistent guidance across the enterprise for employees as well as veterans, their families, caregivers, and