

soon-to-expire authorization of VA's grants and per diem program for homeless veterans. Extending these authorizations until the end of 2007 is an important step, but is not enough.

Last year, VA's health care program for homeless veterans served nearly 600 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. It is shameful that any veteran spends a night on the street. We cannot leave those homeless veterans and those with psychiatric wounds behind.

In this Congress, I introduced legislation to improve VA's capacity to help homeless veterans recover, rehabilitate and return to a full life in our society. I am glad that some of the key expiring provisions to help homeless veterans from my bill are in the legislation that we are considering now. I plan to reintroduce the bill in the next Congress to help homeless veterans, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to address this issue.

It is right that we are permanently establishing the six VA Parkinson's Disease Research, Education and Clinical Care Centers along with VA's two MS Centers of Excellence. These centers are shining examples of how VA could help veterans with other chronic and debilitating diseases and injuries, such as traumatic brain injury. These centers have led the way in state-of-the-art research and clinical care. This bill sends a clear message to VA to keep supporting the clinical, research and educational work of these centers.

Today is a bittersweet day because it may mark the end of an era. This may be the last veterans bill that the House will consider which has Ranking Member LANE EVANS as an original cosponsor. I know this will not be the last bill to reflect his advocacy and passion for veterans and their families. LANE has been a great leader and mentor to so many of us on the committee and in Congress. His legacy is measured in the millions of veterans and their families who have benefited from his determination, compassion, and wisdom. I will deeply miss him, and I know this institution will miss him as well.

It is my understanding that there may be also an opportunity for an omnibus veterans package on the floor tomorrow. I am glad that we may be able to move more legislation before the end of year, but it is unfortunate that we have waited until the last days of Congress to pass these provisions.

The fact remains as we come to an end of the 109th Congress, we must be honest with the American people: We have much more work to do. We have not yet passed a funding bill for VA. It is simply unacceptable for Congress to tell VA you need to put a hold on hiring needed staff because we cannot and will not pass a budget in a timely manner.

It is troubling that some 73,000 of our returning veterans who have come home to VA for medical care have received an initial diagnosis of a mental health disorder, and I am concerned that VA appears to want to deny that

its veterans centers and medical facilities are straining to meet the needs of these veterans. Many are calling traumatic brain injury the signature wound of this war. Veterans with TBI and their families deserve state-of-the-art care from the VA.

For service members, the transition from the military's health care system to enrollment in the VA health care system is far from seamless. For many of our returning National Guard members and reservists, the Montgomery GI bill does not meet their needs. Education benefits of the GI bill must be revamped and updated to meet the needs of current veterans.

All of these issues, and more, require greater oversight and perhaps legislative solutions for us in the next Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the subcommittee chairmen that I have worked with for the last two Congresses, Chairman HENRY BROWN, for working in a bipartisan manner, but also the staff of both the Republican side and the Democratic side for all of their hard work in getting these pieces of legislation to the floor. I would also like to thank Chairman BUYER for all his work. I also want to thank Mr. FILNER for his leadership on this legislation and the committee as well. I look forward to working with Mr. FILNER in the 110th Congress on matters important to America's veterans.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good bill and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6342.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. MICHAUD, if I may, for his emphasis on homeless veterans. Almost a quarter million homeless on the streets tonight are veterans. That is a national disgrace. I look forward to working with all of you to solve that.

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise as the Co-Chair of the Congressional Working Group on Parkinson's Disease in strong support of H.R. 6342, which will protect the Parkinson's Disease Research, Education and Clinical Centers (PADRECCs.)

As a leader in the Parkinson's community, I commend the Committee on Veterans' Affairs for working to enact legislation that will formally establish the PADRECCs for the first time in statute.

Significant contributions have been made by the Centers in research, education, and clinical care that benefit all Americans impacted by Parkinson's disease.

The PADRECCs have served to elevate the quality, comprehensiveness, and access of care for veteran patients with Parkinson's disease and related disorders throughout the Veterans Health Administration.

Through the six regional centers spanning the country and the National VA Parkinson's Disease Consortium, the VA is able to treat more than 79,000 veterans with Parkinson's disease.

The efforts of these Centers are the model of innovation in the delivery of health care and research for chronic, progressive disease in the veteran population.

The Congressional Working Group on Parkinson's Disease learned earlier this year that

the Centers' existence was in jeopardy—seriously threatening the institutions' valuable research, education, and clinical care programs that benefit all Americans affected by Parkinson's disease.

I believe that this bill must be enacted to ensure that the PADRECCs will continue providing valuable services to veteran patients, family members, and the entire Parkinson's disease community.

The original bill to protect the PADRECCs was authored by my fellow Co-Chair of the Congressional Working Group on Parkinson's Disease and friend Congressman LANE EVANS.

As you may know, Congressman EVANS helped to create the PADRECCs.

By working with the former and current VA Administration, Representative EVANS helped to establish these Centers that serve American veterans battling Parkinson's disease.

As a former Marine, Ranking Member on the VA Committee, and person battling Parkinson's disease, Representative LANE EVANS has a strong sense of mission about providing the highest standards of care for both constituencies. I commend the PADRECCs for doing just that.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, our colleague LANE EVANS is officially retiring from the House of Representatives at the conclusion of the 109th Congress due to his struggle with Parkinson's disease.

Congressman EVANS has been a true champion of veterans and Parkinson's issues on Capitol Hill and great friend to both communities.

As Representative EVANS said in his retirement announcement, "I believe strongly in serving people and working to make a positive difference in their lives."

This bill uniquely speaks to the significant contributions Representative EVANS has made in the lives of more than one million Americans living with Parkinson's disease and more than 24.5 million American veterans.

I urge my colleagues to honor LANE EVANS and vote yes on this important bill.

I look forward to enactment of this bill that is so important to all those who struggle with the devastating effects of Parkinson's disease.

Mr. FILNER. 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 South Carolina (Mr. BROWN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6342.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds of those voting having responded in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ROBERT SILVEY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OUTPATIENT CLINIC

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 4073) to designate the outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs located in Farmington, Missouri, as the "Robert Silvey Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic".

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 4073

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

SECTION 1. ROBERT SILVEY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OUTPATIENT CLINIC.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs located in Farmington, Missouri, shall be known and designated as the “Robert Silvey Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic”.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the “Robert Silvey Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. BROWN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina.

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, S. 4073 would rename the outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs located in Farmington, Missouri as the “Robert Silvey Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic.”

Robert Silvey, a decorated veteran of World War II, served as a member of the famed 82nd Airborne Division and was among a group of troopers who parachuted into France the night before the invasion of Normandy on D-Day. While fighting in France, Mr. Silvey was wounded three times and was subsequently awarded the Purple Heart. After returning home from World War II, Mr. Silvey had been active in various service organizations in the Farmington area and was instrumental in advocating for the construction of this new outpatient clinic and has served as an active member in his community as well as in local veterans organizations. Naming this outpatient clinic for Mr. Silvey would be entirely appropriate.

I ask for the support of my colleagues in passing this legislation.

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

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, we also support S. 4073, and I know the gentleman from Missouri will speak about Mr. Silvey and make sure we know why his service is so honored.

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

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, House bill H.R. 5994 has the full support of the Missouri delegation and the State veterans service organizations and is identical to the Senate language.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to yield 3 minutes to the original sponsor of H.R. 5994, the gentlewoman from Missouri, Mrs. JO ANN EMERSON.

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I first want to thank the chairman and ranking member for all of the help they have given us in ensuring that the new veterans clinic in Farmington, Mis-

souri can be named after the person who has advocated most vocally for it, and that is my good friend Bob Silvey.

You mentioned, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Silvey's service as part of the 82nd Airborne and going to the shores of France, actually parachuting in the night before the invasion of Normandy. But Bob has always been an incredible leader in the community of Farmington. As a matter of fact, when Bob asks you to do something, you would never want to say “no,” number one. And number two, you always want to make sure that it gets done as quickly as possible because he will not allow you to say “no” and he will not allow anything not to happen. So when we originally built our smaller veterans facility in Farmington, Missouri, Bob knew the second day that we moved in that it wasn't going to be adequate enough. So he went about looking in the community for a larger space to put it on, one now that is actually adjacent to our VFW post, and it all began like that.

But I have to say that this is an important and incredible tribute to Bob Silvey, but it is also a commitment to all of our servicemen and service-women in Missouri and around the country. Like Bob, so many of them continue to be active members of their community, and they are working tirelessly, as Bob did, to improve the quality of veterans health care in Southern Missouri.

I was really excited in March of this year to break ground on the facility and then in August for us to move into it, and it is a state-of-the-art facility, and really it is only a larger facility but it is there in large part because Bob Silvey was relentless in pursuit of this.

Bob has been an active member of the VFW Post 5896 of Farmington, Missouri. He served as commander four times. He twice served as commander of the VFW Post in Ironton, a town south of Farmington, a couple of times. And I was very, very proud, and I know Bob was too, that the members of the VFW Post 5896 and the American Legion Post 416 in Farmington unanimously passed resolutions in support of naming the new Farmington veterans clinic after Bob Silvey.

In addition, I might want to add that members of our Missouri statehouse and the State senate wrote letters of support in naming this clinic after Bob; so this is an important tribute to him. And certainly this legislation that you all have enabled us to put on the floor today would allow the residents of Farmington, Missouri to honor one of their greatest World War II veterans and ensure that the name on the new clinic reflects the service of a great contributor to our American freedom and the quality of our veterans' lives here at home.

Bob, I know that you are watching this on C-SPAN right now, and I hope that you know how well loved you are. I hope that you know what a leader

you have been, and your commitment and your dedication to this country has been next to none. And this is a very real and fitting tribute to all that you have done to ensure that America remains the greatest country on the face of the earth.

So, Mr. Speaker, I thank very much Chairman BROWN and Ranking Member FILNER for this opportunity.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind all Members to address their remarks to the Chair.

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

I thank the gentlewoman, through the Chair, for her testimony to this decorated hero.

I would also point out we have another hero named Bob in the audience today. I would just like to recognize Bob Cover from the Legislative Counsel's Office, who has been 30 years writing this legislation and dealing with title 38. And we couldn't do anything without your expertise, Bob. We thank you for all your work. We wish you well in the future, and we appreciate your work to help veterans in this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. BROWN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 4073.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds of those voting having responded in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 days in which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 4073.

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

There was no objection.

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2006

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5076) to amend title 49, United States Code, to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2007, 2008, and 2009, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 5076

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