

status options are consistent with the Constitution of the United States.

**SEC. 2. MINIMUM WAGE IN AMERICAN SAMOA AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS.**

(a) DELAYED EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 8103(b) of the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 (29 U.S.C. 206 note) (as amended by section 520 of division D of Public Law 111–117) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(B), by inserting “(except 2011 when there shall be no increase)” after “thereafter” the second place it appears; and

(2) in paragraph (2)(C), by striking “except that, beginning in 2010” and inserting “except that there shall be no such increase in 2010 or 2011 and, beginning in 2012”.

(b) GAO REPORT.—Section 8104 of such Act (as amended) is amended—

(1) by striking subsections (a) and (b) and inserting the following:

“(a) REPORT.—The Government Accountability Office shall assess the impact of minimum wage increases that have occurred pursuant to section 8103, and not later than September 1, 2011, shall transmit to Congress a report of its findings. The Government Accountability Office shall submit subsequent reports not later than April 1, 2013, and every 2 years thereafter until the minimum wage in the respective territory meets the federal minimum wage.”; and

(2) by redesignating subsection (c) as subsection (b).

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill read a third time.

The bill (H.R. 3940), as amended, was read the third time and passed.

The amendment (No. 4670) was agreed to, as follows:

Amend the title so as to read: “To clarify the availability of existing funds for political status education in the Territory of Guam, and for other purposes.”.

**FIVE-STAR GENERALS  
COMMEMORATIVE COIN ACT**

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1177, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1177) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in recognition of 5 United States Army 5-Star Generals, George Marshall, Douglas MacArthur, Dwight Eisenhower, Henry “Hap” Arnold, and Omar Bradley, alumni of the United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to coincide with the celebration of the 132nd Anniversary of the founding of the United States Army Command and General Staff College, and so forth.

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

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the measure be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 1177) was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed.

**VETERANS’ INSURANCE AND  
HEALTH CARE IMPROVEMENTS  
ACT**

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the Veterans’ Affairs Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 3219, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title. The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3219) to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements in the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs relating to insurance and health care, and for other purposes.

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

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I am pleased that the Senate is acting on H.R. 3219, the proposed “Veterans’ Benefits Act of 2010.” The bill, as it comes before the Senate, is a compromise agreement developed with our counterparts on the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. I thank Chairman FILNER and Ranking Member BUYER of the House Committee for their cooperation on this legislation. I also thank my good friend, the committee’s ranking member, Senator BURR, for his cooperation as we have developed this bill. A full explanation of the Senate and House negotiated agreement can be found in the Joint Explanatory Statement, which I will ask be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

The amended bill, which I will refer to as the “compromise agreement,” contains ten titles that are designed to enhance compensation, housing, labor and education, burial, and insurance benefits for veterans. I will highlight a few of the provisions.

The compromise agreement would make several important improvements in insurance programs for disabled veterans. It would increase the maximum amount of veterans’ mortgage life insurance that a service-connected disabled veteran may purchase from the current maximum of \$90,000 up to \$200,000. In the event of the veteran’s death, the veteran’s family would be protected because VA will pay the balance of the mortgage owed up to the maximum amount of insurance purchased. The need for this increase is obvious in today’s housing market.

In addition, this legislation would increase the amount of supplemental life insurance available to totally disabled veterans from \$20,000 to \$30,000. Many totally disabled veterans find it difficult to obtain commercial life insurance. This legislation would provide these veterans with a reasonable amount of life insurance coverage.

This benefits package also includes a provision that will expand eligibility

for retroactive benefits from traumatic injury protection coverage under the Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance program, commonly referred to as TSGLI. Section 1032 of Public Law 109–13, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Tsunami Relief, 2005, established traumatic injury protection under the SGLI program. TSGLI went into effect on December 1, 2005. Therefore, all insured servicemembers under SGLI from that point forward are also insured under TSGLI and their injuries are covered regardless of where they occur. In order to provide assistance to those servicemembers who suffered traumatic injuries on or between October 7, 2001, and November 30, 2005, retroactive TSGLI payments were authorized under section 1032(c) of the Supplemental Appropriations Act to individuals whose qualifying losses were sustained “as a direct result of injuries incurred in Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom.” Under section 501(b) of Public Law 109–233, the Veterans’ Housing Opportunity and Benefits Improvement Act of 2006, this definition was amended to allow retroactive payments to individuals whose qualifying losses were sustained “as a direct result of a traumatic injury incurred in the theater of operations for Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.”

However, without corrective action, men and women who were traumatically injured on or between October 7, 2001, and November 30, 2005, but were not in the OIF or OEF theaters of operation, will continue to be denied the same retroactive payment given to their wounded comrades. This legislation would correct that inequity.

This bill also modifies programs that provide adaptive assistance to veterans. It would increase and provide an index for an existing VA grant program, which provides funds to assist severely disabled veterans in purchasing automobiles or other conveyances that can accommodate their disabilities. The increase to \$18,900 would help prevent erosion of the value and effectiveness of this benefit.

Another provision included in this bill would expand this grant program to provide automobile and adaptive equipment assistance to disabled veterans and servicemembers with severe burn injuries. Due to the severe damage done to their skin, individuals with these disabilities experience difficulty operating a standard automobile not equipped to accommodate their disabilities. This legislation would help them obtain vehicles with special adaptations for assistance in and out of the vehicle, seat comfort, and climate control.

Another key part of this legislation is a provision to help homeless women veterans and homeless veterans with children. The majority of programs and service providers currently available to homeless veterans have historically