

H.R. 4261, the Gulf War Health Research Reform Act of 2014, which I sponsored along with Ranking Member KIRKPATRICK and full committee Ranking Member MICHAUD, restores the independence of the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses to perform the role it has historically played, as intended by Congress, to improve the lives of ill gulf war veterans.

This bill is necessary because some career VA staff have been trying to revive the discredited 1990s fiction that nothing special happened to gulf war veterans' health and that the problems experienced by gulf war veterans are just "what happens after every war" due to psychological stress factors.

Because there is no scientific evidence for this position, VA staffers have resorted to manipulating research studies and reports to try and revive this discredited theory. A major new VA gulf war veteran survey, for example, included the questions necessary to identify PTSD but not Gulf War illness.

Most shockingly, VA has even manipulated new research of the Institute of Medicine by limiting the terms of its contracts. VA transformed the Institute of Medicine gulf war treatments study ordered by Congress into a report based largely on psychotherapies. The Research Advisory Committee objected strongly to these actions, which threatened to mislead treatment research just as science is finally turning the corner. VA retaliated by eliminating the independence of the committee, changing its charter to remove its authority to review the effectiveness of government research programs, and replacing the members serving on the committee. The effect of these changes can already be seen.

The section of the new 2014 Research Advisory Committee report that detailed VA's manipulations of research had to be removed because the committee's authority to review the effectiveness of VA's research programs had been eliminated.

The independent voice, so critical to honest research, will be all but replaced by September with those who seem to bend to VA's will.

H.R. 4261 will restore the authority of the committee and provide that its membership, instead of being appointed entirely by VA, will consist of nine members appointed by the chairs and ranking members of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, and three members chosen by VA. This arrangement follows the longstanding model of the bipartisan Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance at the Department of Education.

Current law provides that the Research Advisory Committee membership may include veterans, representatives of veterans, and the general public. While there are those who seek to limit veteran members to ill veterans, excluding most veterans service orga-

nization representatives and others, the Research Advisory Committee has been well-served by having both ill and other veterans serve on the committee.

It is important to remember that the unwillingness of the VA to honestly address this illness is the reason Congress created the Research Advisory Committee in the first place. The 1997 congressional report that led to that legislation was entitled, "Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses: VA, DOD Continue to Resist Strong Evidence Linking Toxic Causes to Chronic Health Effects."

Science has made great progress since then, thanks in no small measure to the work of the Research Advisory Committee, as well as to the effective Gulf War Illness Research Program that Congress created at the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs. But this progress is all at risk if VA is able to again mislead science down blind alleys, directing scarce research dollars at the wrong target, as so often happened in the 1990s and 2000s.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I yield the gentleman an additional 1½ minutes.

Mr. COFFMAN. I thank the chairman.

It is also important to ask why the VA has pursued this course. Last month, we learned the answer. On April 22, 2014, Military Times reported that the VA Under Secretary for Benefits, Allison Hickey, objected even to using the term "Gulf War illness" because it "might imply a causal link between service in the gulf and poor health which could necessitate . . . disability compensation for veterans who served in the gulf."

Even if this policy was morally justifiable and saving money was the only goal, it is wrong. It will cost the Federal Government far less in the long run to face this problem honestly and pursue effective treatments, rather than to deny benefits and provide misleading research.

We have strong support for this legislation from the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Veterans, or AMVETS, and the Vietnam Veterans of America.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill. Without an independent Research Advisory Committee, the slow but steady progress toward identifying treatments for Gulf War illness will most surely end.

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I just want to acknowledge the work of Mr. Jim Binns of Arizona, who has made countless trips back here advocating for this bill.

I urge my colleagues to support it. We really need to do right by our gulf war veterans.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support H.R. 4261, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4261.

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.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 8 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. TERRY) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H. Res. 599, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 503, by the yeas and nays.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

URGING CHINA TO RESPECT THE FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY, EXPRESSION, AND RELIGION AND ALL FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE RULE OF LAW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 599) urging the Government of the People's Republic of China to respect the freedom of assembly, expression, and religion and all fundamental human rights and the rule of law for all its citizens and to stop censoring discussion of the 1989 Tiananmen Square demonstrations and their violent suppression, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 379, nays 1, not voting 51, as follows:

[Roll No. 241]

YEAS—379

Aderholt	Amodei	Bachus
Amash	Bachmann	Barber