

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I don't have any further speakers, so I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the gentlelady for her fine work, and I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 2942.

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. 2942.

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.

GULF WAR HEALTH RESEARCH REFORM ACT OF 2014

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4261) to improve the research of Gulf War Illness, the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4261

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 "Gulf War Health Research Reform Act of 2014".

SEC. 2. IMPROVEMENTS TO RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON GULF WAR VET- ERANS' ILLNESSES.

(a) INDEPENDENCE OF COMMITTEE.—Subsection (b) of section 707 of the Veterans Health Care Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-585; 38 U.S.C. 527 note) is amended—

(1) by striking "Not later than" and inserting "(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than"; and

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

"(2) INDEPENDENCE.—(A) The Committee established under paragraph (1) shall be an independent advisory committee which shall provide advice and counsel to the congressional veterans committees and to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (as the head of the department designated under subsection (a) that established the Committee under paragraph (1)).

"(B) In carrying out the functions, powers, and duties of the Committee, the Committee shall be independent of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. The Committee shall exert independent control of the budget allocations, staffing levels and expenditures, personnel decisions and processes, procurements, and other administrative and management functions of the Committee. The administration and management of the Committee shall be subject to the usual and customary Federal audit procedures.

"(3) DUTIES.—(A) The Committee shall provide to Congress, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and the heads of other departments and agencies of the Federal Government that conduct research on illnesses in Gulf War veterans advice with respect to proposed research studies, research plans, or research strategies relating to the health con-

sequences of military service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during the Gulf War.

"(B) The Committee may not conduct scientific research or review research proposals submitted to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs prior to funding. The Secretary shall appoint three members from the Committee who have appropriate scientific expertise to the committee designated to review such research proposals relating to illnesses in Gulf War veterans.

"(C) The guiding principle for the Committee shall be the premise that the fundamental goal of Gulf War health-related research, either basic or applied, conducted by the Federal Government is to ultimately improve the health of ill Gulf War veterans, and that the choice and success of research efforts shall be judged accordingly. The Committee shall assess the overall effectiveness of such research conducted by the Federal Government to answer central questions on the nature, causes, and treatments for health consequences of military service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during the Gulf War.

"(D) The Committee shall meet in public session to review research funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs relevant to understanding and treating the health consequences of military service in the Gulf War, and the processes conducted to solicit, review, and select such funded research to assess methods, results, and implications of such research. The Committee may review research plans, initiatives, and activities from other departments and agencies of the Federal Government supporting research relating to the health consequences of military service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during the Gulf War.

"(4) REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—(A) Not later than December 1 of each year, the Committee shall submit to the congressional veterans committees and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs an annual report summarizing the activities of the Committee during the period covered by the report.

"(B) The Committee shall submit to the congressional veterans committees, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and the head of any other department or agency of the Federal Government that conducts research on illnesses in Gulf War veterans any other reports and recommendations of the Committee regarding Gulf War-related research.

"(C) Reports, recommendations, publications, and other documents of the Committee shall not be subject to review or approval by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

"(D) The Committee may submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs proposed recommendations of the Committee for comment for a period not to exceed 30 days.

"(E) Each report submitted by the Committee shall be approved by the Committee meeting in public session prior to such submission.

"(5) MEMBERSHIP.—(A) The Committee shall be composed of 12 members appointed as follows:

"(i) One member appointed jointly by the chairman of the congressional veterans committees, who shall serve as chairman of the Committee.

"(ii) Two members appointed by the chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

"(iii) Two members appointed by the chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate.

"(iv) Two members appointed by the ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

"(v) Two members appointed by the ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate.

"(vi) Three members appointed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, of whom not less than one shall be a veteran.

"(B)(i) The first 11 vacancies from among the members of the Committee (not including a member serving as chairman of the Committee) occurring on or after the date of the enactment of the Gulf War Health Research Reform Act of 2014 shall be filled by—

"(I) the chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives appointing a member for the first and sixth vacancy;

"(II) the chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate appointing a member for the second and seventh vacancy;

"(III) the ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives appointing a member for the third and eighth vacancy;

"(IV) the ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate appointing a member for the fourth and ninth vacancy; and

"(V) the Secretary of Veterans Affairs appointing a member for the fifth, tenth, and eleventh vacancy.

"(ii) A vacancy in the Committee of a member serving as chairman shall be filled jointly by the chairmen of the congressional veterans committees.

"(iii) Except as provided by clause (i) or (ii), a vacancy in the Committee of a member shall be filled in the manner in which the appointment of such member was made. A member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring before the expiration of the term for which the member's predecessor was appointed shall be appointed only for the remainder of that term.

"(C) Of the members of the Committee who are appointed on or after the date of the enactment of the Gulf War Health Research Reform Act of 2014—

"(i) not fewer than three members shall be veterans;

"(ii) not fewer than eight members shall be scientists or physicians who have experience in biomedicine, epidemiology, immunology, environmental health, neurology, toxicology, or other appropriate disciplines; and

"(iii) the chairman shall be a veteran or an expert described in clause (ii), or both.

"(D) Each member of the Committee who is appointed on or after the date of the enactment of the Gulf War Health Research Reform Act of 2014 shall be appointed for a three-year term. Except as provided by section 2(c)(3) of such Act, a member may be reappointed once (not including the initial appointment of a member made before the date of the enactment of such Act).

"(6) MEETINGS.—(A) The Committee shall meet at the call of the chairman, but not less than twice annually.

"(B) A majority of the members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number of members may hold hearings.

"(C)(i) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the head of the Office of Research and Development of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the head of the Office of Public Health of the Department shall attend each meeting of the Committee.

"(ii) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may delegate the attendance of the Secretary under clause (i) to a level not below the Deputy Under Secretary for Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs, but the Secretary shall attend at least one meeting each year without making such delegation.

"(D) Each meeting of the Committee shall be open to the public.

"(7) COMPENSATION AND STAFF.—(A) Except with respect to a member who serves a scientific director under subparagraph (C)(ii) and is treated as staff for purposes of compensation, each member of the Committee

shall be paid at the daily rate provided for temporary and intermittent services under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, for each day during which the member attends meetings of the Committee.

“(B) The members of the Committee shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of service of the Committee.

“(C)(i) The chairman of the Committee may appoint a staff of not more than four employees to provide the Committee scientific and administrative support. Such employees may be—

“(I) detailees of the Department of Veterans Affairs or other departments or agencies of the Federal Government;

“(II) individuals employed as temporary employees of the Federal Government; or

“(III) at the request of the chairman of the Committee, provided under a contract entered into by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and a medical school or other medical research institution selected by the chairman of the Committee.

“(ii) The chairman of the Committee may appoint, from the members of the Committee, a scientific director to supervise the operations of the Committee. Such director shall count as one of the four employees authorized under clause (i).

“(iii) At the request of the chairman of the Committee, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall procure services from nongovernmental consultants to assist the Committee in preparing reports, background papers, and other material for consideration by the Committee. Such services may be procured under the contract described in clause (i)(III).

“(8) APPLICATION OF FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT.—(A) Except as otherwise provided by this subsection, the Committee shall be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

“(B) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall consult with the chairman of the congressional veterans committees in designating an officer or employee of the Department under section 10 of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

“(C) Notwithstanding such section 10, such designated officer or employee may not have authority—

“(i) over the agenda or conduct of a meeting;

“(ii) to adjourn a meeting of the Committee; or

“(iii) to take any other action that is inconsistent with the independence of the Committee under paragraph (2).

“(9) FUNDING.—Amounts for the activities of the Committee shall be derived from amounts appropriated to the Department of Veterans Affairs for purposes of this subsection.

“(10) TERMINATION.—(A) Except as provided by subparagraph (B), the Committee shall terminate on the date that is two years after the date on which the Committee submits to the congressional veterans committees, the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs a report (signed by not less than nine concurring members) explaining that each Secretary is carrying out an effective research program relating to the health consequences of military service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during the Gulf War.

“(B) If during the two-year period described in subparagraph (A) the Committee notifies the congressional veterans committees, the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs that the information contained in the report submitted under

subparagraph (A) is no longer applicable, the two-year period shall toll until the date on which the Committee submits a new report described in subparagraph (A).”.

(b) DEFINITIONS; REDESIGNATION; CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) DEFINITIONS.—Such section 707 is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘congressional veterans committees’ means the Committees on Veterans Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

“(2) The term ‘Gulf War’ means the Southwest Asia theater of operations from August 2, 1990, to July 31, 1991.

“(3) The term ‘Gulf War veteran’ means an individual who served as a member of the Armed Forces in the Gulf War.”.

(2) REDESIGNATION.—Subsection (a) of such section 707 is amended by striking “, and may redesignate from time to time.”.

(3) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Such section 707 is further amended—

(A) in paragraph (1) of subsection (b), as designated by subsection (a)(1) and amended by paragraph (2)—

(i) by inserting “(in this subsection referred to as the ‘Committee’)” after “an advisory committee”; and

(ii) by striking “and representatives of such veterans” and inserting “representatives of such veterans, and individuals from the scientific and medical community”;

(B) by striking “Persian Gulf theater of operations during the Persian Gulf War” each place it appears and inserting “Gulf War”;

(C) by striking “Persian Gulf War veterans” each place it appears and inserting “Gulf War veterans”; and

(D) by striking “during the Persian Gulf War” each place it appears and inserting “during the Gulf War”.

(c) MEMBERS CURRENTLY SERVING.—

(1) MEMBERSHIP.—Notwithstanding paragraph (5)(A) of subsection (b) of such section 707, as amended by subsection (a)(2), the chairmen and ranking members of the congressional veterans committees shall jointly designate 10 members of the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans’ Illnesses established pursuant to such subsection (b) who are serving as members as of the date of the enactment of this Act to continue to serve as members for periods determined pursuant to paragraph (2) rather than for the term for which the members were appointed before such date of enactment.

(2) PERIOD OF SERVICE.—The chairmen and ranking members of the congressional veterans committees shall jointly determine the period of service of each member specified in paragraph (1) in a manner that staggers the periods of such members in periods of one, two, or three years beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act. In determining such staggered periods, the chairmen and ranking members shall take into account the order of filling vacancies pursuant to subsection (b)(5)(B) of such section 707, as amended by subsection (a)(2). Any vacancies occurring of such members shall be filled in accordance with such subsection.

(3) NEW MEMBERS.—Upon designating members under paragraph (1), the chairmen of the congressional veterans committees shall each appoint one additional member to the committee from among individuals who have not served on the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans’ Illnesses. Such appointments shall be treated as the first and second vacancies described in subclauses (I) and (II) of subsection (b)(5)(B)(i) of such section 707, as amended by subsection (a)(2), respectively.

(4) REAPPOINTMENT.—A member of the Committee specified in paragraph (1) who

has served more than three years may not be reappointed after the period for the member specified in paragraph (2) expires.

SEC. 3. RESEARCH CASE DEFINITION OF GULF WAR ILLNESS.

(a) STANDARD DEFINITION.—Except as provided by subsection (b), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that any research conducted or funded by the Secretary on the chronic multisymptom illness that afflicts approximately 25 percent of Gulf War veterans—

(1) refers to the illness as “Gulf War Illness”; and

(2) uses the research case definition of such illness that is recommended from time to time by the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans’ Illnesses established by section 707 of the Veterans Health Care Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-585; 38 U.S.C. 527 note).

(b) ALTERNATIVE DEFINITION.—During any period in which the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans’ Illnesses has not recommended a research case definition for Gulf War Illness, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that any research on such illness conducted or funded by the Secretary uses a research case definition that is consistent with the definition of the term “chronic multisymptom illness in Persian Gulf War veterans” provided by section 805(e) of the Veterans’ Benefits Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-275; 124 Stat. 2890).

(c) ADVICE.—The Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans’ Illnesses shall submit to the Secretary of Defense advice regarding the best type of organization and process for the Gulf War Illness Research Program of the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program to use to develop a research case definition of “Gulf War Illness”.

SEC. 4. STUDIES AND REPORTS ON GULF WAR ILLNESS.

(a) CONDUCT OF NEW STUDIES.—

(1) EVALUATION OF ANIMAL STUDIES.—In conducting or funding any study relating to illnesses of Gulf War veterans on or after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that such study is conducted in a manner such that animal studies are considered to the same extent in all respects as human studies.

(2) SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE OF ASSOCIATION.—In conducting or funding any study relating to illnesses of Gulf War veterans, or other health matters of veterans, on or after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies shall ensure that such study is conducted in a manner that defines “sufficient evidence of an association” in the “categories of association” used in the study as the following: “Evidence is sufficient to conclude that there is a positive association. That is, a positive association has been observed between an exposure to a specific agent and a health outcome in human or animal studies in which chance, bias, and confounding could be ruled out with reasonable confidence.”.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON NATIONAL COHORT STUDY.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs should conduct an additional follow-up study of a national cohort of Gulf War and Gulf-War-Era veterans that includes questions described in the “Symptom Inventory Required to Ascertain Case Status for Gulf War Multisymptom Illness, as Defined by both the Fukuda and Kansas criteria” published by the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans’ Illnesses on June 9, 2012, in appendix F of the document titled “Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans’ Illnesses Findings and Recommendations”.

(c) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON STUDY ON RISK OF DEVELOPING MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS, MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS, PARKINSON’S DISEASE,

BRAIN CANCERS, AND OTHER CONDITIONS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs should submit to the congressional veterans committees each report required by section 804 of the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-389; 122 Stat. 4187).

(d) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON PREVIOUSLY CONDUCTED STUDIES.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs should—

(1) seek to enter into an agreement with the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies to carry out the review described in section 805 of the Veterans' Benefits Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-275; 124 Stat. 2890), regardless of any previous review conducted under such section, in a manner that ensures that the Institute of Medicine convenes to conduct the review a group of medical professionals who are experienced in treating individuals who served as members of the Armed Forces in the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations of the Persian Gulf War during 1990 or 1991 and who have been diagnosed with Gulf War illness, chronic multisymptom illness, or another health condition related to chemical and environmental exposure that may have occurred during such service;

(2) seek to enter into an agreement with the Institute of Medicine to carry out the review described in section 1603 of the Persian Gulf War Veterans Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-277; 38 U.S.C. 1117 note), regardless of any previous review conducted under such section, addressing the matters originally reviewed by the Institute of Medicine in the reports titled "Gulf War and Health: Volume 1. Depleted Uranium, Sarin, Pyridostigmine Bromide, and Vaccines", "Gulf War and Health: Volume 2. Insecticides and Solvents", and "Gulf War and Health: Volume 3. Fuels, Combustion Products, and Propellants"; and

(3) not disseminate or use for research, clinical care, benefits, or any other purpose the results of the report of the Institute of Medicine titled "Gulf War and Health Report: Volume 9. Treatment for Chronic Multisymptom Illness".

(e) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON CONSULTATION.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs should, prior to entering into a contract or agreement with the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies with respect to research or studies on the health of Gulf War veterans, obtain the advice of the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses established by section 707 of the Veterans Health Care Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-585; 38 U.S.C. 527 note) regarding the scope of work and the charge to be given to the Institute of Medicine.

(f) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON INCLUSION OF CERTAIN PROFESSIONALS IN SCIENTIFIC OR MEDICAL GROUPS.—It is the sense of Congress that, in any contract requiring the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies to convene a committee to study the health of Gulf War veterans, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs should ensure that any such committee convened should contain not less than three members of the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses established by section 707 of the Veterans Health Care Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-585; 38 U.S.C. 527 note).

(g) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON NOTIFICATION OF UNDUE INFLUENCE.—It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs should promptly notify the congressional veterans committees of any employee or contractor of the Federal Government whom the Secretary believes influenced, or attempted to influence, the outcome of a report or study on the health of Gulf War vet-

erans conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies if such influence was not related to a scientifically objective outcome.

SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) The term "congressional veterans committees" means the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

(2) The term "Gulf War" means the Southwest Asia theater of operations from August 2, 1990, to July 31, 1991.

(3) The term "Gulf War veteran" means an individual who served as a member of the Armed Forces in the Gulf War.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentlewoman from Arizona (Mrs. KIRKPATRICK) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members would have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 4261.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday, we paused to remember those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in defense of this great Nation, but it is also important to remember those who are still suffering as a result of their service.

It has been estimated that as many as 250,000 veterans have some form of Gulf War illness. Despite millions of dollars in government funding and years of research, it is clear that more has got to be done to better understand this disease, so we can properly care for and compensate these veterans.

The bill before us today reaffirms the essential role of the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses and provides the committee with the independence that it needs, so that it can continue its vital work.

I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 4261.

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

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise in full support of H.R. 4261, the Gulf War Health Research Reform Act of 2014, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank the chairman of our committee, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. COFFMAN), for his sponsorship of this bill. It is such an important one, and I am a cosponsor on that.

For many of the veterans of the gulf war who suffer from Gulf War illness, it has been a long, hard-fought battle, just to have this government recognize that their illness and serious physical conditions were caused by toxic exposures.

Congress first created the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses because the research being done at the time was considered inadequate, partially due to a mistaken belief that it was a psychological condition.

Through the research, we now know that Gulf War illness is a debilitating physical condition, not something that is all in your head, as many veterans were initially told.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4261 will ensure that the Gulf War illness research advisory committee conducts and reviews objective research to help our veterans who are suffering from Gulf War illnesses. This research is essential to finding treatments that improve veterans' health and quality of life.

It is also important that causes of these illnesses be identified so that our veterans with illnesses connected to service during the gulf war can receive VA medical treatment and VA benefits, and it will also help our military, so that commanders can work to prevent and limit our troops' exposure to toxic chemicals in the future.

□ 1800

This bill will allow the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses to direct research and review research findings independent of the VA. It will restore the independent authority of the Research Advisory Committee by having the chairs and ranking members of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees appoint nine members and allowing the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to appoint three members.

Additionally, the Advisory Committee will provide advice to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and to the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees on proposed research studies, research plans, or research strategies related to the health consequences of military service during the gulf war.

Our gulf war veterans suffer from real illnesses. These illnesses require real treatments that can only be found through proper, objective, evidence-based research. This Research Advisory Committee has the potential to find these treatments with the right combination of researchers directing and reviewing research.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, there has been a gentleman who chairs the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations who has been at the forefront of making sure that health care is provided in a timely fashion to our veterans, somebody who himself is a combat veteran. I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. COFFMAN).

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, as a gulf war and Iraq war veteran, I am grateful for the leadership of the gentleman from Florida, Chairman MILLER, on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs and for his support of H.R. 4261.

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
Amash

Amodei
Bachmann

Bachus
Barber