

I commend Mr. LYNCH for his leadership on this issue and for working with Mr. FARENTHOLD, Ranking Member CUMMINGS, Mr. CONNOLLY, and Ms. NOR-TON to bring this bipartisan legislation before the committee. I also want to acknowledge Senators TESTER, MORAN, and TOOMEY for their work on the Senate companion bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 313, the Wounded Warriors Federal Leave Act of 2015.

I introduced this bipartisan legislation in January of this year, and I am proud that it has now gained the support of over 30 Democratic and Republican Members of Congress.

I also want to thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG), for his remarks and his support of this bill. At the outset, I would also like to thank Chairman JASON CHAFFETZ and Ranking Member ELIJAH CUMMINGS along with the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FARENTHOLD) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee for their leadership in bringing H.R. 313 to the floor. I would also like to thank many of the veterans groups and Federal unions and workforce organizations that have joined together to endorse this legislation. They include the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, and the 31 unions and member organizations that make up the Federal Postal Coalition.

Let me also commend Jennifer Hemingway of the majority staff for the Oversight and Government Reform Committee and Lena Chang of the Democratic staff for our committee for their great work on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, the Wounded Warriors Federal Leave Act will address a problem faced by many wounded warriors who are transitioning to civilian life through new careers in the Federal workforce. Currently, a first-year Federal employee will begin his or her career with zero sick leave in the event of a medical event. That is because under current law, full-time Federal employees only earn 4 hours of paid sick leave for each pay period that they work.

Obviously, starting from the beginning, they will have zero balance in their sick leave bank—with a maximum of 104 hours of paid sick leave that is available per year. Nevertheless, new employees start with zero. While Federal workers are able to carry over unused annual sick leave from year to year, they begin their first year on the job with no sick leave whatsoever.

Now, this lack of initial leave for newly hired Federal workers is particularly burdensome on those employees who are also wounded warriors. These

employees need to make regular visits to the VA to seek medical treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and other service-connected disabilities, and they are quickly forced to burn up any sick leave that they do accrue during their first year at a Federal agency.

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Several wounded warriors who have transitioned to the Federal workforce following their tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan and other assignments have highlighted this difficulty during discussions with me and my staff.

These workers reported that, without sufficient leave during their first year on the job, they were routinely faced with the difficult choice between having to take a day off work without pay or simply skipping their scheduled VA appointments altogether. Some wounded warriors reported that the closest VA facility to their job was located a 2- or 3-hour drive away.

As additionally noted by the Federal Managers Association: “Young men and women struggle with available leave as they attempt to keep service-related, medically-necessary appointments, which puts undue stress on both managers and their Federal employees as they try to meet their Congressionally-mandated missions and goals.”

Mr. Speaker, we must afford our wounded warriors the flexibility to receive medical care as they transition to serving our Nation in a new capacity, through a Federal civilian job. The Wounded Warriors Federal Leave Act would do just that.

This bill will provide first-year Federal employees who have a VA disability rating of 30 percent or greater with 104 hours of wounded warrior leave from the moment they begin their Federal workforce careers. This includes eligible new hires at our Nation’s largest employer of veterans—the Defense Department—as well as the United States Postal Service.

H.R. 313 also recognizes that these dedicated Federal workers will have accumulated up to 104 hours of traditional sick leave by the end of their first year on the job. That is why the bill also provides that any unused wounded warrior leave would not carry over beyond the second year.

The Wounded Warriors Federal Leave Act will also provide critical importance, given that the most recent Federal data on veterans employment indicates that Federal agencies are hiring a growing number of veterans each year. In fiscal year 2014, nearly 60,000, or 33.2 percent, of new hires at Federal agencies were veterans. That is an increase of 9.2 percent over fiscal year 2009.

With the number of our young people who have served multiple tours of duty—three, four, five tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan—this is especially important. Approximately 16,000 of newly Federal employees were wounded warriors with a disability rating of 30 percent or greater.

Again, I am thankful to Mr. CHAFFETZ, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. CUMMINGS, and Mr. CONNOLLY. And, also, I want to thank Mr. TESTER. When we sent this bill over to the Senate looking for a cosponsor in the Senate, Senator TESTER was quick to step up and take on this fight in the Senate. I want to thank him for his work on this bill in the Senate side.

In closing, I urge all our Members to vote in favor of H.R. 313.

I yield back the balance of my time. Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I truly thank Congressman LYNCH for his leadership on this issue. It is an issue not only whose time has come, but probably should have come long before this. It is a great idea that deals with the reality of what we face in dealing with wounded warriors and their ongoing success that this country—a grateful country—ought to be involved with encouraging.

I urge the adoption of the bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 313.

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.

#### FEDERAL VEHICLE REPAIR COST SAVINGS ACT OF 2015

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 565) to reduce the operation and maintenance costs associated with the Federal fleet by encouraging the use of remanufactured parts, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 565

*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 “Federal Vehicle Repair Cost Savings Act of 2015”.

#### SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that, in March 2013, the Government Accountability Office issued a report that confirmed that—

(1) there are approximately 588,000 vehicles in the civilian Federal fleet;

(2) Federal agencies spent approximately \$975,000,000 on repair and maintenance of the Federal fleet in 2011;

(3) remanufactured vehicle components, such as engines, starters, alternators, steering racks, and clutches, tend to be less expensive than comparable new replacement parts; and

(4) the United States Postal Service and the Department of the Interior both informed the Government Accountability Office that the respective agencies rely on the use of remanufactured vehicle components to reduce costs.

#### SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act—

(1) the term “Federal agency” has the meaning given that term in section 102 of title 40, United States Code; and

(2) the term “remanufactured vehicle component” means a vehicle component (including an engine, transmission, alternator, starter, turbocharger, steering, or suspension component) that has been returned to same-as-new, or better, condition and performance by a standardized industrial process that incorporates technical specifications (including engineering, quality, and testing standards) to yield fully warranted products.

#### SEC. 4. REQUIREMENT TO USE REMANUFACTURED VEHICLE COMPONENTS.

The head of each Federal agency—

(1) shall encourage the use of remanufactured vehicle components to maintain Federal vehicles, if using such components reduces the cost of maintaining the Federal vehicles while maintaining quality; and

(2) shall not encourage the use of remanufactured vehicle components to maintain Federal vehicles, if using such components—

(A) does not reduce the cost of maintaining Federal vehicles;

(B) lowers the quality of vehicle performance, as determined by the employee of the Federal agency responsible for the repair decision; or

(C) delays the return to service of a vehicle.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise today in support of S. 565, the Federal Vehicle Repair Cost Savings Act of 2015. This bill is a bipartisan and bicameral effort designed to reduce the costs of maintenance for the Federal vehicle fleet.

The Federal Vehicle Repair Cost Savings Act encourages agencies to use remanufactured vehicle components when doing so will reduce maintenance costs while also maintain quality.

The term “remanufactured vehicle components” refers to components that have been returned to same-as-new or better condition and performance by a standardized industrial process that incorporates technical specifications.

In 2013, a Government Accountability Office report found that remanufactured vehicle components, such as engines, starters, alternators, steering racks, and clutches, tend to be less expensive than comparable new parts.

In fact, a 2012 study by the U.S. International Trade Commission found that remanufacturing parts can result in savings of 85 percent of the energy

and material used to manufacture equivalent new parts. Further, this study found that remanufactured parts are, on average, 20 to 50 percent less expensive.

Requiring agency heads under this bill to encourage their Federal vehicle maintenance staff to use remanufactured components will reduce maintenance costs, which totaled \$975 million in 2011, for 588,000 vehicles.

This bill is also supported by the Motor and Equipment Manufacturers Association, which directly employs over 734,000 people in U.S. manufacturing jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congressmen HUIZENGA and ASHFORD for their work on the House companion bill. I also want to thank Senators PETERS and LANKFORD for their work on this legislation.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan cost savings legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in support of S. 565, the Federal Vehicle Repair Cost Savings Act, introduced by Senator PETERS of Michigan.

I would also like to recognize Representative BILL HUIZENGA of Michigan for his good work on this legislation.

S. 565 passed the United States Senate by unanimous consent last month. With today’s House passage, it can go straight to the President’s desk for his signature.

The Federal Vehicle Repair Cost Savings Act would require the head of each Federal agency to encourage the use of remanufactured vehicle components if doing so would reduce costs while maintaining high quality. The intent behind this bill is to raise awareness of the option of using remanufactured parts and inform agency fleet managers of this cost-saving option.

I would note that the bill encourages the heads of Federal agencies to use remanufactured parts, but the decision ultimately to do so would remain at the discretion of fleet managers.

According to a March 2013 Government Accountability Office report, Federal agencies spent about \$1 billion on vehicle repair and maintenance in 2011. The report also found that remanufactured vehicle components tend to be much less expensive. For example, the Postal Service and the Department of Interior informed GAO that they rely on remanufactured vehicle components to reduce costs.

Mr. Speaker, this is a commonsense piece of legislation that seeks to save taxpayer dollars and better ensure that the Federal Government is purchasing high-quality products.

I urge Members on both sides of the aisle to vote for this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA), my good friend and colleague.

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, especially my friend, Chairman CHAFFETZ, and my friend, Mr. WALBERG, here from Michigan, as well as Ranking Member CUMMINGS, for bringing this bipartisan, bicameral bill to the floor to save taxpayer dollars and create jobs.

I often hear, like most of us do, from our constituents: Why can’t Congress work together and get something done and eliminate wasteful spending and create jobs? Well, we have got it, folks. Here we go.

With the Federal Vehicle Repair Cost Savings Act, I teamed up with Senator GARY PETERS, also of Michigan. We are going to save literally millions of taxpayer dollars by reducing spending on Federal vehicle maintenance and create good manufacturing jobs.

Our commonsense bill calls on Federal agencies to use remanufactured components to repair and maintain the Federal vehicle fleet when using those parts would lower costs, achieve higher safety standards, and maintain quality and performance.

Remanufactured parts are less expensive than brand-new parts and have been returned to same-as-new condition. I know this from firsthand experience, owning a small sand and gravel operation where we oftentimes use remanufactured parts on our own trucks. The component may be an engine, may be a transmission, may be a drivetrain, may be a rear end or an alternator. Each of those repairs presents an opportunity to be more fiscally responsible with taxpayer dollars.

In 2013, a GAO report found that the Federal Government owns a fleet of approximately 588,000 vehicles. The cost of maintaining that fleet has ballooned to nearly \$1 billion.

While it is clear there needs to be a fleet of these Federal vehicles to have access to a reliable motor pool, it is important that these vehicles be maintained efficiently and effectively to ensure that those tax dollars—our precious tax dollars—are used in the most effective way possible.

In addition to eliminating wasteful spending, this legislation serves as an important boost to good-paying jobs and remanufacturing suppliers.

According to the Motor and Equipment Manufacturers Association, remanufacturing of motor vehicle parts is responsible for over 30,000 full-time jobs across the United States. For example, in my district, Valley Truck Parts, headquartered in Wyoming, employs 250 Michiganders. In Kentwood, Michigan, North America Fuel Systems Remanufacturing employs more than 150 people.

These companies, among so many others across Michigan and so many other States, demonstrate how remanufacturing supports good-paying middle class jobs in States like Michigan and Ohio and North Carolina and Pennsylvania and so many others. It is

going to play an expanded role, I believe, in making this Federal Government even more efficient.

I encourage my colleagues to join us in this effort to save millions of taxpayer dollars, support good jobs, and make the Federal Government run more efficiently.

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

In closing, having heard the comments on this, I urge the adoption of this commonsense bill that encourages also us doing an environmental thing as well in using resources that we have.

I ask that my colleagues support this commonsense bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 565.

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.

#### GRANTS OVERSIGHT AND NEW EFFICIENCY ACT

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3089) to close out expired grants, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3089

*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 "Grants Oversight and New Efficiency Act" or the "GONE Act".

#### SEC. 2. IDENTIFYING AND CLOSING OUT EXPIRED GRANTS.

##### (a) EXPIRED GRANT REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall instruct the head of each agency, in coordination with the Secretary, to submit to Congress and the Secretary a report, not later than December 31 of the first calendar year beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act, that—

(A) lists each covered grant held by such agency;

(B) provides the total number of covered grants, including the number of grants—

- (i) by time period of expiration;
- (ii) with zero dollar balances; and
- (iii) with undisbursed balances;

(C) for an agency with covered grants, describes the challenges leading to delays in grant closeout; and

(D) for the 30 oldest covered grants of an agency, explains why each covered grant has not been closed out.

(2) USE OF DATA SYSTEMS.—An agency may use existing multiagency data systems in order to submit the report required under paragraph (1).

(3) EXPLANATION OF MISSING INFORMATION.—If the head of an agency is unable to submit all of the information required to be included in the report under paragraph (1), the report shall include an explanation of why the information was not available, including

any shortcomings with and plans to improve existing grant systems, including data systems.

##### (b) NOTICE FROM AGENCIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date on which the head of an agency submits the report required under subsection (a), the head of the agency shall provide notice to the Secretary specifying whether the head of the agency has closed out grant awards associated with all of the covered grants in the report and which covered grants in the report have not been closed out.

(2) NOTICE TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 90 days after the date on which all of the notices required pursuant to paragraph (1) have been provided or March 31 of the calendar year following the calendar year described in subsection (a)(1), whichever is sooner, the Secretary shall compile the notices submitted pursuant to paragraph (1) and submit to Congress a report on such notices.

(c) INSPECTOR GENERAL REVIEW.—Not later than one year after the date on which the head of an agency provides notice to Congress under subsection (b)(2), the Inspector General of such agency with more than \$500,000,000 in grant funding shall conduct a risk assessment to determine if an audit or review of the agency's grant closeout process is warranted.

(d) REPORT ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT.—Not later than 6 months after the date on which the second report is submitted pursuant to subsection (b)(2), the Director of Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall submit to Congress a report on recommendations for legislation to improve accountability and oversight in grants management, including the timely closeout of a covered grant.

##### (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) AGENCY.—The term "agency" has the meaning given that term in section 551 of title 5, United States Code.

(2) CLOSEOUT.—The term "closeout" means a closeout of a grant account conducted in accordance with part 200 of title 2, Code of Federal Regulations, including sections 200.16 and 200.343 of such title, or any successor thereto.

(3) COVERED GRANT.—The term "covered grant" means a grant in an agency cash payment management system held by the United States Government for which—

(A) the grant award period of performance, including any extensions, has been expired for not less than 2 years; and

(B) closeout has not yet occurred in accordance with section 200.343 of title 2, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor thereto.

(4) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

##### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

I introduced H.R. 3089, the Grants Oversight and New Efficiency, or GONE, Act, to bring much-needed accountability to the Federal grant-making process.

This bipartisan bill requires each agency to report to Congress on the amount of expired and empty grant accounts that remain open on the government's books.

Under the bill, the agencies must examine the 30 grants that have been expired for the longest period of time and explain why these grants have not been closed.

One year after this initial report, these agencies will update Congress, reporting on which accounts previously identified have been closed and which remain open. These reports will help Congress better understand why expired grant accounts remain open at taxpayer expense.

Mr. Speaker, in fiscal year 2014, Federal grant expenditures exceeded \$529 billion, and that is real money. This enormous amount of money demands strong financial management to protect taxpayer dollars from waste.

In 2012, GAO released a report on the timeliness of grant closeouts by Federal agencies. The report found nearly \$1 billion remaining in undisbursed funds within expired grant accounts.

Within one of the grant management systems GAO examined, there were almost 1,000 accounts that had been expired for 5 years or more and still had not been closed out.

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GAO found out that this same management system contained 28,000 expired grant accounts with no funds in them. Mr. Speaker, expired grant accounts create multiple levels of waste.

First, the undisbursed funds remaining in expired accounts could be better used for their appropriated purpose or returned to the Treasury to help bring down the deficit and mounting debt.

Second, agencies pay a monthly fee for each account that remains open within the Federal payment management system. As a result, agencies could be spending roughly \$2 million per year to maintain these 28,000 accounts with no funds in them, assuming they have not been closed. Surely we can find a better use for these taxpayer dollars rather than wasting funds maintaining expired accounts.

Finally, grants that are not properly closed out slow the grant-making agency from conducting the necessary oversight to ensure that funds were properly spent and that taxpayer money is not being wasted. The GONE Act is a response to these issues.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3089 utilizes the Department of Health and Human Services to coordinate with agencies to provide these reports to Congress. HHS was chosen for this role because of some of its successful closeout efforts implemented in 2011. HHS's commendable work on grant closeout is exactly