

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

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

Madam Speaker, I want to thank Congressman TOM PERRIELLO of Virginia for introducing H.R. 3976, the Helping Heroes Keep Their Homes Act of 2010. Mr. PERRIELLO is one of the first-term members we have on our committee. They are incredibly active and committed. Mr. PERRIELLO hit the ground running in his first year and is here today with a bill that will make an immediate difference in the lives of our Nation's military veterans.

I yield to Mr. PERRIELLO to explain the bill.

Mr. PERRIELLO. Madam Speaker, I am proud to stand in support of H.R. 3976, the Helping Heroes Keep Their Homes Act, a bill that I introduced to help ensure that our veterans have the resources they need to confront the myriad of challenges in today's economic environment.

Homeownership is the touchstone of the American dream. H.R. 3976, the Helping Heroes Keep Their Homes Act, will reauthorize home foreclosure protections to prevent lenders from foreclosing on veterans' homes within 9 months after the end of military service. Unfortunately, some of the protections established in Public Law 110-289 are scheduled to expire at the end of this year. This bill will ensure that these critical protections remain available to our veterans.

H.R. 3976 is a commonsense bill that has been supported by the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. I appreciate the bipartisan support on this bill, the chairman's leadership and others', and I urge all members of this body to join me in supporting our military families by voting in favor of this bill.

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, if I might digress, I just wanted to thank Mrs. HALVORSON on H.J. Res. 80 for introducing the resolution, and the chairman and Mr. BUYER for bringing that joint resolution to the floor. I think that is important to remind all of my colleagues.

Madam Speaker, I also rise in support of H.R. 3976, as amended, a bill to extend certain expiring provisions providing enhanced protections for servicemembers relating to mortgages and mortgage foreclosure.

Madam Speaker, Public Law 110-289, the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008, extended the protections against foreclosure and related actions on servicemembers' homes contained in the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act

from 90 days to 9 months following lengthy deployments. Extensions of these protections will sunset December 31, 2010.

To address the continuing lengthy deployments by our servicemembers, the Veterans Home Preservation Act of 2010 would simply extend the mortgage-related sunset days contained in Public Law 110-289 through December 31, 2015. The bill also adds a new clause that would apply these same mortgage protections to a surviving spouse of a servicemember who dies while in military service and whose death is service connected.

Madam Speaker, these are good provisions that are appropriate given the current economic climate. I thank the authors of the bill, Mr. PERRIELLO, as well as Chairman HERSETH SANDLIN and Ranking Member BOOZMAN for their fine work, and the Veterans' Affairs Committee chairman, Mr. FILNER, and Mr. BUYER, the ranking member, for bringing this legislation to the floor.

I reserve the balance of my time. Mr. FILNER. I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3976, as amended, a bill to extend certain expiring provisions providing enhanced protections to servicemembers relating to mortgages and mortgage foreclosure.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, it is unfortunate that these protections are still needed. Two years ago or so we went through this major foreclosure crisis. We unfortunately, have not solved it and expect a recurrence, and we must protect and serve these brave men and women in uniform with the same commitment and dedication with which they protected and served us.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3976, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3976, "Helping Heroes Keep their Homes Act of 2009," a bill that will prevent mortgage lenders from foreclosing on a veteran's home after their service.

Strengthening comprehensive programs by investing in our veterans, requiring housing counselors to grant more housing opportunities at each Veteran Affairs centers is the right thing to do. It is my distinct honor to stand here today to support a bill that will allow us to show our appreciation to our veterans who are in danger of losing their homes and possibly becoming homeless.

I really find it unacceptable that an estimated 131,000 veterans are homeless on any

given night after honorably serving their country. We are doing our veterans a great disservice. We owe our veterans the utmost respect, appreciation, and definitely a home to come home to after serving as a member of our Armed Forces. In these challenging economic times, we must do more to provide for our veterans basic needs. H.R. 3976 shows that all Americans take pride in our veterans service to this Nation, and just as the military doesn't believe in leaving a soldier behind on the battlefield, I believe that I speak for all Americans that we don't believe in leaving our veterans behind . . . we must help them push forward.

In these challenging economic times, with returning veterans experiencing unemployment rates in the double digits, we must do more to provide for our veterans' basic needs. This legislation shows that the U.S. is grateful for our veterans' service. Just as the military pledges to leave no soldier behind on the battlefield, this Nation will leave no veteran behind when they come home. This bill will allow us to show our appreciation and honor the service of veterans who have served this country and who now look to us to serve their needs.

Madam Speaker, these veterans have given great contributions and made incredible personal sacrifices so that all of us in this country might live in a safe and secure nation and world. Ensuring that our veterans are safeguarded from losing their homes is a small step towards repaying the insurmountable debt that all of us owe to all veterans. We must do everything possible to let our veterans know how much we value their service. We would be irresponsible and ungrateful if we acted otherwise.

Madam Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3976.

Mr. FILNER. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3976, as amended. 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 California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3976, as amended.

The question was taken. The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

VETERANS' COMPENSATION COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 2010

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the

bill (H.R. 4667) to increase, effective as of December 1, 2010, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4667

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 “Veterans’ Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2010”.

SEC. 2. INCREASE IN RATES OF DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION.

(a) **RATE ADJUSTMENT.**—Effective on December 1, 2010, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall increase, in accordance with subsection (c), the dollar amounts in effect on November 30, 2010, for the payment of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation under the provisions specified in subsection (b).

(b) **AMOUNTS TO BE INCREASED.**—The dollar amounts to be increased pursuant to subsection (a) are the following:

(1) **WARTIME DISABILITY COMPENSATION.**—Each of the dollar amounts under section 1114 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) **ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR DEPENDENTS.**—Each of the dollar amounts under section 1115(1) of such title.

(3) **CLOTHING ALLOWANCE.**—The dollar amount under section 1162 of such title.

(4) **DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION TO SURVIVING SPOUSE.**—Each of the dollar amounts under subsections (a) through (d) of section 1311 of such title.

(5) **DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION TO CHILDREN.**—Each of the dollar amounts under sections 1313(a) and 1314 of such title.

(c) **DETERMINATION OF INCREASE.**—

(1) **PERCENTAGE.**—Except as provided in paragraph (2), each dollar amount described in subsection (b) shall be increased by the same percentage as the percentage by which benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) are increased effective December 1, 2010, as a result of a determination under section 215(i) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)).

(2) **ROUNDING.**—Each dollar amount increased under paragraph (1), if not a whole dollar amount, shall be rounded to the next lower whole dollar amount.

(d) **SPECIAL RULE.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may adjust administratively, consistent with the increases made under subsection (a), the rates of disability compensation payable to persons under section 10 of Public Law 85-857 (72 Stat. 1263) who have not received compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 3. PUBLICATION OF ADJUSTED RATES.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish in the Federal Register the amounts specified in section 2(b), as increased under that section, not later than the date on which the matters specified in section 215(i)(2)(D) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)(2)(D)) are required to be published by reason of a determination made under section 215(i) of such Act during fiscal year 2011.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

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

I rise in support of this bill which ensures that hard-earned benefits for disabled veterans and their surviving family members keep pace with their living expenses. This bill, like the last, was introduced by Mr. PERRIELLO of Virginia. It will benefit each disabled veteran or survivor from the World War I era through the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I yield to the hardworking, active, and committed Mr. PERRIELLO for an explanation of the bill.

Mr. PERRIELLO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Madam Speaker. Today I rise in support of H.R. 4667, the Veterans’ Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2010, a bill that I was proud to introduce in support of America’s veterans.

Over 140 years ago, President Lincoln called upon our Nation “to care for him, who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan.” This charge is as compelling today as it was in 1865. It underscores the important role that our veterans play in defending our freedoms and the obligation we all have as a Nation to provide our brave veterans the care they need once returning home.

□ 1500

H.R. 4667, the Veterans Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2010, will provide an increase to the rates of basic compensation for disabled veterans and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation to their survivors and dependents, along with other benefits, in order to keep pace with the rising cost of living. The disability COLA would become effective December 1, 2010, and will be equal to that provided on an annual basis to Social Security recipients.

In these challenging economic times, our disabled veterans depend upon these tax-free payments not only to provide for their own basic needs, but for those of their spouses, children, and parents as well. Without an annual COLA increase, these veterans and their families would see the value of their hard-earned benefits slowly erode. We would be derelict in our duty if we failed to guarantee that those who sacrificed so much for this country receive benefits and services that fail to keep pace with their needs.

Doing right by veterans must always be a top priority for Congress. I believe that passage of this bill will send a clear message of support to those who wear the uniform of the United States military, a message that says we will never forget your service and sacrifice and that a grateful Nation will take

care of you when you return from the front lines of freedom.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill on behalf of this Nation’s veterans and continue the bipartisan support that we showed in the committee.

Mr. FILNER. Thank you, Mr. PERRIELLO, and again I want to thank you for your service to our Nation’s veterans.

I reserve the balance of our time.

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4667, the Veterans’ Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2010. This legislation would increase, effective December 1, 2010, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rate of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

Now, this COLA adjustment includes veterans disability compensation, additional compensation for dependents, clothing allowance, dependency and indemnity compensation to surviving spouses and their children. This is an important annual authorization which provides much needed assistance to our Nation’s veterans, and, obviously, I encourage all my colleagues to support the bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers and am prepared to close.

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, I’d like to thank my House colleagues, Mr. HALL of New York, chairman of the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee, and Mr. LAMBORN of Colorado, the ranking member of the subcommittee, as well as the House bill sponsor, Mr. PERRIELLO of Virginia, for their leadership on H.R. 4667. I also thank Chairman FILNER and the ranking member, Mr. BUYER, for advancing this bill. I urge my colleagues to support it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, just like our military men and women did not hesitate to offer to lay down their lives to defend our freedom and the way of life that we cherish, we will not hesitate to defend the funds necessary to support themselves and their families.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4667.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 4667, “Veterans’ Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2010” introduced by my distinguished colleague from Virginia, Representative PERRIELLO.

H. Res. 4667 will increase the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes. Increases will include wartime disability compensation, additional compensation for dependents, clothing allowances, and compensation for the surviving spouse, and for children. The Secretary of Veteran Affairs shall be responsible for publishing in the Federal Register the amounts, as increased, as specified under the Social Security Act. The Secretary of Veteran Affairs shall increase the dollar amounts in effect on November 30, 2010, for the payment of disability compensation for the rate adjustment that will take effect on December 1, 2010.

It is my distinct honor to stand here today to support a bill that will allow us to show our appreciation to our veterans and honor the service of veterans who have become disabled while serving in the armed forces. These veterans have given great contributions and made incredible personal sacrifices so that all of us in this country might live in a safe and secure nation and world. Providing a cost-of-living increase is only a small step towards repaying the insurmountable debt that all of us owe to all veterans. For, what is the price of freedom?

As President Kennedy once said, "The price of freedom is high, but Americans have always paid it." And no one has paid a higher price than the brave men and women through the years who gave the last full measure of devotion to their country. Whether it is the ultimate sacrifice of life or the loss of limb or the loss of time with family and friends, we owe our veterans an enormous outstanding debt of gratitude.

From Bunker Hill to Yorktown, from Washington, DC to the Battle of New Orleans, from Bull Run to Gettysburg and Antietam to Appamattox, brave Americans gave their lives so that the nation might live. And from Alsace Lorain to Verdun, and Normandy to Berlin and Pearl Harbor to Okinawa, from Inchon and Corregidor to Vietnam, Lebanon, Grenada, Kuwait, Afghanistan, and Iraq, Americans have nobly sacrificed their lives so that the world may live in freedom.

The debt of gratitude we owe to the soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen who answered their nation's call and made supreme sacrifices can never be repaid. But the nation can follow President Lincoln's admonition to "care for him who has borne the battle, and for his [family]." Indeed, it is the least we can do.

It is out of my profound respect and gratitude for all who wear and have worn the uniform of the United States that I continue to work so hard to pass legislation that will ensure that veterans receive the health care, job opportunities, housing assistance, and educational benefits they deserve.

Mr. FILNER. I urge my colleagues to support the COLA bill, H.R. 4667.

I yield back the balance of my time. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4667.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

ENERGY JOBS FOR VETERANS ACT

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4592) to provide for the establishment of a pilot program to encourage the employment of veterans in energy-related positions, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4592

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 referred to as the "Energy Jobs for Veterans Act".

SEC. 2. VETERANS ENERGY-RELATED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PILOT PROGRAM.—To encourage the employment of eligible veterans in the energy industry, the Secretary of Labor, as part of the Veteran's Workforce Investment Program, shall carry out a pilot program to be known as the "Veterans Energy-Related Employment Program". Under the pilot program, the Secretary shall award competitive grants to three States for the establishment and administration of a State program to make grants to energy employers and labor-management organizations that provide covered training, on-job training, apprenticeships, and certification classes to eligible veterans. Such a program shall be known as a "State Energy-Related Employment Program".

(b) ELIGIBILITY FOR GRANTS.—To be eligible to receive a grant under the pilot program, a State shall submit to the Secretary an application that includes each of the following:

(1) A proposal for the expenditure of grant funds to establish and administer a public-private partnership program designed to provide covered training, on-job training, apprenticeships, and certification classes to a significant number of eligible veterans and ensure lasting and sustainable employment in well-paying jobs in the energy industry.

(2) Evidence that the State has—

(A) a population of eligible veterans of an appropriate size to carry out the State program;

(B) a robust and diverse energy industry; and

(C) the ability to carry out the State program described in the proposal under paragraph (1).

(3) Such other information and assurances as the Secretary may require.

(c) USE OF FUNDS.—A State that is the recipient of a grant under this section shall use the grant for the following purposes:

(1) Making grants to energy employers and labor-management organizations to reimburse such employers and organizations for the cost of providing covered training, on-job training, apprenticeships, and certification classes to eligible veterans.

(2) Conducting outreach to inform energy employers, labor-management organizations, and veterans, including veterans in rural areas, of their eligibility or potential eligibility for participation in the State program.

(d) CONDITIONS.—Under the pilot program, each grant to a State shall be subject to the following conditions:

(1) The State shall repay to the Secretary, on such date as shall be determined by the Secretary, any amount received under the pilot program that is not used for the purposes described in subsection (c).

(2) The State shall submit to the Secretary, at such times and containing such information as the Secretary shall require, reports on the use of grant funds.

(e) EMPLOYER REQUIREMENTS.—In order to receive a grant made by a State under the pilot program, an energy employer shall—

(1) submit to the administrator of the State Energy-Related Employment Program an application that includes—

(A) the rate of pay for each eligible veteran proposed to be trained using grant funds;

(B) the average rate of pay for an individual employed by the energy employer in a similar position who is not an eligible veteran; and

(C) such other information and assurances as the administrator may require; and

(2) agree to submit to the administrator, for each quarter, a report containing such information as the Secretary may specify.

(f) LIMITATION.—None of the funds made available to an energy employer through a grant under the pilot program may be used to provide training of any kind to a person who is not an eligible veteran.

(g) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Together with the report required to be submitted annually under section 4107(c) of title 38, United States Code, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the pilot program for the year covered by such report. The report on the pilot program shall include a detailed description of activities carried out under this section and an evaluation of the program.

(h) ADMINISTRATIVE AND REPORTING COSTS.—Of the amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations under subsection (j), two percent shall be made available to the Secretary for administrative costs associated with implementing and evaluating the pilot program under this section and for preparing and submitting the report required under subsection (f). The Secretary shall determine the appropriate maximum amount of each grant awarded under this section that may be used by the recipient for administrative and reporting costs.

(i) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section:

(1) The term "covered training, on-job training, apprenticeships, and certification classes" means training, on-job training, apprenticeships, and certification classes that are—

(A) designed to provide the veteran with skills that are particular to an energy industry and not directly transferable to employment in another industry; and

(B) approved as provided in paragraph (1) or (2), as appropriate, of subsection (a) of section 3687 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term "eligible veteran" means a veteran, as that term is defined in section 101(3) of title 38, United States Code, who is employed by an energy employer and enrolled or participating in a covered training, on-job training, apprenticeship, or certification class.