

allow us in Congress to track how VA manages its information technology assets.

I cosponsored this legislation, and I encourage my colleagues to vote "yes" in support.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN).

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman BUYER and Ranking Member EVANS for bringing this important bill to the attention of the House of Representatives.

This legislation will empower the chief information officer of the Department of Veterans Affairs to control and influence information technology in the Department.

I fully support H.R. 4061 and am very pleased to be an original cosponsor.

This bill helps the Department of Veterans Affairs construct a balanced, responsive, and accountable system to manage information technology at VA.

As we have all seen from the emergencies that have recently affected this country, it is important for all of the computers to be able to communicate with each other in every region. A veteran needs to know that he or she will be served when they enter any VA facility.

Under this bill, we are taking the first steps to make sure this happens.

I encourage my colleagues to approve this legislation.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER), a member of the committee.

□ 1530

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I am a cosponsor of H.R. 4061, the Department of Veterans Affairs Information Technology Management Improvement Act of 2005. This important legislation would provide the Chief Information Officer at the Department of Veterans Affairs with future authority over information technology budgets, equipment and personnel.

Importantly, this legislation will centralize information technology at the Department, increasing the ability of the Department to serve veterans by providing information more productively, and improve the delivery of health care to Veterans.

Under this legislation, claims for veterans will be processed more speedily, waiting times for medical care will be reduced, all veterans benefits will be delivered more quickly, and medical data for veterans will be improved through more rapid updating. In short, this legislation will not only improve information technology at the Department but will make a real difference in improving the delivery of health care and other benefits for our Nation's veterans.

This legislation will allow our veterans to save time in accessing the benefits to which they are entitled, improving their experiences at the VA

and improving their quality of life. Should this legislation become law, the Department of Veterans Affairs may improve information technology management at the Department and help better serve our veterans.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH).

Ms. HERSETH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of H.R. 4061, the Department of Veterans Affairs Information Technology Management Improvement Act. This bill helps the VA construct a balanced, responsive and accountable system to manage information technology at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Department Chief Information Officer will be given the control and resources necessary to manage information technology department-wide. Measures of effectiveness across the administrations will be tracked and should demonstrate that VA has become a more effective organization. The CIO will have control of the budget, assets, personnel and systems necessary to achieve this success.

Also under the bill, as the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES) noted, a Deputy CIO will be assigned to each of the three administrations. In this capacity, they are the principal advocates for the business and mission needs of their respective administrations at all levels of use, from senior managers to end-users throughout the field. The Deputy CIO will be responsible to the Department CIO for IT system alignment and related matters but will otherwise be in control of day-to-day IT operations in their respective administration.

I, too, would like to congratulate Chairman BUYER, Ranking Member EVANS, their staffs and all Members who worked hard on working out this improved IT management system for the VA. I am glad to be a cosponsor of this bill which will help our veterans.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend, the ranking member and Marine, LANE EVANS, for his work and cooperation on this bipartisan legislation. This is the way the committee is supposed to work.

We have invested almost 6 years of work on this to bring corrections to IT systems, and I am glad that we have been able to work together in a bipartisan fashion to deliver a product to this floor for which we can be proud of.

I would also like to commend the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), the chairman and ranking members of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, for their hard work in providing the oversight required to define these problematic issues and helping to make needed legislative changes to address these shortcomings at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

I would also like to reiterate my thanks to the gentleman from New

York (Mr. WALSH) for his support in bringing accountability to VA's IT programs within the appropriations process.

I would also like to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES), Army Vietnam vet, for his work on this and the original cosponsorship, along with the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) and the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH).

Finally, I would also like to thank Art Wu, Len Sistek, Kimo Hollingsworth, Ginny Richardson, and Risa Salsburg for their diligence and dedication in serving our Nation's veterans on the committee, and also the staff directors, Jim Lariviere and Jim Holley, both for the majority and the minority.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Department of Veterans Affairs Information Technology Management Improvement Act of 2005. This is a bill whereby when we come to this body we do not leave our experiences behind. We are to learn from the past and to plan for the future. We are to modernize Federal governments, to cut through the bureaucracy, and to create workable solutions that will become a standard that will be leveraged across all departments of the government, creating greater efficiencies, responsiveness to people, and saving money. That is exactly what this product has done, and it is being brought to the floor in a bipartisan fashion, and so I ask all my colleagues to support this.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4061.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. 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 question will be postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BUYER. Mr. 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. 4061.

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

There was no objection.

JOHN H. BRADLEY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OUTPATIENT CLINIC

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill