

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, I believe Chairman FILNER and Ranking Member BUYER have created a bill that will encourage more disabled veterans to participate in sports from the local level up through elite competition such as the Paralympic Games beginning with games in Beijing. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4255, as amended.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FILNER. I thank Mr. BOOZMAN for participating in this debate and for his leadership on the committee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. I would 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. 4255, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, all of us have been to hospitals, we have been to homes where we have seen disabled veterans, whether from the current war or previous wars. We all know that a major factor in their recovery, especially mentally, is a sense of self-worth, a sense that they have a future, a sense that although they have problems physically, they can overcome that and be productive members of our society.

For many of those veterans who were athletes or who were participating in athletics, the opportunity to participate again competitively is one of the most meaningful things they can have in their recovery. And what this program will do, the Paralympic Program, is give both disabled active duty and veterans, the opportunity to compete, to train, and to have that comradeship with fellow athletes, and to show that they are indeed human beings who can participate in this society. That is a major, major part of the healing process.

I urge my colleagues to support this.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. FILNER. I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I just want to associate myself with Mr. FILNER's remarks. I think he said it very, very well. For many individuals, for many soldiers this is such an important thing and truly is part of the healing process. And, again, I just associate myself with his remarks. I also want to again reiterate how much I appreciate Mr. FILNER working with Mr. BUYER to give us such a good bill.

Mr. FILNER. I thank the gentleman.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, as the Chairwoman of the Veterans' Affairs Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4255, as amended, which the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee passed on June 26 and the full Committee approved on July 15.

I would like to congratulate Chairman FILNER for introducing this bill to authorize the VA

to make a grant to the United States Olympic Committee to provide and develop activities for servicemembers and veterans with physical disabilities. I also would like to thank full Committee Ranking Member BUYER for his leadership and willingness to work with the majority to combine provisions of his bill, H.R. 1370, with the Chairman's bill.

The United States Olympic Committee Paralympics Program Act will help increase the participation of disabled veterans in physical activities and sports to promote healthy-living, help elite-level athletes compete in sporting programs, and help our wounded servicemembers transition to the next stage in their lives.

Again, I thank the Chairman and Ranking Member BUYER for their leadership on this important issue. I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 4255.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4255, as amended, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide assistance to the Paralympic Program of the United States Olympic Committee, and for other purposes.

Mr. Speaker, I want to applaud the bipartisan manner in which this bill moved forward through the Committee. I want to especially acknowledge Chairman FILNER for introducing H.R. 4255, the United States Olympic Committee Paralympic Act of 2008 and working with Subcommittee Chairwoman STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN and Ranking Member JOHN BOOZMAN to incorporate into the amended version of the bill several provisions from my bill, H.R. 1370, The Disabled Veterans Sports and Special Events Promotion Act of 2007.

In 2005, the VA and the USOC concluded an agreement to increase efforts to increase participation by disabled veterans in sports at all levels, as part of their rehabilitation from their injuries. I was privileged to participate in encouraging the USOC and VA to reach that agreement and by combining our two bills, we will give VA and the USOC Paralympics some of the resources they will need to meet that goal. I look forward to seeing the VA, USOC Paralympics and their partners ramp up their efforts and am excited that we will have at least 11 disabled veterans participating as members of the U.S. Paralympic Team in Beijing as a beginning of larger disabled veteran participation in the future games.

I am also pleased to see a renewed commitment to providing training opportunities for veterans that will be offered. Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, I believe you and I have created a bill that will encourage more disabled veterans to participate in sports from the local level up through elite competition such as the Paralympic games beginning with games in Beijing. Through the grant program, this bill uses the USOC and its partners to equip, train and support disabled veterans' sports and I urge my colleagues to support this bill as amended.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support H.R. 4255, as amended.

Mr. FILNER. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HARE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4255, 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. BOOZMAN. Mr. 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.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 4137) "An Act to amend and extend the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes," requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. DODD, Mr. HARKIN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. REED, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BROWN, Mr. ENZI, Mr. GREGG, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. BURR, Mr. ISAKSON, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. HATCH, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ALLARD, and Mr. COBURN, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

IMPROVING SCRA AND USERRA PROTECTIONS ACT OF 2008

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6225) to amend title 38, United States Code, relating to equitable relief with respect to a State or private employer, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6225

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 "Improving SCRA and USERRA Protections Act of 2008".

SEC. 2. EQUITY POWERS.

Section 4323(e) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking "may use" and inserting "shall use, in any case in which the court determines it is appropriate,".

SEC. 3. RELIEF FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES DURING PERIOD OF MILITARY SERVICE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title VII of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 591 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"SEC. 707. TUITION, REENROLLMENT, AND STUDENT LOAN RELIEF FOR POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS CALLED TO MILITARY SERVICE.

"(a) TUITION AND REENROLLMENT.—Whenever a servicemember is called, activated, or ordered to military service and withdraws or takes a leave of absence from an institution of higher education in which the servicemember is enrolled, the institution shall—

"(1) provide a credit or refund to the servicemember the tuition and fees paid by