

and people said, Thank you very much for the money, but here is A, B, C, D—what's really happening? I commend Chairman TOWNS for quickly reacting to this and to some other issues that were found to be less than optimal in the stimulus package.

In the case of this legislation, H.R. 2182, we seek to empower with existing funds State and local governments to not have to reach into other money in order to do oversight. This is not to say that we wouldn't prefer that the oversight be done at all times even without Federal money, but at a time in which the stimulus needs to be spent quickly and accurately, this legislation recognizes that money in short supply in States and in cities is likely not to go into the oversight necessary.

Particularly with the chairman's initiative to ensure that transparency be greater than in any previous Congress, I recognize—and he has recognized—that if we want greater transparency, we are going to have to ensure that we not only supply the funds to do the oversight but that we supply the new technology and means to do the oversight. This legislation is deliberately intended to allow for cities and States to make investments in hardware or software that allows for them to better dig down into their procurement process, their spending, to work smarter, not just harder.

Having no other speakers at this time, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to reiterate my strong support of H.R. 2182 as it provides State and local governments with the flexibility and resources they need to properly monitor the stimulus project. In our hearing, they asked for help, and of course, with Congressman ISSA and with members of the committee, we are now giving them that help. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the passage of this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2182.

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.

ADAPTED HOUSING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY GRANT PROGRAM

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1170) to amend chapter 21 of title 38, United States Code, to establish a grant program to encourage the development of new assistive technologies for specially adapted housing, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1170

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY GRANT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 21 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§2108. Specially adapted housing assistive technology grant program

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall make grants to encourage the development of new assistive technologies for specially adapted housing.

“(b) APPLICATION.—A person seeking a grant under this section shall submit to the Secretary an application for the grant in such form and manner as the Secretary shall specify.

“(c) GRANT FUNDS.—(1) The amount of each grant awarded under this section shall be an amount of not more than \$200,000 per year.

“(2) For each year in which the Secretary makes a grant under this section, the Secretary shall make the grant by not later than October 1 of that year.

“(d) USE OF FUNDS.—(1) The recipient of a grant under this section shall use the grant to develop assistive technologies for use in specially adapted housing.

“(2) If the recipient of a grant under this section is awarded a patent related to assistive technology developed with amounts under the grant, the Secretary shall retain not less than a 30 percent interest in such patent.

“(e) REPORT.—Not later than March 1 of each year, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report containing information related to each grant awarded under this section during the preceding calendar year, including—

“(1) the name of the grant recipient;

“(2) the amount of the grant; and

“(3) the goal of the grant.

“(f) FUNDING.—From amounts appropriated to the Department for Medical Services for each fiscal year, \$2,000,000 shall be available for each such fiscal year for the purposes of the program under this section.

“(g) TERMINATION.—The authority to make a grant under this section shall terminate on the date that is five years after the date of the enactment of this section.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 21 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“2108. Specially adapted housing assistive technology grant program.”.

(c) DEADLINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary shall implement the grant program under section 2108 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), by not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 1170, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in about a week, on Monday, May 25, our country will mark the 38th year in which Congress has formally recognized the last Monday of May as Memorial Day in honor of our brave men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our Nation, so I stand before you today with a series of bills to honor our fallen men and women and our current veterans and those on current active duty with deeds and not just with words that we speak on Memorial Day. So we want to honor the legacy of our fallen servicemembers. We look forward to ensuring that our veterans are cared for at the same level of dedication and service that they have provided while in service to our country.

The bills before you today have all come through our Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, chaired by Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN from South Dakota and with her ranking member, Mr. BOOZMAN from Arkansas. They have proven to be a formidable team, a team which works well together, which brings our committee together and which brings us bills that are very important to our veterans today. So I thank both the Chair and her ranking member for all of the good work that they do with our committee.

I think I will yield to Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN to explain the bills because she has played such an important role in them. I will yield to her such time as she may consume.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the chairman for yielding.

As the chairwoman of the Veterans Affairs' Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1170, as amended. I would like to thank Chairman FILNER, Ranking Member BUYER on the full committee and the sponsor of the bill, and subcommittee ranking member, Mr. BOOZMAN, for their leadership and bipartisan support of this bill, which the full committee passed on May 6.

The bill offers important improvements to the Department of Veterans Affairs' Specially Adapted Housing Program by creating a 5-year pilot program to promote the research and development of adaptive technologies. With many veterans returning from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan with injuries such as traumatic brain injury, it is important that research and development help meet the demand for cost-effective solutions that could mitigate the needs for around-the-clock nursing care or institutionalization for seriously wounded veterans. These solutions can be as simple as ramps or other structural modifications or they can be more complex, such as voice recognition controls for a home's heating system.

Also, H.R. 1170, as amended, gives the Department of Veterans Affairs a 30 percent stake in any patent approved as a result of this grant program. This

measure will allow taxpayers to receive a reasonable return on their investment as well as to promote creativity and ingenuity among the designers and inventors working with the VA on these grants.

The Specially Adapted Housing Program has been a tremendous help to many veterans, and it is expected to fund 1,250 projects in 2010. This bill will expand and improve this program, and it is a wise investment in our veterans.

I thank Chairman FILNER for noting the working relationship that I have with the distinguished ranking member, Mr. BOOZMAN of Arkansas. When he once chaired the subcommittee, we worked together then and continue to work today on a whole host of programs, particularly housing for our disabled veterans in light of the current needs of veterans and their families.

I want to thank Mr. BOOZMAN for sponsoring this important bill, and I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 1170, as amended.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, on February 25, 2009, I, along with Congresswoman STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN, introduced H.R. 1170, which would amend chapter 21 of title 38, United States Code, to establish a grant program to encourage the development of new, assistive technologies for specially adapted housing. H.R. 1170, as amended, would authorize the VA to use up to \$2 million per year to provide grants of up to \$200,000 to expand research and development in the areas of adaptive technologies that can be used in the VA's Specially Adapted Housing Program.

The goal of VA's specially adapted housing benefit is to enable severely disabled veterans to live in a home with modifications that make daily life and daily living easier—typical adaptations or structural modifications such as ramps, wider halls and doors, grab rails, and lower counters. Yet there are many emerging technologies that lend themselves well to improving the livability of adapted homes. Some examples of possible home modifications are voice recognition and voice-commanded operations, integrated computer-managed functions, alternative human computer interfaces, living environment controls, adaptive feeding equipment, fall prevention devices, and recreation assistance equipment.

Finally, the bill includes a provision that is a result of funding an R&D program. Under this authorization, the VA would retain a 30 percent interest in any patents evolving from the grant.

I truly appreciate Congresswoman HERSETH SANDLIN in working with me on this very important bipartisan legislation.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN, committee Chairman FILNER, and Ranking Member STEVE BUYER for moving this bill forward in a timely manner, as well

thanking our staffs. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1170, as amended.

With that, having no other speakers, I yield back my time.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I just want to conclude by telling the House that, recently, we had a committee meeting to learn more about how new technologies can augment the VA's ability to efficiently meet the adaptive needs of our veterans and improve the healing process. We have a new Secretary of the VA, who has committed himself to transformation. We have a new Deputy Secretary, Mr. Gould, who comes from IBM and who understands how a big organization can innovate. That's going to be an important part of the VA's moving into the 21st century. This is a part of that.

I thank Mr. BOOZMAN for introducing it. I thank Chair HERSETH SANDLIN for working with him to move this along. I recommend that everybody vote for H.R. 1170.

I yield back the balance of our 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. 1170, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MANDATORY VETERAN SPECIALIST TRAINING ACT OF 2009

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1088) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for a one-year period for the training of new disabled veterans' outreach program specialists and local veterans' employment representatives by National Veterans' Employment and Training Services Institute.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1088

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 "Mandatory Veteran Specialist Training Act of 2009".

SEC. 2. ONE-YEAR PERIOD FOR TRAINING OF NEW DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS AND LOCAL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVES BY NATIONAL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES INSTITUTE.

(a) ONE-YEAR PERIOD.—Section 4102A(c)(8)(A) of title 38, United States Code is amended by striking "three-year period" and inserting "one-year period".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) APPLICABILITY TO NEW EMPLOYEES.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to a State employee assigned to perform the duties of a disabled veterans' outreach program specialist or a local veterans' employment representative

under chapter 41 of such title who is so assigned on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) APPLICABILITY TO PREVIOUSLY-HIRED EMPLOYEES.—In the case of such a State employee who is so assigned on or after January 1, 2006, and before the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall require the State to require, as a condition of a grant or contract under which funds are made available to the State in order to carry out section 4103A or 4104 of title 38, United States Code, each such employee to satisfactorily complete the training described in section 4102A(c)(8)(A) of such title by not later than the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 1088.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation was introduced by Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN of South Dakota. She has demonstrated her commitment to our Nation's veterans for many, many years. Her work as Chair of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, with Mr. BOOZMAN, always bears fruit. H.R. 1088 is one of those bills.

I yield to the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN) as much time as she may consume to explain the bill.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the chairman once again.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1088, the Mandatory Veteran Specialist Training Act of 2009, which the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee passed on March 19 and which the full committee approved on May 6.

I want to thank again Chairman FILNER, the ranking member of the full committee, Mr. BUYER, and once again the distinguished ranking member of the subcommittee, Mr. BOOZMAN, for their leadership and for, again, their bipartisan support of this bill, which I introduced on February 13, 2009.

The bill would amend title 38 to reduce from 3 years to 1 year the period during which disabled veterans' outreach program specialists or local veterans' employment representatives with the Department of Labor must complete the specialized veterans' employment training program provided by the National Veterans' Training Institute. The National Veterans' Training Institute program is designed to give those specialists the correct skill set that can help veterans so that they can