

By providing the necessary training and support, we will catch more human trafficking criminals and save lives, and prevent many other persons, including children, from becoming human trafficking victims.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 4449, the Human Trafficking Prevention Act of 2014.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MEADOWS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4449.

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.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 3230, PAY OUR GUARD AND RESERVE ACT

Mr. PETERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Peters of California moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 3230 (an Act to improve the access of veterans to medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes) be instructed to—

(1) recede from disagreement with section 702 of the Senate amendment (relating to the approval of courses of education provided by public institutions of higher learning for purposes of the All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance Program and the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program conditional on in-State tuition rate for veterans); and

(2) recede from the House amendment and concur in the Senate amendment in all other instances.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XXII, the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

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Mr. PETERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong support of the Veterans' Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act of 2014, which the Senate passed on a bipartisan 93-3 vote last month.

It is no secret that the Department of Veterans Affairs is failing to keep our Nation's promise to our veterans and their families.

Ensuring that our veterans have access to the medical care and benefits that they have earned is one of the most important jobs of Congress and a top priority of mine, given the more than 200,000 veterans who live in San Diego County.

In recent months, failures at the Phoenix VA and other facilities across

the country demonstrated a culture of complacency and ineptitude that is unacceptable and must change.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to my colleague from Phoenix, KYRSTEN SINEMA.

Ms. SINEMA. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from California (Mr. PETERS) for offering this motion to instruct and for his leadership and work on behalf of veteran and military families.

This motion urges House conferees to accept language in the Senate bill that ensures post-9/11 veterans receive in-state tuition at colleges and universities, regardless of their home State. This concept was overwhelmingly supported by the House of Representatives when it passed the GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act in February.

I am a cosponsor of the GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act, authored by Chairman MILLER, and I appreciate his bipartisan leadership and dedication to improving opportunities for veterans. Tuition fairness gives our veterans a better chance to achieve the American Dream.

In April of 2011, as a State senator, I authored and led the effort to pass this same law in Arizona. I am proud to now be a part of the national effort to make college more affordable for our veterans.

As David Lucier, president of the Arizona Veterans and Military Leadership Alliance, said:

This is an opportunity to create the 'next greatest generation' by investing in our veterans as they move out of uniform—to being scholars—to becoming national and global leaders.

I couldn't agree more. Acting on tuition fairness is the right thing to do. Acting on a VA reform bill is also the right thing for Congress to do. But in Arizona, we are not waiting for Congress to act. We are making sure that veterans receive the care they need right now.

In Phoenix, we recently cohosted the Veterans First Clinic, which brought together community providers, the Phoenix VA, and over 20 veteran-serving organizations to help veterans access services. We are leveraging community-based providers to make sure veterans receive timely access to care, and we are holding the VA accountable through monthly reporting meetings. We are moving forward while Washington drags its feet, because in Arizona we believe that veterans and their families should come first. But more action is required.

I appreciate the bipartisan work to advance a VA reform bill, especially from Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member MICHAUD. I call on the conferees to move quickly to produce commonsense reforms that can be signed into law. By working together, we can address this crisis and create a VA system that our veterans deserve.

Again, I thank my colleague from California for offering this motion.

Mr. PETERS of California. I thank my colleague, Ms. SINEMA.

While San Diego's VA centers have performed better than most, and the backlog of benefits claims has been reduced significantly in my region, we can't ignore the larger structural reforms that the entire VA system clearly needs.

In San Diego, my district office staff has been working to help veterans and their families who have experienced the bureaucratic red tape at the VA firsthand. Since coming to Congress last year, we have handled more than 400 veterans' cases and have recovered more than \$750,000 in benefits to which these veterans were entitled.

I have also focused on ways to make the transition from Active Duty service back to civilian life an easier one for veterans and their families. Last year, I engaged with military commanders, nonprofits, and veterans' advocacy organizations to launch the Military Transition Support Project. This collaborative community effort will provide a central hub of information for servicemembers as they become veterans and search for housing, employment, and benefits. It is on its way to being a national model and doesn't cost the Federal Government or taxpayers a dime.

The experience of Dr. Howard and Jean Somers, constituents of mine from Coronado, has only added to my urgency in addressing reform at the VA. The Somers' son Daniel served our country in Operation Iraqi Freedom. As the Somers testified in the House Veterans Affairs Committee 2 weeks ago, their son made several attempts after returning home from combat to seek help and counseling for posttraumatic stress but was ultimately unsuccessful, and eventually he took his own life. The VA system failed Daniel Somers; it failed his parents; and that is unacceptable.

Both the Senate and the House have taken action to make real, substantive changes at the VA. I voted for many of these measures in the House, but the Senate's plan is comprehensive, bipartisan, and is the best opportunity for the quick action that our veterans deserve.

It will benefit thousands of veterans by increasing their access to care by allowing the VA to lease more facilities, hire doctors and nurses to fill their most pressing staff shortages, and by allowing veterans to see non-VA providers if they have been forced to wait for an appointment or live too far from the closest facility.

It would increase accountability on those responsible for the recent failures by allowing the VA Secretary to fire complacent employees, and through changes to the scheduling, staffing, and administrative processes in each facility.

Part of my motion also has to do with ensuring that our veterans and their spouses are able to access a high-quality education after their time of Active Duty has ended.

Veterans are advancing themselves at colleges and universities across my

district, across San Diego, and across the country. Expanding in-state tuition to our veterans, regardless of where they live, would expand their educational opportunities significantly and potentially reduce the financial burden that many of them face.

As of today, only 24 States offer in-state tuition benefits for veterans who have not yet met the standard residency requirements of that State. My home State of California is one of those that does not offer it.

In the University of California system, one of the premier public university systems in the entire world, more than 1,600 veterans are currently enrolled. The in-state tuition at a UC school averages \$13,200 per year. For nonresidents, it is \$36,000. That is a difference of \$23,000 that veterans must pay out of pocket.

UC San Diego, part of which is in my district, enrolls 324 veterans, and nearby San Diego State has 1,127 veterans. In the California State University system, being a non-California resident costs nearly double the tuition, to the tune of more than \$4,000 per year.

By forcing veterans who fought not just for one State or for their home State but for the entire United States, to fit into the standard residency requirements, in many instances we are forcing them to delay their education or vocational training they need for career advancement. Instead of making it more difficult to use their earned GI Bill benefits, we should be making it easier and more financially feasible.

A recent national investigation called "Back Home: The Enduring Battle Facing Post-9/11 Veterans," noted the example of Marine Corps Corporal veteran Brian Oller, a student at UC San Diego's Scripps Institution of Oceanography, who is paying out of pocket to cover part of the \$22,000 tuition, which his GI benefits don't fully pay.

Fifteen thousand veterans are discharged in the San Diego region each year, and about half decide to stay in the area to restart their civilian lives. Many of them are not from California, but they should have access immediately to the in-state tuition rate.

Giving veterans the in-state tuition rate is a bipartisan idea that I know our chairman, Mr. MILLER, supports. The House passed a bill 390-0 to provide this benefit. The comprehensive Senate bill I want us to vote on also includes that language.

Mr. Speaker, I hope we can pass the Veterans Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act in its entirety and provide the necessary relief and support to our veterans and show the American people that Congress is capable of passing comprehensive reforms to what is clearly a broken system.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this motion to instruct. Let's actually get the needed reforms in place and expand educational opportunities and our support for our veterans.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise in opposition to the motion to instruct.

Mr. Speaker, as I said during the debate last week on other motions to instruct that were brought to the floor, improving timely access to quality health care and imposing true accountability for senior managers are the keys to beginning the long process of restoring trust at the Department of Veterans Affairs. This was the central charge to the conferees that are currently meeting at the beginning of our conference, and it remains the same charge tonight.

As I said last week, now is not the time to tie the hands of the conferees with an unnecessary motion on the floor.

I know my colleague, Mr. PETERS, has the best of intentions. They are rooted in his desire to serve veterans of this country, but unfortunately, somebody somewhere has different ideas.

Veterans expect us to do what is best to improve the quality of care that they receive and the delivery of the benefits that they have earned. I certainly expect that none of these votes that have been taken—in fact, I believe we have done four, and another was noticed today—will be used by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle in 30-second political ads.

By adopting the motion to instruct, we would be telling our conferees to recede to the Senate's position on all provisions of the Senate bill.

While I am still hopeful that a deal is possible, Senator SANDERS and I and our staffs and other conferees continue to work each day and into the night. It is becoming more difficult, though, because the Senate has once again changed the goalposts, and I don't know what the Senate's real position is today. In fact, I said last week I don't know if the Senate could vote for their own bill now.

Senator SANDERS has recently indicated his desire to expand the scope of our conference committee's work by adding VA's request—and I say "request," but I really don't know. Is it an emergency request? Is it a supplemental request? Nobody seems to be sure exactly what it is. Most importantly, the VA doesn't know what it is. Senator SANDERS is asking for the inclusion of an additional \$17.6 billion into our conversation.

As I said last week, both the VA Office of Inspector General and the General Accountability Office have said on numerous occasions that they do not have any confidence in the numbers that VA provides right now. Moreover, at every budget hearing before our committee in recent years, the Secretary has sat at the witness table and clearly said—when asked by members: Do you have the funds necessary?—the Secretary says: We have the funds necessary to meet the needs of our veterans.

So why all of a sudden would we believe that VA sees this need for an additional \$10 billion to hire 10,000 more health care staff and \$6 billion in new construction without thoroughly vetting the numbers—also, add an additional \$1.5 billion for IT—when we already know that VA has squandered hundreds of millions of dollars in IT money over the years?

But what I want to do for the Members here tonight is to show you a typical budget submission, a request from the administration on behalf of the Department of Veterans Affairs. It is over 1,300 pages in four volumes to justify the money that is spent at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

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Mr. Speaker, here is the explanation that was given to us for the \$17.6 billion ask by the Department. I have in recent days called it a three-page document—\$17.6 billion justified by a three-page document—but actually, if you take the cover letter off and if you take the closing page off, you have one page to justify \$17.6 billion.

Now, in talking with Senator SANDERS and Acting Secretary Sloan Gibson on the phone a couple of days ago, I expressed that this was not the way to justify this type of expenditure to this Congress. I believe people on both sides of the aisle will clearly admit that this is not what we would call "regular order," but the Acting Secretary said, by noon yesterday, I would receive much more detailed information on this ask. So noon came and it rolled by, and it was at 9 o'clock last night when, finally, we got this deep dive—additional information—and they doubled the pages to two pages of information for a \$17.6 billion ask—two pages. The Acting Secretary will be before our committee tomorrow morning. I hope he brings three pages with him to justify this request.

This is not enough information for such a huge ask by the VA. It is not some unsubstantiated guess put together in the back room of a massive bureaucracy. In fact, interestingly enough, it is titled, "A Working Estimate," as of July 22. This isn't even the number that they are sure that they want to ask for.

What is really disappointing is that I actually believe that we could have already come to an agreement if Senator SANDERS had not insisted on moving the goalpost and adding this \$17.6 billion ask into a clearly defined conference committee.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PETERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I am prepared to close.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, in closing, the House has almost a dozen bills that sit, languishing in the Senate right now, including the authorization of 27 VA clinics that passed in December—important changes to

the processing of disability claims that has been so backlogged over the last few years, education benefits, including the instate tuition bill that passed unanimously out of this House, that has sat, languishing with the other 11 bills in the Senate that are waiting to be brought up for a vote. The Senate could pass these bills and send them straight to the President, and they would become law right away.

Again, to my colleague from California, I would remind you that H.R. 357, the GI Bill Tuition Fairness Act, did pass this House unanimously, and you were a cosponsor of the bill that passed by 390-0 in February. It gives States the incentive to provide all veterans instate tuition rates. It is very similar to the provision in the Senate bill that Mr. PETERS wants our conferees to recede to in conference. Once again, this bipartisan bill could be sent to the President if the Senate would just bring it up for a vote.

We are trying to work out a deal with the Senate, but I submit to this body today that these motions to instruct are clearly becoming unproductive, are slowing down our process, and unfortunately, I think they are being used as nothing more than a political ploy. I find it very interesting that not one member of the minority side on our VA Committee has offered over the last four times a motion to instruct conferees.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on the motion to instruct, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PETERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In closing, first, I lament the notion that this is motivated entirely by politics; although, I understand that would not be entirely unusual in this body. It was 80 degrees in San Diego today—a beautiful day. I don't fly all the way over here to the 91-degree heat that feels like 100 not to do something, and veterans are a top priority for me.

The point of this motion is that we have something right before us that would deal with the culture of complacency that has failed our veterans, and we could pass the bill supported both by Senator BERNIE SANDERS and Senator JOHN MCCAIN, which was passed by a vote of 93-3—I don't think you could get more bipartisan than that—and it would not raise the issues that Chairman MILLER has discussed because, if we wanted to add more money, as Senator SANDERS may want, we could take that up later.

There are very, very many points of agreement in the Senate bill, and it would incorporate many of the things we did here in the House if we would pass it just like this. So it makes all the sense in the world to go ahead and have that bill before us so that we could pass it. It could be on the President's desk tomorrow, and at least many of the points of agreement, like the instate tuition, for example, would

be on their way to helping veterans right away.

Last week, I attended part of the stand down for homeless veterans in San Diego. The Veterans Village of San Diego organized the first stand down in 1988, and there are more than 200 similar programs nationwide that help provide a hand up, not a hand out for homeless vets. No one at the event asked me whether I thought the House or the Senate or the President had the best plan for keeping our promise to America's veterans. They want action, and they want it now. They don't want to hear about how the procedural rules of this place are some way to hide behind our lack of action.

They fought for our country in the jungles of Vietnam, in the deserts of Iraq, and in the mountains of Afghanistan. The fact that this House can't put aside partisan politics to do the right thing for our veterans is even more messed up than anyone can imagine.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PETERS of California. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, surely, the gentleman did not insinuate that I, as the chairman of the most bipartisan committee in this Congress, was being partisan in any anything that I have said or done.

Mr. PETERS of California. Absolutely not, Mr. Chairman. What I am suggesting is that the effect of our inability to vote on this Senate bill, which passed 93-3, sends the message that we just can't get it together.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PETERS of California. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that I do know one bill that is much more bipartisan than the Senate's 93-3 vote, and that was the House's bill that passed 430-0.

Mr. PETERS of California. Mr. MILLER, I could not argue with you. The only other point I would make is that the provisions of that bill are contained within the Senate bill that I hope we are able to vote on. That is why we could kill two birds with one stone.

Mr. Speaker, frankly, if we can't get this kind of thing done, it is no wonder that the approval rating of the body is at 9 percent. It is a shame.

I do urge my colleagues to adopt the motion to instruct so that we can get this effort moving and provide our veterans with the educational opportunities that they deserve, with the support they deserve, and with the opportunities that they deserve because they fought so hard and so bravely for us.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. PETERS of California. 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, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

RECOGNIZING HELEN MADDOX ON HER 100TH BIRTHDAY

(Mr. BARTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, it is very rare that you have a constituent who reaches the century mark, but I have one, a young lady named Helen Maddox in Arlington, Texas, who will be celebrating her 100th birthday later this week.

Helen was not born a native Texan, but she got there as soon as she could. She and her husband moved to Arlington, Texas, over half a century ago, and she has lived there ever since. Her husband is now deceased.

Helen has been very active in the Republican Women, in numerous civic clubs, and has been a very strong personal friend of mine and also a political supporter. She will be celebrating her 100th birthday this week.

On behalf of the United States Congress, I want to wish her the absolute very best birthday and hope that the next 100 are as happy and positive as her first 100 have been.

Happy birthday, Helen Maddox, of Arlington, Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to add to what I just said.

HONORING HELEN MADDOX ON HER 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a very special woman on a very special day—her 100th birthday. Helen Maddox was born on her family's small family farm in Romulus, Michigan on July 28, 1914.

She was the youngest of three and admits that while she was surrounded by love, life back then wasn't always easy. There was always a long list of chores that included taking care of the animals and helping with the crops.

Helen worked at a roadside stand selling fruits and vegetables and says her curly hair was a great marketing tool. People would stop because of her cute curls, and then buy something.

Her parents were community leaders and that is a trait that rubbed off on Helen.

Like many people who weren't lucky enough to be born in Texas, she moved there as an adult. She immediately became involved in the small, but growing community of Arlington, Texas. Back then it was a town of just 15,000, now it is close to 400,000. Helen Maddox played a role in making it a big city with a small town feel.

She started attending city council meetings so she could keep up with what was going on