

TO DIRECT THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO INCLUDE ON THE
INTERNET WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS A
LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDE SCHOLARSHIPS TO VETERANS
AND THEIR SURVIVORS

JUNE 18, 2009.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of
the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. FILNER, from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 1172]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 1172) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include on the Internet website of the Department of Veterans Affairs a list of organizations that provide scholarships to veterans and their survivors, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with an amendment and recommend that the bill as amended do pass.

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AMENDMENT

The amendment is as follows:
Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. PAT TILLMAN VETERANS' SCHOLARSHIP INITIATIVE.

(a) AVAILABILITY OF SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION.—By not later than June 1, 2010, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall include on the Internet website of the Department of Veterans Affairs—

(1) a list of organizations that provide scholarships to veterans and their survivors and, for each such organization, a link to the Internet website of the organization;

(2) a statement that the information described in paragraph (1) is not an all-inclusive list of scholarships available to veterans and their survivors; and

(3) a statement that the Secretary has not verified the information available on the Internet websites of the organizations referred to paragraph (1) and that the Secretary does not endorse any offer made by any sponsor of any such the website.

(b) MAINTENANCE OF SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall make reasonable efforts to notify schools and other appropriate entities of the opportunity to be included on the Internet website of the Department of Veterans Affairs pursuant to subsection (a).

PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

H.R. 1172 was introduced on February 25, 2009, by Representative John Boozman of Arkansas, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 1172, as amended, would require the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to include on the VA's Web site a list of organizations that provide scholarships to veterans and their survivors.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

Beginning with the World War II G.I. Bill, the VA has administered education programs designed to provide a wide range of education and training opportunities to veterans. Over the years, that mission expanded to include veterans' dependents and survivors.

The number of degree-granting institutions and non-degree training schools has significantly increased since World War II. According to the U.S. Department of Education, there are about 4,314 degree-granting institutions and about 2,222 non-degree training entities that qualify for education assistance programs. Each of these programs may also offer non-Federal financial aid directly or indirectly through their association with foundations. The continued expansion of these education funding sources makes it imperative that the VA assist veterans in accessing all relevant scholarship information.

With the proliferation of schools, the increasing cost of education and training, and the myriad of resources of financial assistance, there is a need for a comprehensive location to provide scholarship information to veterans and their survivors. An Internet search for "veterans scholarships" yields over 8,500 links of information. A centralized location would facilitate a veteran's search for college funds.

The Committee believes that the VA should also include relevant sources of financial assistance for dependents and survivors if the providers of such financial aid notify VA about the availability of such assistance.

HEARINGS

On May 21, 2009, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity conducted a legislative hearing on various bills introduced during the 111th Congress, including H.R. 1172. The following witnesses testified: The Honorable Mike Coffman of Colorado; Richard Daley, Associate Legislation Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; John L. Wilson, Associate National Legislative Director, Disabled American Veterans; Mark Seavey, Assistant Director, National Legislative Commission, The American Legion; Raymond C. Kelley, National Legislative Director, AMVETS; Cpl. Wade J. Spann, USMC, Wounded Warrior Project; Keith M. Wilson, Director, Education Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, accompanied by John Brizzi, Deputy Assistant General Counsel, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and, John C. McWilliam, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Veterans' Employment and Training Service, U.S. Department of Labor. Submitting a statement for the record included: The Honorable Bob Filner of California.

SUBCOMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

On June 4, 2009, the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity met in an open markup session and ordered H.R. 1172, as amended, favorably forwarded to the full Committee by voice vote. During consideration of the bill the following amendment in the nature of a substitute was considered:

An amendment in the nature of a substitute by Mr. Boozman of Arkansas to require the VA to provide a statement indicating that the list of scholarships provided on the VA's Web site is not all-inclusive and the information provided is not verified or endorsed by the VA and require the VA to reasonably maintain such a Web site was agreed to by voice vote.

COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

On June 10, 2009, the full Committee met in an open markup session, a quorum being present, and ordered H.R. 1172, as amended, reported favorably to the House of Representatives by voice vote.

COMMITTEE VOTES

Clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires the Committee to list the record votes on the motion to report the legislation and amendments thereto. There were no record votes taken on amendments or in connection with ordering H.R. 1172 reported to the House. A motion by Mr. Stearns of Florida to order H.R. 1172, as amended, reported favorably to the House of Representatives was agreed to by voice vote.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS

In compliance with clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII and clause (2)(b)(1) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee's oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the descriptive portions of this report.

STATEMENT OF GENERAL PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In accordance with clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee's performance goals and objectives are reflected in the descriptive portions of this report.

NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY, ENTITLEMENT AUTHORITY, AND TAX EXPENDITURES

In compliance with clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee adopts as its own the estimate of new budget authority, entitlement authority, or tax expenditures or revenues contained in the cost estimate prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

EARMARKS AND TAX AND TARIFF BENEFITS

H.R. 1172 does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(d), 9(e), or 9(f) of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

COMMITTEE COST ESTIMATE

The Committee adopts as its own the cost estimate on H.R. 1172 prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following is the cost estimate for H.R. 1172 provided by the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974:

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, June 17, 2009.

Hon. BOB FILNER,
*Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 1172, a bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include on the Internet Web site of the Department of Veterans Affairs a list of organizations that provide scholarships to veterans and their survivors.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Camille Woodland.

Sincerely,

ROBERT A. SUNSHINE,
(For Douglas W. Elmendorf, Director).

Enclosure.

H.R. 1172—A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to include on the Internet Web site of the Department of Veterans Affairs a list of organizations that provide scholarships to veterans and their survivors

H.R. 1172 would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide and maintain on its Web site information regarding scholarships that are available to veterans and family members of deceased veterans. Information to be provided on the Web site would include a list of organizations offering scholarships and a link to their Web sites. VA would also be required to notify schools and other organizations of the opportunity to be listed on the Web site. CBO estimates that implementing the bill would have no significant impact on the federal budget.

H.R. 1172 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Camille Woodland. The estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

FEDERAL MANDATES STATEMENT

The Committee adopts as its own the estimate of Federal mandates regarding H.R. 1172 prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 423 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE STATEMENT

No advisory committees within the meaning of section 5(b) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act would be created by H.R. 1172.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 3(d)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee finds that the Constitutional authority for H.R. 1172 is provided by Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States.

APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS OF THE LEGISLATION

Section 1. Pat Tillman Veterans Scholarship Initiative

This section requires the VA to list sources of scholarships for veterans not later than June 1, 2010, and requires the VA Web site to include a statement that the list of organizations offering scholarships to veterans and their dependents is not comprehensive.

This section requires the VA Web site to include a statement that the Department has not verified or validated the information on any linked site and does not endorse any offers made by the sponsors of the Web site.

This section requires the VA to make reasonable efforts to publicize the opportunity to have sources of scholarships listed on the VA's Web site.

