



## Legislative Bulletin – Bills scheduled for consideration under suspension of the Rules on February 13, 2017

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## H.R. 609 – To designate the Department of Veterans Affairs health care center in Center Township, Butler County, Pennsylvania, as the "Abie Abraham VA Clinic" (Rep. Kelly, R-PA)

CONTACT: [Brittan Specht](#), 202-226-9143

### FLOOR SCHEDULE:

Scheduled for consideration on February 13, 2017, under a suspension of the rules, which requires a 2/3 majority for passage.

### TOPLINE SUMMARY:

[H.R. 609](#) would designate the Department of Veterans Affairs health care center in Center Township, Butler County, Pennsylvania, as the "Abie Abraham VA Clinic".

### COST:

A Congressional Budget Office (CBO) cost estimate is not available at this time.

### CONSERVATIVE CONCERNS:

There are no substantive concerns.

- **Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?** No.
- **Encroach into State or Local Authority?** No.
- **Delegate Any Legislative Authority to the Executive Branch?** No.
- **Contain Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits?** No.

### DETAILED SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:

[Sergeant Abie Abraham](#) served in the U.S. Army for 21 years, during which he was a Japanese prisoner of war, and endured starvation, disease, and violence during the Bataan Death March. After his retirement he volunteered over 36,850 hours at the Butler County Veteran's Affairs health care center. He passed away at that center on March 22, 2012, at age 98.

This bill would designate the Department of Veterans Affairs health care center in Center Township, Butler County, Pennsylvania, as the "Abie Abraham VA Clinic".

The House passed an identical bill as H.R. 5317 in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress. The RSC bulletin on H.R. 5317 is available [here](#).

**COMMITTEE ACTION:**

H.R. 609 was introduced on January 23, 2017 and referred to the House Committee on Veteran’s Affairs. The committee has not acted on the bill.

**ADMINISTRATION POSITION:**

A Statement of Administration Policy is not available.

**CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY:**

According to the sponsor, Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: the United States Constitution Article I, Section 8. No enumerating clause was included.

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## **H.R. 512 – WINGMAN Act, as amended (Yoho, R-FL)**

**CONTACT:** [Brittan Specht](#), 202-226-9143

### **FLOOR SCHEDULE:**

Scheduled for consideration February 13, 2017, under a suspension of the rules, which requires a 2/3 majority for passage.

### **TOPLINE SUMMARY:**

[H.R. 512](#) would permit a congressional employee to have read-only access to veteran records in the Veteran Benefits Administration if authorized by the veteran.

### **COST:**

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimate is not available.

Rule 28(a)(1) of the Rules of the Republican Conference prohibit measures from being scheduled for consideration under suspension of the rules without an accompanying cost estimate. Rule 28(b) provides that the cost estimate requirement may be waived by a majority of the Elected Leadership.

### **CONSERVATIVE CONCERNS:**

- **Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?** No.
- **Encroach into State or Local Authority?** No.
- **Delegate Any Legislative Authority to the Executive Branch?** No.
- **Contain Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits?** No.

### **DETAILED SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:**

H.R. 512 would require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to allow a veteran who files a claim for benefits to permit a congressional staff member to have read-only access to the veteran's files at the VA. Each Member of Congress would be able to designate up to two employees to be eligible for such access. This would allow congressional caseworkers to better assist veterans in navigating the VA claims process. Eligible staff must be permanent, full-time employees, whose responsibilities include assisting constituents with issues regarding federal government agencies or departments and must meet the VA's requirements for recognition as an agent or attorney, though such recognition would be prohibited by the legislation. The secretary would be prohibited from imposing any additional eligibility standards for congressional staff.

No additional funds are authorized to carry out this section. For fiscal years 2017-2020, out of existing funding no more than \$10,000,000 may be made available to carry out this section.

The House passed similar legislation as H.R. 5166 by a voice vote in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress. The RSC bulletin on H.R. 5166 is available [here](#).

**COMMITTEE ACTION:**

This bill was introduced by Representative Yoho on January 12, 2017 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The committee has not acted on the bill.

**ADMINISTRATION POSITION:**

No Statement of Administration Policy is available at this time.

**CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY:**

According to the sponsor, Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: Article I, Section 8. No specific enumerating clause was included.

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## **H.R. 244 – HIRE Vets Act, as amended (Cook, R-CA)**

CONTACT: [Brittan Specht](#), 202-226-9143

### **FLOOR SCHEDULE:**

Scheduled for consideration on February 13, 2017, under a suspension of the rules, which requires a 2/3 majority for passage.

### **TOPLINE SUMMARY:**

[H.R. 244](#) would require the Department of Labor to establish a program to solicit information from employers for the purposes of encouraging private sector investments to recruit, employ, and retain those who served in the military with annual presidential awards to private sector employers.

### **COST:**

No Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimate is available at this time.

CBO previously [estimated](#) that enacting similar legislation, H.R. 3268 from the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, would have no net effect on direct spending after the first year of the program, as fees collected would offset any costs. However, the costs of establishing the program in the first year would not be covered by the fees created in the bill. CBO estimated those costs would total \$1 million, for personnel costs, medallions, and administrative supplies and would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds. CBO's estimate was based on the automatic appropriation of fee revenue authorized by the bill as reported by the committee; however, the amended version of the bill considered on the floor, and similar to H.R. 244 as scheduled for consideration in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, requires these funds be subject to appropriation.

### **CONSERVATIVE CONCERNS:**

- **Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?** This bill creates a voluntary award program, funded by fees paid by employers, that requires specific hiring and retention targets created by the federal government.
- **Encroach into State or Local Authority?** No.
- **Delegate Any Legislative Authority to the Executive Branch?** The bill would direct the Secretary of Labor to establish the medallion program by rule and would allow the secretary to provide requirements for the award of medallions to large employers additional to those detailed in the legislation. For small and medium employers, the secretary would be granted full discretion in setting award requirements.
- **Contain Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits?** No.

### **DETAILED SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:**

This bill would direct the Secretary of Labor to establish a HIRE Vets Medallion Program to solicit voluntary information from employers for the purposes of recognizing those who recruit, employ and train veterans, as well as provide community and charitable services supporting the veteran community. The year following

the establishment of this program, the secretary would accept applications for the award and would notify recipients of the award by October 11<sup>th</sup> and publicly announce the recipients in conjunction with Veterans Day. Those receiving the award would be given a HIRE Vets Medallion and a certificate.

The secretary would group the employers by those having 500 or more employees (large employers) and those having less than 500 employees (small and medium employers). For large employers, the secretary would establish two levels of HIRE Vets Medallions, the gold and platinum level. To qualify for a gold award veterans must constitute at least seven percent of all employees hired in a calendar year and the employer must retain 75 percent of veterans hired, the firm must have an established employee veteran organization, and have established programs to enhance the leadership skills of veteran employees. To qualify for a platinum medallion veterans must constitute at least ten percent of all employees hired in a calendar year and the employer must retain 85 percent of veterans hired, have dedicated human resource professionals to support veterans, must provide compensation to deployed reservist and National Guard employees so that their total active-duty pay and salary is equal to their salary prior to being called into active duty, and the employer must have established a tuition assistance program to support veteran employees. For small and medium sized employers the secretary would establish similar awards.

The bill would make the fraudulent display of the medallion unlawful.

The bill would authorize the secretary to assess a fee on employers who apply for the HIRE Vets Medallion and establish a special fund at Treasury for such receipts. These funds would be used, subject to appropriation, to carry out the program.

The House passed similar legislation as H.R. 3826 by voice vote in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress. The RSC bulletin on H.R. 3286 is available [here](#).

#### **COMMITTEE ACTION:**

This bill was introduced by Representative Cook on January 4, 2017 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans Affairs. The committee has not acted on the bill.

#### **ADMINISTRATION POSITION:**

No Statement of Administration Policy is available at this time.

#### **CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY:**

According to the sponsor, Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: Article I, Section 8. No specific enumerating clause was included.

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## H.R. 974 – Boosting Rates of American Veteran Employment Act (Rice, D-NY)

CONTACT: [Brittan Specht](#), 202-226-9143

### FLOOR SCHEDULE:

Scheduled for consideration on February 13, 2017, under a suspension of the rules, which requires a 2/3 majority for passage.

### TOPLINE SUMMARY:

[H.R. 974](#) would allow the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) to give preference in awarding contracts for the procurement of goods and services to those that employ veterans on a full-time basis.

### COST:

No Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimate is available at this time.

Rule 28(a)(1) of the Rules of the Republican Conference prohibit measures from being scheduled for consideration under suspension of the rules without an accompanying cost estimate. Rule 28(b) provides that the cost estimate requirement may be waived by a majority of the Elected Leadership.

### CONSERVATIVE CONCERNS:

- **Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?** No.
- **Encroach into State or Local Authority?** No.
- **Delegate Any Legislative Authority to the Executive Branch?** No.
- **Contain Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits?** No.

### DETAILED SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:

H.R. 974 would authorize the secretary to give preference to organizations when awarding contracts based on the percentage of full-time veteran employees. If an organization is found to have misrepresented the veteran status of their employees, the organization would be forbidden from contracting with the VA for at least five years.

The House passed similar legislation as H.R. 1382 by vote of [404-0](#) in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress. The RSC bulletin on H.R. 1382 is available [here](#).

### COMMITTEE ACTION:

This bill was introduced by Representative Rice on February 7, 2017 and referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The committee has not acted on the bill.

### ADMINISTRATION POSITION:



No Statement of Administration Policy is available at this time.

**CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY:**

According to the sponsor, Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: Article I, Section 8.

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