AMENDMENT TO RULES COMMITTEE PRINT FOR

H.R. 6395

OFFERED BY MR. GOLDEN OF MAINE

At the end of subtitle C of title VII, add the following new section:

SECTION 111. PANDEMIC HEALTH ASSESSMENTS EVALUATE EXPOSURE TO OPEN BURN PITS AND TOXIC AIRBORNE CHEMICALS.

(a) Exposure to Open Burn Pits and Toxic Airborne Chemicals or Other Airborne Contaminants as Part of Health Assessments for Members of the Armed Forces and Veterans During a Pandemic and Inclusion of Information in Registry.—

(1) Health assessment.—The Secretary of Defense and Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that the first health assessment conducted for a member of the Armed Forces or veteran after the individual tested positive for a virus certified by the Federal Government as a pandemic includes an evaluation of whether the individual has been—

(A) based or stationed at a location where an open burn pit was used; or
(B) exposed to toxic airborne chemicals or other airborne contaminants relating to service in the Armed Forces, including an evaluation of any information recorded as part of the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry.

(2) Inclusion of Individuals in Registry.—If an evaluation conducted under paragraph (1) with respect to an individual establishes that the individual was based or stationed at a location where an open burn pit was used, or that the individual was exposed to toxic airborne chemicals or other airborne contaminants, the individual shall be enrolled in the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry unless the member elects to not enroll in such registry.

(3) Rule of Construction.—Nothing in this subsection may be construed to preclude eligibility of a veteran for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs by reason of the history of exposure of the veteran to an open burn pit not being recorded in an evaluation conducted under paragraph (1).

(4) Definitions.—In this subsection:

(A) Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry.—The term “Airborne Hazards
and Open Burn Pit Registry” means the registry established by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under section 201 of the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans’ Benefits Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–260; 38 U.S.C. 527 note).

(B) OPEN BURN PIT.—The term “open burn pit” has the meaning given that term in section 201(c) of the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans’ Benefits Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–260; 126 Stat. 2422; 38 U.S.C. 527 note).

(b) STUDY ON IMPACT OF VIRAL PANDEMICS ON MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES AND VETERANS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED TOXIC EXPOSURE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall conduct a study, through the Airborne Hazards and Burn Pits Center of Excellence (in this subsection referred to as the “Center”), on the health impacts of infection with a virus designated as a global pandemic, including a coronavirus, to members of the Armed Forces and veterans who have been exposed to open burn pits and other toxic exposures for the purposes of understanding the health impacts of the virus and whether individuals
infected with the virus are at increased risk of severe
symptoms due to previous conditions linked to toxic
exposure.

(2) PREPARATION FOR FUTURE PANDEMIC.—
The Secretary, through the Center, shall analyze po-
tential lessons learned through the study conducted
under paragraph (1) to assist in preparing the De-
partment of Veterans Affairs for potential future
pandemics.

(3) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

(A) CORONAVIRUS.—The term
“coronavirus” has the meaning given that term
in section 506 of the Coronavirus Preparedness
and Response Supplemental Appropriations
Act, 2020 (Public Law 116–123).

(B) OPEN BURN PIT.—The term “open
burn pit” has the meaning given that term in
section 201(c) of the Dignified Burial and
Other Veterans’ Benefits Improvement Act of
2012 (Public Law 112–260; 126 Stat. 2422; 38