AMENDMENT TO RULES COMMITTEE PRINT 115–23

OFFERED BY MR. MAST OF FLORIDA

Page 175, after line 24, insert the following:

SEC. 5___. ESTABLISHMENT OF SEPARATION OATH FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The United States Armed Forces is the largest, all-volunteer military force in the world, yet less than one percent of the American population serves in the Armed Forces.

(2) Each branch of the Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard) instills in its members a sense of duty and obligation to the United States, their branch of service, and their comrades-in-arms.

(3) The Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that approximately 20 veterans of the Armed Forces commit suicide each day and a veteran’s risk of suicide is 21 percent higher compared to an adult who has not served in the Armed Forces.
(4) The Department of Veterans Affairs is aggressively undertaking measures to prevent these tragic outcomes, yet suicide rates among veterans remain unacceptably high.

(5) Upon enlistment or appointment in the Armed Forces, a new member is obligated to take an oath of office or oath of enlistment.

(6) Most members of the Armed Forces view this oath not as an imposition, but as a promise that they are bound to fulfill.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF SEPARATION OATH.—Section 502 of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (b) as subsection (c) and, in such subsection, by striking “The oath” and inserting “An oath established by this section”; and

(2) by inserting after subsection (a) the following new subsection (b):

“(b) SEPARATION OATH.—Prior to retirement or other separation from the armed forces, other than separation pursuant to the sentence of a court-martial, a member of an armed force may take the following oath:

“I, _______________ ________________, recognizing that my oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies,
foreign and domestic, has involved me and my fellow
members in experiences that few persons, other than
our peers, can understand, do solemnly swear (or af-
firm) to continue to be the keeper of my brothers-
and sisters-in-arms and protector of the United
States and the Constitution; to preserve the values
I have learned; to maintain my body and my mind;
and to not bring harm to myself without speaking to
my fellow veterans first. I take this oath freely and
without purpose of evasion, so help me God.’”.

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—

(1) SECTION HEADING.—The heading of section
502 of title 10, United States Code, is amended to
read as follows:

“§502. Enlistment oath and separation oath: who
may administer”.

(2) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections
at the beginning of chapter 31 of title 10, United
States Code, is amended by striking the item relat-
ing to section 502 and inserting the following new
item:

“502. Enlistment oath and separation oath: who may administer.”.