AMENDMENT TO RULES COMMITTEE PRINT 116-19

OFFERED BY MRS. WALORSKI OF INDIANA

Page 733, after line 15, insert the following new section:

SEC. 1092. SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING MILITARY WORKING DOGS AND SOLDIER HANDLERS.

(a) CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS.—The Congress finds that—

(1) the 341st Training Squadron, 37th Training Wing at Lackland Air Force Base provides highly trained military working dogs to the Department of Defense and other government agencies;

(2) in 2010, the operational needs of the Army for military working dogs increased without an increase in resources to train a sufficient number of dogs for the detection of improvised explosive devices at the 341st Training Squadron;

(3) the Army initiated the tactical explosive detection dog program in August 2010 as a nontraditional military working dog program to train and field improvised explosive device detection dogs for
use in Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom;

(4) the tactical explosive detection dog program was created to reduce casualties from improvised explosive devices in response to an increase in the use of asymmetric weapons by the enemy;

(5) the tactical explosive detection dogs were a unique subset of military working dogs because the Army selected and trained soldiers from deploying units to serve as temporary handlers for only the duration of deployment to Operation Enduring Freedom;

(6) the tactical explosive detection dogs and their soldier handlers, like other military working dog and handler teams, formed strong bonds while training for combat and performing extremely dangerous improvised explosive device detection missions in service to the United States;

(7) the tactical explosive detection dog program was a nontraditional military working dog program that terminated in February 2014;

(8) at the termination of the tactical explosive detection dog program in February 2014, neither United States law nor Department of Defense policy established an adoption order priority, and Depart-
ment of Defense policy only provided that military
working dogs be adopted by former handlers, law en-
forcement agencies, and other persons capable of hu-
manely caring for the animals;

(9) an August 2016 report to Congress by the
Air Force entitled “Tactical Explosive Detector Dog
(TEDD) Adoption Report” concluded that the Army
had a limited transition window for the disposition
of tactical explosive detection dogs and the lack of
a formal comprehensive plan contributed to the dis-
organized disposition process for the tactical explo-
sive detection dogs;

(10) the August 2016 report stated that, in
2014, the Army disposed of 229 tactical explosive
detection dogs;

(11) 40 tactical explosive detection dogs were
adopted by handlers, 47 dogs were adopted by pri-
vate individuals, 70 dogs were transferred to Army
units, 17 dogs were transferred to other government
agencies, 46 dogs were transferred to law enforce-
ment agencies, and 9 dogs were deceased;

(12) the disposition of tactical explosive detec-
tion dogs was poorly executed, proper procedures
outlined in Department of Defense policy were ig-
nored, and, as a result, the former soldier handlers
were not provided the opportunity to adopt their tactical explosive detection dogs;

(13) the Army should have deliberately planned for the disposition of the tactical explosive detection dogs and provided appropriate time to review and consider adoption applications to mitigate handler and civilian adoption issues;

(14) section 342(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 (Public Law 114–92; 129 Stat. 793) amended section 2583(c) of title 10, United States Code, to modify the list of persons authorized to adopt a military animal and prioritize the list with preference, respectively, to former handlers, other persons capable of humanely caring for the animal, and law enforcement agencies;

(15) since 2000, Congress has passed legislation that protects military working dogs, promotes their welfare, and recognizes the needs of their veteran handlers;

(16) Congress continues to provide oversight of military working dogs to prevent a reoccurrence of the disposition issues that affected tactical explosive detection dogs;

(17) former soldier handlers should be reunited with their tactical explosive detection dogs;
(18) congressional recognition of the military service of tactical explosive detection dogs and their former soldier handlers is a small measure of gratitude this legislative body can convey;

(19) over 4 years have passed since the termination of the tactical explosive detection dog program;

(20) Congressman Walter B. Jones has been a long-time advocate for military working dogs and their handlers;

(21) Congressman Walter B. Jones has worked to ensure that handlers are given priority when their military working dogs reach retirement;

(22) Congressman Walter B. Jones was a strong proponent of the Wounded Warrior Service Dog program, which is a valuable program that helps wounded members of the Armed Forces manage and recover from post-traumatic stress;

(23) the advocacy of Congressman Walter B. Jones for military working dogs is well known throughout the nonprofit community that supports military working dogs;

(24) Congressman Walter B. Jones worked with the Department of Defense and the Senate to update the language in the Air Force Manual on Mili-
tary Working Dogs to clarify that military working
dogs are not equipment and to indicates the true
level of appreciation and respect the Department of
Defense has for these valuable members of the mili-
tary team;

(25) Congressman Walter B. Jones was the
chief legislative sponsor of the Military Working Dog
Teams Monument, which was built with no taxpayer
dollars but through corporate and private donations;
and

(26) with the support of Congressman Walter
B. Jones, the National Defense Authorization Act
for Fiscal Year 2008 (Public Law 110–181) author-
ized the Burnam Foundation to design, fund, build,
and maintain the Military Working Dog Teams Na-
tional Monument.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
gress to—

(1) recognize the efforts of Congressman Walter
B. Jones to promote military working dogs as uns-
sung heroes on the battlefield and in helping wound-
ed warriors recover from physical and mental inju-
ries;
(2) recognize the service of military working dogs and soldier handlers from the tactical explosive detection dog program;

(3) acknowledge that not all tactical explosive detection dogs were adopted by their former soldier handlers;

(4) encourage the Army and other government agencies, including law enforcement agencies, with former tactical explosive detection dogs to prioritize adoption to former tactical explosive detection dog handlers; and

(5) honor the sacrifices made by tactical explosive detection dogs and their soldier handlers in combat.