

programs for which they are eligible. They said that seniors needed more services in their communities to avoid spending down their assets to qualify for Medicaid. They said that we needed a greater focus on mental health and elder justice. The reauthorization of the Older Americans Act addresses these needs, and I hope that this important legislation will pass this Congress.

However, we must do more to assist grandparent caregivers. These grandparents make up 5.7 million households living with over 6.1 million children, evidence that many of these grandparents are oftentimes caring for more than one child. In my congressional district, there are over 10,000 grandparents who are responsible for their grandchildren's needs. Indeed, the Seventh District of Illinois, my congressional district, has the highest percentage of children living with grandparents in the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that you can measure the greatness of a society by how well it treats its young, how well it treats its old, and how well it treats those who have difficulty caring for themselves. In this case when we provide grandparents, senior citizens, with the opportunity to help raise their grandchildren, then we are doing the Nation a great service.

I thank all of those who rose to support this legislation.

□ 1830

Mr. KUHLMAN of New York. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers, but I would like to make some closing remarks. I want to say that I had the pleasure of serving, together with Chairman PATRICK TIBERI from Ohio, and together we led our committee through the effort of the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act.

It was of great satisfaction to me, because we were able to pass amendments and requests for an increase in authorization for this very important act.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KUHLMAN of New York. Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support and cosponsor H. Res. 874, a resolution honoring America's senior citizens for their contributions to American life. I am particularly pleased by the language encouraging young people to seek out and talk to our Nation's seniors about these seniors' life experiences. Talking to beloved grandparents, aunts, uncles, or friends about their past is a great way to learn history and gain an understanding of the past that simply cannot be obtained from a textbook.

I hope that, in the limited time left in this congressional session, we would further demonstrate our commitment to America's seniors by voting on my Senior Citizens' Improved

Quality of Life Act, H.R. 5211. H.R. 5211 contains a number of items of great importance to America's seniors. H.R. 5211 helps seniors by:

Repealing all taxes on Social Security benefits. Since Social Security benefits are financed with tax dollars, taxing these benefits is an example of double taxation. The benefits tax also reduces Social Security benefits by subterfuge.

Ensuring that Social Security trust fund money is used only for Social Security. H.R. 5211 requires that all money raised for the Social Security trust fund will be spent in payments to beneficiaries, with excess receipts invested in interest-bearing certificates of deposit. This will keep Social Security trust fund money from being diverted to other programs, as well as allow the fund to grow by providing for investment in interest-bearing instruments. Ending the raid of the Social Security trust fund is a vital first step in any serious Social Security reform plan. Protecting the trust fund also demonstrates our commitment to putting the priorities of the American people ahead of special interest pork barrel spending.

Repealing provisions of Federal law that restrict the ability of senior citizens to form private contracts for health care services. This restriction violates the rights of seniors who may wish to use their own resources to obtain procedures or treatments not covered by Medicare, or to simply avoid the bureaucracy and uncertainty that come when seniors must wait for the judgment of a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS, bureaucrat before finding out if a desired treatment is covered. H.R. 5211 also stops the Social Security Administration from denying Social Security benefits to seniors who refuse to enroll in Medicare Part A. Forcing seniors to enroll in Medicare Part A as a condition for receiving Social Security violates the promise represented by Social Security. Americans pay taxes into the Social Security trust fund their whole working lives and are promised that Social Security will be there for them when they retire. Yet, today, seniors are told that they cannot receive these benefits unless they agree to join another government program.

Allowing seniors who neither want nor need to participate in the Medicare program to refrain from doing so and ensuring seniors have the freedom to use their own resources to obtain quality health care will strengthen the Medicare program for those seniors who do wish to receive Medicare benefits. Of course, H.R. 5211 does not take away Medicare benefits from any senior. It simply allows each senior to choose voluntarily whether or not to accept Medicare benefits.

Ensuring that Social Security benefits only go to American citizens. Proposals, such as those contained in the Reid-Kennedy immigration bill, to allow noncitizens, including those who entered the country illegally, to receive Social Security benefits are a slap in the face to America's workers and seniors. H.R. 5211 ensures that only American citizens who have paid into the Social Security trust fund can receive Social Security benefits.

Providing seniors with a tax credit to help cover their prescription drug expenses not covered by Medicare and repealing Federal barriers that prohibit seniors from obtaining quality prescription drugs from overseas. Even though Congress added a prescription drug benefit to Medicare, many seniors still have

difficulty affording their prescription drugs. One reason is because the new program creates a "doughnut hole," where seniors must pay for their prescriptions above a certain amount out of their own pockets until their expenses reach a level where Medicare coverage resumes. H.R. 5211 helps seniors cope with these costs by providing them with a tax credit equal to 80 percent of their out-of-pocket pharmaceutical costs.

H.R. 5211 also lowers the price of pharmaceuticals by making two changes in the law to create a free market in pharmaceuticals. First, H.R. 5211 allows anyone wishing to import a drug to submit an application to the Food and Drug Administration, FDA, which then must approve the drug unless the FDA finds the drug is either not approved for use in the U.S. or is adulterated or misbranded. Second, H.R. 5211 ensures that lawful internet pharmacies can continue to offer affordable prescription drugs free of Federal harassment.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I reiterate my support for H. Res. 874 and my hope that Congress will continue to show its appreciation for America's seniors by voting on my Senior Citizens' Improved Quality of Life Act before adjourning for the year.

Mr. KUHLMAN of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. KUHLMAN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 874, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title of the resolution was amended so as to read: "A Resolution recognizing and honoring older Americans."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING AND SUPPORTING EFFORTS OF STATE OF NEW YORK TO DEVELOP NATIONAL PURPLE HEART HALL OF HONOR

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 419) recognizing and supporting the efforts of the State of New York to develop the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor in New Windsor, New York, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 419

Whereas George Washington, at his headquarters in Newburgh, New York, on August 7, 1782, devised a Badge of Military Merit to be given to enlisted men and noncommissioned officers for meritorious action;

Whereas the Badge of Military Merit became popularly known as the "Purple Heart" because it consisted of the figure of a heart in purple cloth or silk edged with narrow lace or binding and was affixed to the uniform coat over the left breast;

Whereas Badges of Military Merit were awarded during the Revolutionary War by General George Washington at his headquarters, in Newburgh, New York, on May 3 and June 8, 1783;

Whereas the Badge of Military Merit, an award for military merit in the Revolutionary War, is the inspiration for today's Purple Heart medal;

Whereas on the bicentennial of General Washington's birthday in February 1932, the Badge of Military Merit was redesignated by General Douglas MacArthur, then Chief of Staff of the Army, as the Purple Heart, to be awarded to persons killed or wounded in action against an enemy of the United States;

Whereas more than 800,000 members of the Armed Forces have been awarded the Purple Heart;

Whereas the State of New York has dedicated substantial resources to the creation of the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor to be constructed at the New Windsor Cantonment, a New York State Historic Site, in New Windsor, New York, to honor those individuals who have been awarded the Purple Heart and to inform and educate the people of the United States about the history and importance of that distinguished combat award;

Whereas the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor will be a permanent place of remembrance of the service and sacrifices made by the members of the Armed Forces wounded or killed in service to America throughout the Nation's history, both at home and abroad; and

Whereas as the Nation continues to defend the American Way, there will be a need for a distinguished place to honor those who in the future are awarded the Purple Heart for their service and sacrifice: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—

(1) recognizes and supports the efforts of the State of New York to develop and maintain the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor in New Windsor, New York, to honor those individuals who have been awarded the Purple Heart and to inform and educate the people of the United States about the history and importance of that distinguished combat award; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States as well as Federal departments and agencies to cooperate, assist, and participate in educating and informing individuals about the history and importance of the Purple Heart and about the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 419, recognizing and supporting the efforts of the State of New York to develop the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor in New Windsor, New York.

Mr. Speaker, let me first take just a moment to thank my colleague and good friend, the gentlewoman from

New York (Mrs. KELLY), and the State of New York for establishing a place for Americans to come and honor those men and women of our military who have sacrificed so much for America. They are the individuals who fight for us, who sweat for us, who bleed for us, and, sadly and unfortunately, sometimes who die for us.

The Purple Heart is a unique symbol that recognizes the sacrifices made by the men and women of the Armed Forces, sacrifices made for the freedoms this great country offers, freedoms not just for themselves, but for future generations of Americans.

It is only fitting that we have a place such as the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor to honor those men and women so that future generations can go there and learn about those fine young Americans who have ensured that we can all live free.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. SKELTON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 419, which recognizes the efforts of the State of New York to establish the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor.

And, I recognize the gentlewoman from New York, Mrs. SUE KELLY, the sponsor of this measure for her efforts. One might wonder why the state of New York is leading the effort to establish a center that focuses on the history and importance of this honored military award. The reason is simple, in the summer of 1782, during the Revolutionary War; General George Washington devised two new badges, one of which was the Badge of Military Merit, which we know today as the Purple Heart.

General Washington at the time wrote ". . . whenever any singularly meritorious action is performed, the author of it shall be permitted to wear on his facings over the left breast, the figure of a heart in purple cloth, or silk, edged with narrow lace or binding." Three soldiers are known to have received the original honor badge, Sergeant Daniel Bissell of the 2nd Connecticut Regiment of the Continental Line, Sergeant William Brown of the 5th Connecticut Regiment of the Continental Line, and Sergeant Elijah Churchill of the 2nd Continental Dragoons, also a Connecticut regiment. However, after the Revolution, the award fell into disuse and was not proposed for use again until after World War I.

In 1927, Army Chief of Staff General Charles P. Summerall directed that proposed legislation be sent to Congress to revive the Badge of Military Merit. However, it was not until 1931, when General Summerall's successor, General Douglas MacArthur pushed forward the idea to reinstate the badge. It was on the 200th anniversary of George Washington's birth, February 22, 1932, that the War Department announced General Order No. 3, which established the Purple Heart.

In 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt extended the award to the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, and established a uniform application of standards in the Army and

Navy. President Harry S. Truman retroactively extended the eligibility for the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard back to April 5, 1917, and in 1962, President John F. Kennedy extended eligibility to any "civilian national of the United States, who while serving under competent authority in any capacity with an armed force . . . , has been, or may hereafter be, wounded" to qualify for the Purple Heart.

Mr. Speaker, the Purple Heart has an illustrious career and it is recognition of the enemy-related injuries a service member sustains. Today, there are more than 800,000 members of the Armed Forces who have been awarded the Purple Heart. The State of New York has been working to establish a National Purple Heart Hall of Honor at the New Windsor Cantonment in New Windsor, New York to provide a permanent place of remembrance of the service and sacrifices made by men and women in uniform throughout our nation's history. This resolution before us recognizes the efforts of the State of New York, and encourages the education and information on the history and importance of this distinguished combat award.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. KELLY).

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to encourage my colleagues to join me in honoring the extraordinary sacrifices made by American's veterans by voting "yes" on H. Con. Res 419.

This resolution supports the establishment of a National Purple Heart Hall of Honor in the birthplace of the Purple Heart in New Windsor, New York. The Purple Heart is the oldest and one of the most prestigious honors bestowed upon an American soldier. By passing this legislation today, we recognize the sacrifices of the brave men and women who have received this honor.

The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor will uniquely highlight the stories of the Purple Heart veterans. Every Purple Heart veteran is a hero whose story needs to be held. By hearing these stories we can fully honor their sacrifices and learn from their experiences. The stories will echo within the halls of the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor, and they should inspire our Nation not only to preserve the legacy of our military heroes, but to better appreciate the freedoms for which they fought.

The Hall of Honor is scheduled to be officially dedicated November 10. It will be located at New Windsor Cantonment, the site in my congressional district. This is the site of the last encampment of the Continental Army, where General George Washington first presented the Badge of Military Merit in 1782. Since then more than 800,000 members of the Armed Forces have been awarded this medal, which is now called the Purple Heart. It is an honor reserved for those soldiers who are wounded or killed while defending the greatest of our principles, freedom.

