

country deserve a patriotic and esteemed burial.

It is with these thoughts in mind that I not only compliment the committee, the chairman and ranking member and those who worked on it, but I endorse it wholeheartedly and urge its passage.

Mr. STUMP. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. BACHUS], a member of the committee.

Mr. BACHUS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Madam Speaker, I want to commend the chairman of our committee, the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP], and the gentleman from New York [Mr. QUINN], the chairman of the subcommittee. What they have done through their leadership on this bill is to give us a much better piece of legislation than what we had when it came over from the Senate.

The bill is not to punish; the bill is to protect our veterans. It is to respect our veterans. It is meant to protect them. It is not punitive. This bill does a very fine job of doing that.

When the bill came over from the Senate, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. SKELTON] talked about a loophole, and I think that is a very good word. I think the gentleman is correct, in that when it came over from the Senate it said that certain people could not be buried in a National Cemetery if they had committed a Federal offense or a Federal capital offense. We agreed with that.

But the Committee on Veterans' Affairs felt we should not set up a preference for someone who commits Federal offenses, nor should there be preferential treatment given to Federal offenses as opposed to State offenses. In other words, if you blew up a Federal building, if you killed a Federal officer, if you committed a murder on an Indian reservation, you would be prohibited from being buried in a national cemetery; but if you blew up a city hall, if you killed a sheriff, if you walked in a McDonald's and killed 20 people, there would be no prohibition on you, a mass murderer, being buried in a national cemetery.

We took care of that simply by saying that all capital offenses were covered. What the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP] took leadership on is he was interested in respecting our cemeteries, preserving their dignity, thinking about those heroes who are buried there, and our statement to the Nation on who are our heroes.

The Senate bill, I think, was punitive, in that it denied to the widows, to the dependents, all benefits, and that was not what we were after. That is not what we were seeking. We were seeking to protect and to respect, not to be punitive.

The final product I wholly endorse. I originally introduced part of this legislation in response to a lynching of a 19-year-old young man in Mobile County.

The bill that came from the Senate would not have addressed this. The people that participated in the military honor guard protested having to participate in honoring a man who had just been executed in the electric chair in Alabama. The Senate bill did not address that; the House bill did.

Madam Speaker, this is a much better bill, and I urge its passage, and I thank the chairman and the subcommittee chairman.

Mr. EVANS. Madam Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. RODRIGUEZ], a fighter for veterans and member of the committee.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend the leadership for taking swift and precise action to prevent violent criminals from being honored in our Nation's veterans' cemeteries.

The bill we are passing today amends earlier provisions which may have unfairly targeted those who would be blamed, veterans' families or veterans who suffer from mental illness. I believe the focus of this bill on actual convicts and veterans who obviously committed the crime with the requisite mental intent protects due process for veterans and their families.

In protecting veterans and veterans' families from the arbitrary elimination of benefits, this legislation strikes the resounding chord that we will not bless criminal veterans with the honor of burial in our national cemeteries.

Madam Speaker, in closing, let me thank the chairman and the ranking member, as well as the gentleman from New York, Chairman QUINN. I think the gentleman did an exceptional job in reaching out to us in a bipartisan manner.

Mr. EVANS. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, once again I would like to commend the gentleman from New York [Mr. QUINN] and the gentleman from California [Mr. FILNER], the chairman and ranking member of this subcommittee, and also again the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. BACHUS] and the gentleman from Texas [Mr. RODRIGUEZ] and the ranking member of the full committee, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. EVANS], for all their fine work on this bill. I think we have come up with a very fine product, and I would urge all Members to support it.

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of S. 923, a bill to deny veterans burial benefits to persons convicted of Federal capital offenses. I would also like to commend the chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Mr. STUMP, for his guidance in bringing this important bill before the House.

On June 18, I introduced H.R. 1955 which is similar to the legislation before the House today. As a member of the VA-HUD Appropriations subcommittee, I felt it was necessary and appropriate to introduce this legislation

after the Senate passed S. 923 by a vote of 98 to 0.

As pictures of the Oklahoma City bombing were brought into the lives of everyone across this great country, no one watched with more horror than I did. It will always remain ingrained in our hearts, our minds, and our souls.

Like the rest of the Nation, I was saddened more by the fact the person responsible for killing 168 people in the most heinous domestic terrorist act ever committed could receive a hero's burial with taps, a 21-gun salute, and a flag-draped coffin.

S. 923 is the right thing to do. Our Nation's veterans' cemeteries are sacred ground, and they are a solemn and sad reminder of the price our Nation has paid for the freedom we enjoy every day. It is wrong for those veterans and their dependents to live with the thought that someone who has killed so many innocent lives on our own soil could be laid to rest next to these fallen heroes.

I commend Chairman STUMP and the rest of the Veterans' Committee for their diligence on this issue. I would also like to thank the chairman for allowing me to testify before his committee on this very issue. All of us, including myself, who served in our armed services are thankful for his leadership to ensure our Nation's cemeteries remain sacred.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. STUMP. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 923 and H.R. 2367.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. STUMP. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. STUMP].

The amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The Senate bill was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed.

The title of the Senate bill was amended so as to read:

An Act to amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit interment or memorialization in certain cemeteries of persons committing Federal or State capital crimes.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

IN HONOR OF JOHN N. STURDIVANT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland [Mrs. MORELLA] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MORELLA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of John Sturdivant, a good friend of mine and a good friend of hundreds of thousands of Federal employees, including those he knew personally and those whom he never met. John died after a courageous struggle with cancer on Tuesday night. His death and the loss of his leadership are devastating blows to his family, his friends, and all Federal employees. I will miss him very much.

As president of the American Federation of Government Employees since 1988, John was an outstanding champion of Federal employees during a time of rapid downsizing and unprecedented attacks against Federal employees.

He was a wonderful ally to have in our fight for Federal employees. We worked together to successfully reform the Hatch Act and give Federal employees the political voice they deserve.

In 1995, we stood together protesting the deleterious and wasteful Government shutdowns. He presented not only compelling arguments against the Government shutdowns, but he also voiced the human costs of the Government shutdown in a very powerful way.

He successfully advocated the use of official time and led the charge against excessive Government privatization. John was there, with me and several of my colleagues, as we successfully fought against proposals to reduce Federal retirement benefits. He did not let partisan politics obstruct his pursuit of fairness for Federal employees. We supported one another, I valued his help, his guidance, and his bipartisan approach to Federal employee issues.

He was a man who was selfless in his dedication to AFGE. Enduring his illness, in and out of the hospital, he continued to speak out powerfully on issues involving our civil service.

I offer condolences to his companion, Peggy Potter, his daughter, Michelle Sturdivant, his mother, Ethiel Jessie, and his brother, stepbrother, and sister. May they be strengthened by his inspiration, his warm personality, and his achievements.

Madam Speaker, I honor the memory and the great accomplishments of John Sturdivant, a man who touched the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, and a man who will be greatly missed by all who knew him and by those for whom he fought, who never had the good fortune to meet him.

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AN EXTRAORDINARY MONTH FOR WOMEN IN THE HOUSE AND IN THE COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. EMERSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia [Ms. NORTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, this has been an extraordinary month for

women in the House and in the country, and I want to say a few words about women in both places; first, about women in the House, and then about two issues that concern women throughout the country.

On October 21 the women of the House, those who belong to the Women's Caucus, and that is virtually all of us, had our first ever gala. That gala was given to raise funds for Women's Policy, Inc., and it was a most successful event, with the President and the First Lady and the Secretary of State all coming to pay tribute to 20 years of achievement by women in Congress.

We set an extraordinary bipartisan example. The gentlewoman from Connecticut, Mrs. NANCY JOHNSON, is the Republican cochair this year. Last year the gentlewoman from New York, Mrs. NITA LOWEY was the Democratic cochair, and the gentlewoman from Maryland, Mrs. MORELLA, was the Republican cochair. They kept the caucus alive and bipartisan, and we were pleased to follow in their wake this year.

The caucus simply gets things done. It gets things done any way it can. Sometimes it is by getting policies changed; sometimes it is by getting laws changed. And what does the caucus have to show for 20 years from the work we have done? More women getting mammograms, and therefore a decrease in breast cancer and cervical cancer; the Pregnancy Discrimination Act; the Violence Against Women Act. It is a roster to be proud of.

But as it turns out, October was the awareness month for two concerns that women across the country have given the caucus as their own priorities, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and Domestic Violence Month.

The Women's Caucus this very year waged a battle for mammograms for women over 40. This was in the tradition of the Women's Caucus, when it looked as though we were about to get a reversal in policy on that very issue. The science did not support a reversal, and we were able to get it changed based on the science.

We pride ourselves in not getting changes like that not on political grounds, and using the data that is provided us by Women's Policy, Inc., we were able to help turn that decision around. Now women at 40 should get a mammogram every year or every other year.

This is an important issue. It is important to have the focus of women in Congress on it, because since the early seventies the incidence of breast cancer has increased by 1 percent a year, and we do not know why. All we know is that we have to do something about it.

Actually, if mammograms are high quality they can spot breast cancer in women over 50 at a rate of 85 to 90 percent of the incidence of cancer. So we have made a lot of progress.

While we focused on the threat to women at 40, the fact is that I want to

remind everybody that it is women who are over 50 who are at greatest risk for breast cancer. If women aged 50 to 69 have regular mammograms, they can reduce their chances of death from breast cancer by one-third, and gradually, by bringing attention to this dreaded disease, we have been able to do something about it.

I do want to put into the record risk factors that are more specific than what we usually hear. These are the risk factors: Having had a previous breast cancer; a specific, identified genetic mutation that may make one susceptible to breast cancer; a mother, a sister, or a daughter, or two or more close relatives with a history of breast cancer, and that could be even cousins; a diagnosis of other types of disease that are pinpointed to predispose one to breast cancer; that is to say, breast disease that predisposes one to breast cancer; dense breast tissue, which makes it difficult to read a mammogram; and having a first child at age 30 or older.

Madam Speaker, this was also Violence Against Women Month. By observing and talking about this terrible epidemic in our country, we are finally bringing it out of its special closet. Some 3 out of every 100 women in this country have been severely assaulted by a partner, that is, not simply a slap, but severely assaulted. They had to go to the emergency room or get medical treatment.

Madam Speaker, I hope what the Women's Caucus has done helps us all to understand the value of the caucus to bring our attention to problems such as these.

THE TRUTH ABOUT VANDALISM AND ILLEGAL PROTEST IN DISTRICT OFFICE OF HON. FRANK RIGGS OF CALIFORNIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. RIGGS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. RIGGS. Madam Speaker, it is rather unusual circumstances that bring me to the floor to address my colleagues during special orders, but I really feel compelled to make this statement because of some very, I think, one-sided, misleading reports that have appeared in the media recently regarding a protest that occurred at my district office in Eureka, CA, on October 16.

On that day, over 60 protesters stormed my office. They trespassed my office. They threatened, they actually accosted and assaulted my two employees working in the office at the time, both female employees, wonderful, dedicated employees by the names of Julie Rogers and Ronnie Pelligrini, who felt genuinely threatened and frightened for their safety when this incident began.

These protesters, however, four of whom were subsequently arrested, have now gone to the media, along with