

Veterans' Compensation Rate Amendments of 2001.

I would first like to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, and their staffs, who worked to bring this bill before the House for final passage.

This legislation provides an important annual cost-of-living adjustment for disabled veterans, as well as surviving spouses of veterans who receive dependency and indemnity compensation. Under H.R. 2540, the compensation rate is raised by 2.6 percent, the same percentage as the increase provided to Social Security recipients.

As the cost living continues to rise, it is important that the well-deserved benefits received by veterans and their families are not diminished as a result of inflationary costs.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this legislation and ensure that the benefits for the men and women who served our nation keep up with the ever-increasing cost of living.

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Veterans Benefits Act of 2001, specifically a provision in the legislation that ensures all veterans will be eligible for a government-furnished grave marker.

I would like to thank the Chairman for his hard work and commitment to our Nation's veterans and I appreciate the willingness of the Chairman and the committee to include my veterans marker provision in the conference report. I would also like to thank the Chairman for accommodating my request in the Joint Explanatory Statement to encourage the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to consider pre-existing requests for markers.

This legislation is essential to our veterans' futures, ensuring that their acts of heroism will be recognized beyond their lifetimes. This legislation remedies a glaring discrepancy in the law, ensuring that every veteran, regardless of whether their grave is privately marked, will be eligible for a government grave marker upon their death.

Every single veteran deserves to be permanently recognized for their contribution to our nation. Every veterans family deserves solace in knowing their loved one will continue to receive the recognition they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I extend the heartfelt thanks from the veterans in my district.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OTTER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill, H.R. 2540.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendments were concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR APPOINTMENT OF PATRICIA Q. STONESIFER AS CITIZEN REGENT OF BOARD OF REGENTS OF SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass to the Sen-

ate joint resolution (S.J. Res. 26) providing for the appointment of Patricia Q. Stonesifer as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.

The Clerk read as follows:

S.J. RES. 26

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That, in accordance with section 5581 of the Revised Statutes of the United States (20 U.S.C. 43), the vacancy on the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, in the class other than Members of Congress, occurring by reason of the expiration of the term of Dr. Homer Neal of Michigan on December 7, 2001, is filled by the appointment of Patricia Q. Stonesifer of Washington. The appointment is for a term of 6 years and shall take effect on December 8, 2001.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS).

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

Mr. Speaker, Senate Joint Resolution 26 provides for the appointment of Patricia Stonesifer to serve on the Smithsonian Institution's Board of Regents. This board governs the Smithsonian Institution and includes the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court and the Vice President of the United States. It also is comprised of three Members each from the U.S. House and Senate and nine citizens who are nominated by the Board and approved jointly in a resolution of Congress.

Patricia Stonesifer currently serves as cochair and President of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. She works to achieve that foundation's mission of improving access to advances in global health and education for all people as we move into the 21st century. Her other philanthropic work includes serving on the Board of the Vaccine Fund, which was started in 1999 to address the need for vaccines among the world's poorest countries.

Prior to her being appointed President and Cochair of the Gates Foundation, she held a Senior Vice President position at Microsoft and ran her own management and consulting firm.

I believe her diverse background and strong management experience make her an excellent candidate for appointment to the Smithsonian Institution's Board of Regents, and I urge my colleagues to support Senate Joint Resolution 26.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

At the risk of repeating some of the comments that the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) has stated, let me also join him to say I am delighted at this appointment.

Ms. Patricia Stonesifer has distinguished herself in a variety of fields.

She brings a combination of skills to the Smithsonian Institution. As has been previously alluded to her, in her capacity as Cochair and President of the Gates Foundation, she focused on improving global health throughout the world. She has also served on the Board of the Vaccine Fund, established in 1999, to address the dire need to combat preventable disease in the world's poorest countries.

As the gentleman mentioned, she brings considerable expertise in the private sector, which, combined with her philanthropic work, will make her a very welcome addition to this board.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, Ms. Patricia Stonesifer will make a wonderful addition to the Smithsonian Institution's Board of Regents. Ms. Stonesifer has distinguished herself in numerous philanthropic, business, and public activities during her career, and I urge every Member to support her appointment.

Ms. Stonesifer now serves as the co-chair and president of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. At the Gates Foundation, she focuses on global health and education issues, reflecting her personal commitment to improving living conditions for peoples everywhere.

Ms. Stonesifer also serves on the boards of the Vaccine Fund, established 2 years ago to combat preventable disease in the world's poorest countries, and that of the African Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Partnership, an organization working to fight the spread of AIDS in Botswana. She has served as a member of the American Delegation to the United Nations General Assembly's special session on AIDS.

In her business career, Ms. Stonesifer has both served as a senior vice president at Microsoft, and operated her own consulting firm, so she knows business large and small. She serves on the boards of two publicly held corporations, the King County (Wash.) YWCA, and the Seattle Foundation.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that Patricia Stonesifer will bring the right mix of philanthropic and business experience to the Smithsonian Institution. I urge the House to support her appointment.

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

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. 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 motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate joint resolution, S.J. Res. 26.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate joint resolution was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. 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 Senate Joint Resolution 26.

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

There was no objection.

HONORING THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE FOR THEIR COMMITMENT TO SECURITY AT THE CAPITOL

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 309) honoring the United States Capitol Police for their commitment to security at the Capitol.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 309

Whereas the Capitol is an important symbol of freedom and democracy across the United States and throughout the world, and those who safeguard the Capitol safeguard that freedom and democracy;

Whereas millions of people visit the Capitol each year to observe and learn the workings of the democratic process;

Whereas the United States Capitol Police force was created by Congress in 1828 to provide security for the Capitol;

Whereas today the United States Capitol Police provide protection and support services throughout an array of congressional buildings, parks, and thoroughfares;

Whereas the United States Capitol Police provide security for Members of Congress, their staffs, other government employees, and many others who live near, work on, and visit Capitol Hill;

Whereas the United States Capitol Police have successfully managed and coordinated major demonstrations, joint sessions of Congress, State of the Union Addresses, State funerals, and inaugurations;

Whereas the United States Capitol Police have bravely faced numerous emergencies, including three bombings and two shootings, one of which, in 1998, tragically took the lives of Private First Class Jacob "J.J." Chestnut and Detective John Michael Gibson;

Whereas the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, have created a uniquely difficult environment for the United States Capitol Police;

Whereas the United States Capitol Police responded to this challenge quickly and courageously, including by facilitating the evacuation of all of the buildings under their purview, as well as the perimeter thereof; and

Whereas the United States Capitol Police have instituted longer shifts, requiring that officers work substantial overtime each week to ensure the continued protection of the Capitol: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives honors and thanks the United States Capitol Police for their outstanding work and dedication during a period of heightened security that began on September 11, 2001.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS).

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise here today with my colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DAVIS), for consideration of H. Res. 309, a resolution honoring the United States Capitol Police for their commitment to the security of the Capitol, the public and the employees and Members of Congress. Their unwavering dedication to protect and serve shall not go unnoticed.

Congress created the United States Capitol Police force in 1828 to provide security for the Capitol. Since inception of the Capitol Police, their officers have courageously and successfully protected the Capitol, and the people and buildings that surround this symbol of freedom and democracy. The U.S. Capitol, which is simultaneously a national shrine, a tourist attraction and a working office building, imposes challenging security requirements.

Since the September 11 tragedy, the Capitol Police have been placed under a tremendous strain to implement the increasing number of important security enhancements that have been instituted. Working 6 or 7 days straight with 12 hour shifts, the United States Capitol Police deserve a great "thank you."

In addition, when the House of Representatives relocated to the General Accounting Office, the Capitol Police protected us there as well. We know this was not an easy task, and we truly appreciate their service.

Mr. Speaker, their valor has not come easily. The United States Capitol Police have faced several emergencies, three bombings and two shootings, one of which took the lives of Private First Class Jacob "JJ" Chestnut and Detective John Michael Gibson. I want to extend our appreciation of their commitment to protect and serve this institution.

Last year more than 2 million tourists visited the Capitol complex, which is comprised of 19 buildings. At the same time, the Capitol hosted more than 1,200 American and foreign dignitaries and 1,000 special events and was the site of nearly 500 scheduled demonstrations. In addition to lawmakers and their staffs, a sizable number of journalists, lobbyists and service personnel also work within the Capitol complex.

Achieving a secure environment for the Capitol complex, while still maintaining an atmosphere of openness, has become increasingly challenging in recent years. Both the potential threats to the Capitol and the number of people entering the area every day have grown dramatically. The men and women of the United States Capitol Police risk their lives every day for the safeguarding of the Capitol.

Again, our thanks go out to you, our officers, our protectors and our friends.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), the sponsor of the resolution.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 309, legislation which I introduced to honor the United States Capitol Police. I would like to thank our lead Republican cosponsor, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS), the gentleman from Ohio (Chairman NEY) and the ranking member, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), and also the leadership in

both parties, for bringing this important resolution to the House floor today.

The terrorist attacks of September 11 have created a uniquely difficult environment for the Capitol Police. New security measures have been implemented, requiring the police to work longer hours, sometimes 12 hours and longer a day, oftentimes 6 days a week.

The Capitol Police have had to go even further above and beyond the call of duty to protect Members of Congress, staff and many of our visitors. The Capitol Police have responded to the new security challenges on Capitol Hill, including the attacks on September 11 and the anthrax attacks, quickly and courageously. They have continued their fine tradition of serving the Capitol Hill community.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to have the opportunity to thank our Capitol Police for the tremendous job that they do every day, and especially since September 11. They truly are heroes, and we salute them today.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS).

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution. I would like to commend the sponsor of the legislation, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) who just spoke, and thank her for her work on this.

This legislation honors the Capitol Police, who we all know and work with on a daily basis, for their outstanding work and dedication during the period of heightened security needs on the day of September 11, 2001, and thereafter. It really should not take a national emergency for us to thank those who serve and protect us on a day-to-day basis, but it is an important act to do so today.

The Capitol is an important symbol of freedom and democracy, across this country and throughout the world, and those who safeguard the Capitol safeguard that freedom and democracy. Thousands of people visit the Capitol each day to observe and learn the workings of a democratic process.

The horrific events of September 11 have created a difficult environment to work in, prompting extra alertness and some strain among Members, Staff and visitors. The Capitol Police Force has responded to this challenge quickly and courageously, especially during the evacuation of the Capitol complex during the attacks of September 11.

Many people like to boast about how many hours they work during the day, and we as elected officials and politicians put in a lot of hours during our day, sometimes 12 to 18 hours. I would challenge any people to try doing that for an extended period of time. It is personally wearing and draining. Our folks here in the Capitol Police have had to do 12 to 18 hour days, 6 to 7 days a week, for weeks on end, before we finally got some relief through the