

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

REMEMBERING THOSE WHO SERVED

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 21, 2002

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, every year on Memorial Day, we recognize those who fought for our nation and gave their lives in the name of democracy and freedom. It is a time for us to remember the patriotism they showed as they went into battle, the courage with which they fought, and the ultimate sacrifice they made for our country.

My home state of Michigan has lost many good men and women to war. We lost 18,906 people in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Gulf War. We lost over 2,600 men and women in Vietnam—more people per capita than any other state in the nation. We understand the honor in answering a nation's call to serve, and we know what it means to lose parents, brothers, sisters, and children to battle. As a Vietnam-era veteran, and the son of a WWII veteran, I know in my heart the value of this service.

Our lost soldiers have earned parades, memorial services, and events in their honor. But they have also earned a commitment from their nation that we will never forget their service and will treat all who fight for our country with dignity and respect. We should remember our lost soldiers not just in words, but deeds. We should honor their sacrifices by providing good health care, benefits, and compensation to our veterans who fought alongside them and the current members of our Armed Forces. We should honor them by fulfilling all the promises that we made to them and their families when they answered the call of duty.

As we observe Memorial Day, let us not be content with honoring our soldiers just this one day each year. Let us remember in our hearts the ultimate gift these men and women gave to us. And let us keep in our prayers those men and women who are serving our nation overseas today. In their courage and strength, they set an example for all of us and remind us of what it means to be an American.

VETERANS' AND SURVIVORS' BENEFITS EXPANSION ACT OF 2002

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 20, 2002

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my support for H.R. 4085, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2002. Our federal policy towards veterans recognizes the importance of their service to our nation. The Department of Veterans Affairs administers, directly or in conjunction with other federal agencies, programs

that provide compensation for disabilities sustained or worsened as a result of active duty in military service. The VA also provides pensions for totally disabled, poor war veterans. Furthermore, the VA offers cash payments for certain categories of dependents and/or survivors. The VA gives free medical care for conditions sustained during military service, and medical care for other conditions, much of which is provided free to low income veterans.

In addition, the Department of Veteran Affairs supplies education, training, rehabilitation, and job placement services to assist veterans upon their return to civilian life. The VA also administers loan guarantees to help them obtain homes. Moreover, the VA provides life insurance to enhance the veteran's financial security for their dependents, and burial assistance to the families of veterans when they die. Thus, the VA does a lot to enhance the lives of our veterans.

The responsibility to care for veterans, their spouses, their survivors and their dependents can last a long time. An example of this is that the last dependent of a Revolutionary War veteran died in 1911, and the last dependent of a veteran of the War of 1812 died in 1946, and the last dependent of a veteran of the Mexican War in 1962. Subsequently, about 650 children and widows of Spanish-American War veterans still receive VA compensation or pensions.

This bill contains provisions that would affect a wide range of veterans' programs, including disability compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, housing, insurance, and readjustment benefits. This bill also provides an annual cost-of-living increase for veterans' benefits, and expands certain benefits for veterans and their survivors.

Accordingly, this bill directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase the rates of veterans' disability compensation, as of December 1, 2002. This cost of living increase gives veterans a 2.6% increase. This matches the automatic increases received by most federal benefit programs. This is important, because we should not burden our veterans financially.

The bill also adds additional compensation for dependents, the clothing allowance for certain disabled adult children, and dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children.

The CBO estimates that enacting this bill would increase direct spending by \$25 million in 2003, \$123 million over the 2003–2007 period, and \$260 million over the 2003–2012 period, but the CBO estimates that any such outlays would be insignificant because it takes the Department of Veterans Affairs several months to process most benefit claims.

Therefore, I support our veterans and strongly support this bill to increase compensation to our veterans.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO ELE'S PLACE

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 21, 2002

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the accomplishments of Ele's Place in Lansing, Michigan, and the caring volunteers and community leaders who have built a remarkable non-profit program for children grieving the loss of a loved one.

Beginning in 1991 with volunteer help and a dream, Ele's Place has worked in borrowed space in a Lansing church basement to reach out to grieving children in a compassionate and caring setting. Today, Ele's Place is a haven where children can learn to heal in trying times.

Ele's Place also offers guidance to parents and adults helping children through the loss of a family member, friends, classmate or other loved one. By helping children and their significant adults deal with grief, Ele's Place has an immeasurable and extended impact on the entire community.

As Ele's Place launches the construction of its very own facility this month, this group of caring professionals and volunteers are poised to expand their enormous impact on the grieving families of the Lansing, Michigan region.

Mr. Speaker, we wish Ele's Place well and congratulate them on this major accomplishment. We are honored to support the work of the dedicated team that makes Ele's Place possible.

HONORING THE DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE OF TOMMY MARLIN

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 21, 2002

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding public service of a good friend of mine, Tommy Marlin. Tommy is retiring as the Sumner County executive at the end of his current term, which ends on August 31. He has served as the county's chief executive since 1994, but has served the residents of Sumner County, Tennessee, for 26 years.

Tommy began his career in public service in 1976 after being elected the county's assessor of property. He might have chosen a different career path in light of the fact his brother and nephew were wrestlers in the National Wrestling Association. But Tommy was looking for a more combative arena to showcase his talents, so he chose politics.

I'm glad Tommy entered the field of public service because he has helped me in my own career. He has been a longtime friend and advisor from my very first days in Congress.

In 1988, Tommy was named Overall Outstanding County Official of the Year by the

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

state of Tennessee. As county executive, his door is always open, and his card reads, "It's a pleasure to serve you." One peek around his office and it's evident that his blood runs orange because he is an avid University of Tennessee football fan.

The people of Sumner County could not have asked for a better public servant. His leadership and work ethic will be sorely missed. I cordially congratulate Tommy on his distinguished career as a public servant and wish him and his wife, Nancy, well in their future endeavors.

IN HONOR OF THE HAMTRAMCK
FIREFIGHTERS AND THE 5TH AN-
NUAL ST. FLORIAN MARCH

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 21, 2002

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, as members of the Hamtramck Firefighters gathered together to celebrate the patron saint of firefighters, St. Florian, they celebrated a feast day cherished by firefighters everywhere. Honoring the patron saint of firefighters, brewers, chimney-sweeps and others, St. Florian is remembered in the Catholic tradition for many miracles, including the extinguishing of a huge fire with a pitcher of water and stopping a town from burning by throwing a single bucket of water on the blaze. Celebrating their fifth consecutive march on Saturday, May 4, 2002, the Hamtramck Firefighters continued the tradition of celebrating and honoring the miracles of St. Florian.

As the city of Hamtramck, Michigan is home to the St. Florian Catholic Church, each year the Hamtramck Firefighters celebrate this feast day by marching from the Hamtramck Firehouse to the St. Florian church for a special celebration of mass. Inviting departments from across the state of Michigan and Ontario, Canada, communities everywhere choose this day to recognize their firefighters and the countless contributions they have made to their communities.

Our great state of Michigan is home to patriotic citizens who give so much to this country everyday. This year is no exception for the Hamtramck Firefighters, who continue to stand together ready to offer relief and assistance to fellow Americans in this time of greatest need. The Hamtramck Firefighters have also chosen this day to celebrate the unity and brotherhood of firefighters, a brotherhood that reaches far beyond religious and ethnic barriers. Their actions reflect the unity and strength of Americans.

Firefighters are an integral part of every community in this nation. As the Hamtramck Firefighters and firefighters everywhere celebrate the holiday commemorating St. Florian, we join them in their tribute and honor the contributions firefighters have made to our great country.

JOBS FOR VETERANS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 20, 2002

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4015, the Jobs for Veterans Act. This bill would provide funds for a new performance incentive awards program to encourage employment, training, and placement programs for veterans. This incentive program would reward those states that excel in aiding our veterans. It would also provide awards to states that made significant progress in this area, even if they were not among the highest performers. The awards would take the form of new contracts for veterans employment programs.

Furthermore, It authorizes \$1 million for a Labor Department study of the economic benefit to the United States attributable to providing employment and training services to veterans.

Mr. Speaker, we have all seen the stories of those who have lost their lives so we can live ours. The tragic events of September 11th and the ensuing War on Terror that our brave armed forces are currently fighting should inspire this body to secure the future of our armed forces.

Job training is of paramount importance to our veterans. We ought to provide them with adequate resources so that they may succeed in their future endeavors.

HONORING THE DISTINGUISHED
PUBLIC SERVICE OF DOYLE
GAINES

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 21, 2002

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding public service of a good friend of mine, Doyle Gaines. Doyle is retiring as the Macon County executive at the end of his current term, which ends on August 31.

Before being elected as the county executive in 1990, he was the Macon County school superintendent for 16 years and spent more than 38 years in the education field as a teacher, coach and administrator. During his impressive career, Doyle received numerous awards and honors for his commitment and leadership.

He has always been an active member of the community, serving on various civic boards and organizations. Doyle's leadership was also instrumental in forming the Cordell Hull Economic Opportunity Corporation, a regional agency in Tennessee dedicated to fighting poverty by helping people be self-sufficient.

Always striving to be well informed and at the forefront of creative initiatives, Doyle has served his community, state and nation with distinction. The people of Macon County and the mid-state region could not have asked for a better public servant. His leadership and work ethic will be sorely missed by the Macon County government. I cordially congratulate

Doyle on his distinguished career as a public servant and wish him well in future endeavors.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AF-
FAIRS EMERGENCY PREPARED-
NESS RESEARCH, EDUCATION,
AND BIOTERRORISM PREVEN-
TION ACT OF 2002

SPEECH OF

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 20, 2002

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, the events of September 11th and the subsequent anthrax attacks have forced us as a country to reevaluate our ability to respond to chemical, biological, and radiological contingencies. As a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee (HVAC) Subcommittee on Health, I participated in a hearing to assess the readiness of the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) to be a third line responder in the event of a threat of this sort. The news was not good. This is why I am an original co-sponsor of HR 3253, the Emergency Preparedness Research, Education, and Bio-Terrorism Prevention Act of 2002. Through the establishment of National Medical Emergency Preparedness Centers, we would enhance the work that the DVA is already engaged in, and strengthen our national homeland defense efforts.

In recognizing that the DVA is the nation's largest health care system and engages in some of the most promising research, and provides first-rate medical training and education should signal to us all that herein lies an opportunity. Considering all that the DVA already does successfully, I see no reason why they cannot be positioned as a first responder in the event of a biological or chemical attack. With the proper allocation of resources and support, those provided by the passage of HR 3253, many DVA medical centers will be well positioned to provide our country with the necessary support in these crisis situations.

In my district, the 28th Congressional District of Texas, the South Texas Veterans Health Care System, Audie L. Murphy Division, already engages in shared teaching and research arrangements with medical schools and has been able to attract several high-level scientists in fields relevant to bio-chemical and radiological threats. This facility is among the top ten research and development facilities within the DVA and is a tribute to the rewards of collaborative research efforts like those suggested by this legislation.

I am excited about the prospect of National Emergency Preparedness Centers, which would not only engage in research to develop methods of detection, inoculation, and treatment, but also coordinate research with universities and federal agencies in the dissemination of the latest information to healthcare workers at public and private hospitals across the country.

Through the passage and enactment of this measure the DVA will become a key partner in our nation's homeland defense efforts.