

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING GRATITUDE FOR FOREIGN GUEST LABORERS, KNOWN AS BRACEROS, WHO WORKED IN THE UNITED STATES FROM 1942 TO 1964

Mr. BOEHNER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 522) expressing gratitude for the foreign guest laborers, known as Braceros, who worked in the United States during the period from 1942 to 1964.

The Clerk read as follows:

Whereas because of a labor shortage resulting from the entry of the United States into World War II, the Federal Government issued contracts to Mexican, Canadian, Jamaican, and Puerto Rican citizens willing to cross into the United States to accept temporary employment;

Whereas hundreds of thousands of these men and women, known as Braceros, labored in the Nation's agricultural, transportation, and other industries during the period from 1942 to 1964;

Whereas the first 1,500 Braceros arrived in California from Mexico City, Mexico, on September 29, 1942, to work in the sugar beet fields until December 24 of that year;

Whereas thousands of Braceros labored on the Nation's railroads, maintaining and expanding critical infrastructure for the transportation of food, equipment, and other valuable supplies during and after World War II;

Whereas the heroic work effort of the Braceros has been recognized by many State and local governments around the Nation, but has not been recognized by the Federal Government;

Whereas the Nation and the world owe a debt of gratitude for the contribution the Braceros made to the war effort that defeated fascism in Europe and Asia;

Whereas more than 1,000,000 Braceros and their families or descendants are still United States residents or citizens; and

Whereas September 29, 2002, is the 60th anniversary of the first arrival of Bracero guest workers in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses gratitude for the foreign guest laborers, known as Braceros, who worked in the United States during the period from 1942 to 1964; and

(2) recognizes the Braceros for their contributions to the war effort and for their hard work, which helped to keep the United States strong and prosperous during this challenging period.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOEHNER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 522.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise today in support of this resolution sponsored by my friend and colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE), which recognizes and honors the foreign guest laborers who worked here in the United States during a 22-year period from 1942 to 1964.

As a result of severe wartime shortages, the United States entered into an agreement with Mexico for the legal employment of agricultural workers from Mexico. During this time, between 4 and 5 million guest workers known as "braceros," were employed in the United States. They were an important source of labor during this period, helping to alleviate shortages of workers, particularly in the agricultural industry.

Thousands of braceros also labored on our Nation's railroads, maintaining and expanding critical infrastructure that provided transportation for food and supplies during and after World War II.

This past Sunday marked the 60th anniversary of the arrival of the first of these guest workers in the United States. They constituted an important part of our country's workforce during World War II, when labor became a valuable commodity, especially on farms. Today, many of these workers and their families or descendants are residents of the United States.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues today to join me in supporting this resolution expressing gratitude for the braceros and acknowledging their hard work and important contribution to our economy during a most challenging period in our Nation's history.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I want to thank my good friend, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), the chairman of the committee, as well as my good friends, the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ), for their work in bringing H.R. 522 to the floor today.

During World War II, America experienced an enormous labor shortage. The U.S. asked the Mexican Government to send guest workers to help relieve the shortage, particularly in the agricultural regions of California and Texas, as well as Florida. Between 1942 and the 1960s, approximately 5 million guest workers called braceros came and worked in America's fields and on our railroads. They helped us grow the food we needed to feed American soldiers. By maintaining the railroads, they kept our guns and tanks and military equipment moving to our ports for shipment to soldiers overseas.

When we asked them to come, they came and did the back-breaking manual labor necessary to get the job done. The braceros asked for very little in re-

turn. They only wanted a fair wage for their work. As government contract workers, they were required to have 10 percent of their wages withheld. This money was to be placed in savings accounts and paid to the workers upon their return to Mexico.

Unfortunately, many braceros fell prey to abusive employers and the negligence of the U.S. Government and the Mexican Government. This money, estimated between 60 and \$70 million, was never repaid; and there is no clear accounting of where it went. A class action suit has been filed on their behalf to finally bring them redress, relief from distress.

Despite the way they were treated, these braceros valued their contributions to the United States. Many have kept their identification cards as a proud remembrance of their service to this country. Many ultimately settled here and have raised families.

More than 1 million braceros and their descendants are now permanent residents, or they have applied for and received American citizenship. Sunday, September 29, 2002 was the 60th anniversary of the day the first braceros arrived in this country. It is fitting that today we take this time to finally say "thank you" to these workers who came and helped us in our time of need.

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

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOEHNER. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE), the sponsor of this resolution.

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

Mr. OSE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a group of individuals known as the braceros for their incredible contributions to our great Nation. As a result of the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States formally entered the Second World War. This was a fight for freedom, both foreign and domestic, to protect our allies and our own Nation, and to end a war we neither started nor wanted. This part of the history lesson is taught in virtually every school in our Nation. It is well known by our students, far and wide. However, one particular group is often left out of the history books.

World War II forced our Nation to shift our economy. Throughout the war, upwards of 13 million men and women served in our Nation, roughly one-tenth of the total population. While our service people were fighting across the oceans, millions more were working constant shifts in the factories to support the effort. This resulted in a severe labor shortage in concentrated areas, such as agriculture.

In an effort to minimize this loss of labor, the United States and our good friend to the south, Mexico, entered into a bilateral agreement in August of

1942 to provide contract labor. These guest workers known as *braceros*, literally meaning "strong arms," were recruited and hired to work in the fields and on the railroads across the United States.

The first 1,500 *braceros* to enter the United States arrived in California to work in the sugar beet fields outside of Stockton on September 29, 1942, where they worked until December 24th of that same year. I would like to point out, as the gentleman from Texas has, my good friend, that this past Sunday marked the 60th anniversary of the first *braceros* in the United States.

Over the course of the next 22 years, as many as 5 million *braceros* participated in the program supporting our critical infrastructure. It was through their hard work that our Nation was able to effectively sustain our agricultural economy, as well as expand and maintain our railroads, resulting in a safe, reliable, and effective means of transporting food, medicine, troops, and other supplies for the war.

In 1964, the last *braceros* fulfilled their contracts and the program came to an end. However, their contributions last even today.

The United States did suffer a severe labor shortage as a result of World War II, but thanks to the efforts and hard work of millions of *braceros* from our good neighbor to the south, our Nation survived and today prospers. It is time we honor their contributions during this time of crisis and recognize the *braceros* for their place in American history. I rise today to say "thank you" to those who lent a hand.

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

I was very pleased to hear my friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE), talk about the need for the *braceros* who came to the United States to help us, who had strong arms, as he said. They also had strong backs. They worked very hard, just like our friends from other countries who came at the turn of the century from the European countries that included the Irish and included the Polish and Czechoslovakians and Germans and many others who came to help us build our country.

I am very pleased that I was invited to come and speak on behalf of this resolution, H.R. 522, because I come from Mexican immigrants, Mexican immigrant parents who came in 1910 as children.

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My father was 9 years old and had just lost his father during the beginning of the Mexican Revolution of 1910, and my mother came at the age of 5 with her parents from Chihuahua, Mexico, so I can relate to many of the *braceros* who came to work in agricultural fields and other jobs where we needed them in the United States. I have seen how this kaleidoscope of people from different countries has helped us build a country that we enjoy today.

Madam Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to our good friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), the ranking member of the subcommittee.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution to honor the foreign guest workers who worked in the United States from 1942 to 1964. Those of us who represent California and Texas and other areas along the border can clearly remember the hard work performed by the *braceros*.

When I was a young person going to school, I worked alongside of many of the *braceros* in what is now my congressional district in the fields there and in the orchards, with people who worked very, very hard, toiled at great length, and provided badly needed labor in our agricultural sector of the California economy.

As many have pointed out, they originally came here in World War II so we could free many of our citizens to go off and fight in the Second World War and they could continue to provide work here on the home front. This resolution honors those individuals, and it honors their dignity, and it honors the contribution that they have given to this country.

What we should not honor is the conditions under which they worked, the conditions under which they were forced to live, the conditions under which they were separated from their families, the hours that they were required to toil, and the actual working conditions.

We had what became a big issue, a critical issue of the short-handed hoe that they were required to work with that led to disabilities of very young people, and in many instances permanent disabilities of their ability to work.

It was a fact that many of their children were kept from the schools of various States and this Nation, and there was very little or no sanitation for these individuals; that they were required to work constantly around pesticides that at that time were literally put on the crops without protective gear, without being able to wash up after work, without being able to protect their families and places that they lived from those very same pesticides.

I say that because I spent time in what we called the *bracero* camps at that time, with as many as 12 or 14 people sharing a single room, or multiple families, or families sharing space with individuals, or individuals sleeping in the trucks at night when they were not used by the farmers that they were working for.

So while we think back about the dignity of those workers and the contribution they made to this Nation, Madam Speaker, we should understand the problems that they had when they tried to get fair wages; when, in many instances, they worked and were not paid; when, in many instances, they

were worked, and unjust withholding was taken from their paycheck.

Yet out of this incredibly disgraceful treatment of these individuals, we saw the growth and the beginning of a very powerful movement that gave additional dignity and power to these men and women, led by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta of the United Farm Workers Union, born in the 1960s, to demand decent living and working conditions. That movement brought to the attention of consumers across this Nation how the inexpensive food, fruits and vegetables they were eating were subsidized by the poor working conditions and the poor wages of these individuals, which led to a nationwide boycott of the grape industry that was one of the most successful in the history of this country. That continues today to vigorously pursue the rights of these individuals to improve their working conditions.

Just this week, Governor Gray Davis signed into legislation a bill that requires mandatory mediation of labor disputes in the agricultural industry in our State. Why? Because many of these workers had a right to a union 23 years ago, and they still have not gotten the union. They won the elections, they won them all. They have not been recognized. Now we are saying if, after 3 years, you cannot get it, we will have mandatory mediation.

He also signed legislation to try to get back the wages that were withheld from them so they could pay for their trip back to Mexico, but they were never returned to them, the 10 percent that was withheld. I wish this House would address that same issue. I wish this House would address agricultural labor. I wish this House would address the restitution to these people.

So as we speak here today and we talk about their dignity and their contribution, we have to recognize that many of these same conditions exist today. We have to recognize that this House, the Republican leadership, refuses to bring to the floor a resolution honoring Dolores Huerta, one of the most powerful labor leaders in the country, one of the most importantly symbolic labor leaders in this country with respect to females working in the agricultural movement and working in so many endeavors in this country; a woman who gave almost her life with the terrible illnesses, from all of her exposures in the field, this last year. Yet this House cannot summon its ability to recognize her dignity and her contribution to the American fabric and the fabric of this society.

So I join this, because these people were entitled to this recognition. But this cannot be the only agenda for people who continue to toil in our fields, for people who continue to be exploited, for people who even have less status than the *braceros*, people who are hired every day. They are hired on Monday, and come payday on Friday, they call the INS service rather than pay them, and the government rounds

up the workers in the Napa Valley, in the Central Valley, in the Imperial Valley of California, people who today have no housing, no housing. These are people today who harvest the grapes that go into a \$100 or \$200 bottle of wine, and they have no housing. They sleep in the fields, in the cars, in the culverts. Those are the descendants of the braceros.

There are some who want to create a new bracero program. While we honor their dignity and contribution, let us remember before we ever contemplate a new bracero program that these people had no status in terms of their ability to have decent working conditions, decent living conditions, and decent wages. We can never recreate that situation in the United States.

I thank my colleagues on the committee for bringing this legislation to the floor. I hope the braceros and their descendants will understand what we are trying to do with this legislation, but I also would hope that they understand that the struggle continues, and I would hope that this Congress understands that the struggle continues for these people to receive economic and social justice, and dignity for their families.

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

Madam Speaker, I wish to associate myself with the remarks of the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), because I agree with all that he says of the injustices that braceros and guest workers have had to face over the many years that they have been helping us here in the United States.

I wish to say that the story that I was telling you before I recognized the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) was that my parents were Mexican immigrants. They met here in the United States as adults, married, and had 11 children. I happened to be the eighth of those 11 children. They went on to become American citizens, and my father was an entrepreneur who created a small meat processing company, and it grew to where they hired over 350 employees. Over the last 54 years, that business has been one that has been recognized here by the Department of Commerce and the Small Business Administration.

All of this is to say that many of the immigrants, from whatever country they came from, have been making great contributions. So this resolution that we are asking our colleagues to support, H.R. 522, is one that is very noble and one that we urge everyone to support.

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

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

Madam Speaker, let me congratulate my colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE), for bringing this

resolution honoring the braceros and their contribution to our country during a very difficult period.

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to express my support for House Resolution 522. This resolution is a modest, but important, first step in recognizing and honoring the tremendous contributions of Mexican guest workers, known as braceros, to our country in a time of great need.

On September 29, 1942, sixty years ago this past Sunday, the U.S. government entered into a program that was designed to help America get through the economic challenges that accompanied World War II. Under the program, nearly 5 million workers came to the U.S. from Mexico, to carry out the back-breaking labor that kept our nation going. They filled in where labor was in short supply—especially in agriculture. Their work allowed America to carry out its war effort and to feed the country and its troops.

In the years that followed, the program was expanded to include railroad laborers and guest workers from other nations. Working under harsh conditions and living far from their families and loved ones, these guest workers filled critical jobs, bolstered wartime production, put food on our tables, and helped build our country's transportation system. Braceros represented up to twenty-five percent of farm workers in several states, providing a significant source of labor that secured our nation's global leadership in agriculture. Many of the workers ultimately settled in the United States and raised families—more than one million braceros and their descendants are now permanent residents or citizens of our nation.

Despite these significant contributions, however, braceros suffered neglect and injustice at the hands of our government, the Mexican government, and many of the contractors that employed them. Despite putting in a full day's work in the fields, despite being fully exposed to the elements and a full range of other challenges, braceros did not receive compensation for their back-breaking work in full. As many as 400,000 workers saw their paychecks reduced by ten percent, totaling an estimated \$70 million.

During the first seven years of the program, the explicit policy governing the program required that each worker sacrifice ten percent of his or her salary, with the promise that it would be available to them upon their return to Mexico. These deductions disappeared and went unaccounted for. At least \$70 million of it—which, with interest, may be worth as much as \$500 million to a billion dollars today—was gone.

Do we know where the money went? No. However, we do know this: under the bracero program, the U.S. government acted as the employer. Workers were contracted out to various businesses—farms, for example. The U.S. government withheld ten percent of their wages. The funds were then to be transferred to Wells-Fargo bank. The bank would transfer it to the Banco de Mexico which would then (supposedly) transfer it to regional banks.

Somewhere along the way—sometime during a process which we know began on U.S. soil and may, for all we know, ended on U.S. soil, too—the money was lost or taken away. All we know for sure is one thing: the money is still owed.

In June of this year, I was pleased to introduce legislation that sought to secure relief for

braceros who have long-awaited the compensation that they are due. My bill, the Bracero Justice Act of 2002, H.R. 4918, would allow people to seek resources in a venue that so often has protected the most vulnerable in our society: the federal judicial system. In short, my bill would help secure a deserving group of people their day in court and to have their case heard on the merits.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H. Res. 522. This nation owes the braceros a great debt for having helped us win World War II. Let us regard this resolution as the first step on the road to justice for these former guest workers, who, despite their sacrifices and suffering, remained hard-working compatriots in the war effort. I urge my colleagues to recognize the invaluable contributions of the braceros on this sixtieth anniversary and to support this resolution.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the hundreds of thousands of foreign workers, or braceros, who came to this country between 1942 and the late 1960s and to urge my colleagues to vote for H. Res. 522, expressing gratitude for their work. However, for Congress to truly honor the legacy of the braceros, it must pass the Bracero Justice Act. As many as 400,000 Mexico braceros who came to the U.S. before 1949 had money withheld from their paychecks, with the promise that it would be saved on their behalf, yet it was never returned. The Bracero Justice Act would help right this wrong.

In many cases, braceros left their families in Mexico to come work for our benefit. For the most part, braceros took physically demanding jobs in agriculture and railroad construction, and worked for as little as 40 cents an hour. Many had to put up with slave-like conditions, working long hours with few or no breaks, suffering injuries, and dealing with abusive employers. Many of the bracero families were impoverished. The time to honor these workers and the sacrifices they made is long overdue.

It would be a shame if further efforts to demand fairness for braceros were dismissed. It is unacceptable that workers who came to the U.S. in response to our call for help and our need for workers now be denied a voice to fight for what has always been theirs. The money taken from the braceros' paychecks could have been extremely helpful to their families, either at the time or had it been returned to them when they returned to Mexico, as was promised. Instead, it was never seen.

Bracero workers of the past and immigrant workers today continue to contribute to the richness and diversity of this country. I am grateful for the work and sacrifices the braceros made. I will continue to work for the passage of the Bracero Justice Act. Justice and fairness have been denied these workers and their families for too long.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today in support of the resolution to honor our guest laborers from the Republic of Mexico, known as the Braceros, who worked here from 1942 to 1964 and assisted the United States during World War II's severe labor shortage. It is most appropriate that we honor these Braceros now, on the 60th anniversary of the arrival of the first Braceros in the U.S. Without them, this country would have been in dire straits.

At the start of the World War II, the United States needed hundreds of thousands of new workers to help with the war effort and make

up for those who left their jobs to serve in the military. Men and women worked 24 hour shifts, seven days a week to maintain the war effort, all the while trying to live their normal lives. We all recognize the image of Rosie the Riveter, but few know about another key and important element of the wartime workforce—the Mexican Braceros.

In August 1942, the United States and Mexico signed a historic treaty for the purpose of recruiting and hiring Mexicans to work in agriculture and to expand and maintain U.S. railroads. These guest workers were known as the Braceros, literally meaning “strong arms”. It was through their hard work that our agricultural economy was able to survive and our railroads were able to safely and effectively transport food, medicine, equipment, and soldiers for the war.

The first 1,500 Braceros in the United States arrived for work in California on September 29, 1942, where they worked in the sugar beet fields outside of Stockton until December 24 of that year. Over the next twenty years, hundreds of thousands of Braceros labored across the United States supporting our critical infrastructure. Braceros constituted up to twenty-five percent of farm workers in several states, providing a significant source of labor that secured our nation's global dominance in agriculture.

Join me as I enthusiastically support this long overdue resolution to honor the Braceros. We cannot allow such an important part of our nation's history to continue to be overlooked. Americans owe a debt of gratitude to them and their families.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions of “Braceros,” to the United States workforce. During World War II the United States suffered from a shortage of labor as young men from across the country were shipped overseas in the armed forces or took factory jobs to support the war effort. In order to compensate for the lack of workers, especially in physically demanding jobs such as agriculture and railroad construction, the United States made arrangements with Mexico, Canada, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico to welcome hundreds of thousands of guest workers a year to fill the labor gap—the birth of the Bracero.

On August 4, 1942, the United States government signed the Mexican Farm Labor Program Agreement with Mexico, the first among several agreements aimed at legalizing and controlling Mexican migrant farm workers along the southern border of the United States. Managed by several government agencies, including the Department of Agriculture, as a temporary, war-related measure to supply much-needed workers during the early years of World War II, the Bracero program continued uninterrupted until 1964. The agreement guaranteed a minimum wage of thirty cents an hour and humane treatment (in the form of adequate shelter, food, sanitation, etc.) of Mexican farm workers in the United States.

It has been estimated that in the 1950s the United States welcomed as many as 300,000 Mexican workers annually. By the end of the 1950s, Texas and other border states were receiving large numbers of Braceros. Mexican agricultural workers, often considered an unlimited supply of cheap labor, have unfortunately often been the target of repressive work and living conditions and have been forced to

seek assistance from a host of economic, political, social and humanitarian interests. Regrettably, poor wages, lack of educational opportunities for their children, malnutrition, poor sanitation, and discrimination have often colored these workers' exposure to the United States. These inexcusable conditions did not discourage or slow the flow of workers, but rather raised consciousness and unity amongst these exploited class of workers—leading to the creation of several mutual aid societies and the facility of labor organizing. Between 1942 and 1964 more than 4.5 million Braceros entered the United States. Most remained to contribute their labor to the domestic economy.

September 29, 2002, marks the 60th anniversary of the first arrival of Bracero guest workers into the United States. Without the many and great contributions of Braceros, the foundation upon which our great country has been built would not exist. I congratulate the more than 1,000,000 Braceros and their families or descendants who still live in the United States for their relentless work ethic, pride, strength and endurance. I congratulate you today not only for the historic contributions you have made to our workforce, but also for your commitment to seek justice and equity in your homes and workplace. You have been relentless in your pursuit of enhanced opportunity for all workers and the improvement of opportunities available to you and your families through political and legal advocacy.

Mr. REYES. Madam Speaker, I am proud to support this resolution that recognizes the countless contributions of thousands of hard-working immigrants who came to the U.S. more than fifty years ago to work in our nation as guest workers. They worked in our farms and railroads and produced with their labor the many things we needed at the time.

They gave part of their lives to the United States and followed the rules as they were told.

It is only fitting that today this House recognize their many contributions.

As Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, just like I am proud to support this recognition, I am also disappointed that this House has been unable to respond to the plight of the very same people we honor today by enacting the Bracero Justice Act.

The Bracero Justice Act would go beyond the recognition that we support today and allow thousands of Braceros to be heard in court and make their case, and potentially receive money owed to them.

Braceros came to work for America. They fulfilled their part of the agreement that brought them here, but apparently money that had been withheld from their paychecks never made it back to their hands as was promised. And now we are looking for that lost money and we want the courts to look into the allegations of these hard-working individuals and see that justice is done.

It is only fair that if money was withheld and never made it back to the people who earned it we do the right thing for the Braceros and their families, and give them the opportunity to get it back.

I strongly support this symbolic resolution and express my gratitude for all the contributions Braceros made to our country. I also call on this Congress to take a look at the Bracero Justice Act, to do the right thing and to move to help thousands of Braceros and their families.

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to convey my support for H. Res. 522. A great debt is owed to the workers who came to our country during World War II, known as Braceros, when we were experiencing a labor shortage. We needed these workers in order to keep our agricultural and transportation sectors going. Indeed, we needed them in order to keep our entire country going. Without the work of these men and women on the railroads, we could not have transported the food and supplies needed at home and for the war effort. Without their labor in the fields, we would not have had an ample food supply here at home or for our soldiers. While long over due, this resolution is a token of our country's gratitude for the contributions these men and women made to our country. I am proud to support this resolution.

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 522 that celebrates the contributions that braceros have made to America.

From 1942 to 1950, nearly 400,000 Mexican guest workers, known as braceros, were recruited to work in the United States in response to the severe labor shortage during World War II.

They toiled in our fields and on our railroads 10 to 12 hours a day.

Eager to make better lives for themselves and their families, these tireless workers helped to keep the United States stable and strong during a said chapter in our nation's history.

The contributions of braceros to our country and its economy were immeasurable.

It is for that reason that we must also pass the Bracero Justice Act. For in spite of the hard work performed by the braceros, many never received full compensation for their work.

In fact, an estimated \$60 million dollars was withheld from their paychecks. Sixty years later thousands are still waiting to receive wages they earned.

Men like 75-year-old Mr. Andres Islas, a naturalized U.S. citizen, from my district, who performed backbreaking work in the agriculture fields of California in the 1940s.

Mr. Islas, the father of Bell councilwoman Theresa Jacobo, recalls being told that the U.S. government was taking a portion of his paycheck, but was never told how or where he could reclaim it.

He and all the braceros of that time have a right to be paid for their hard work during this time of crisis in our nation's history.

The Bracero Justice Act, currently before the House of Representatives, will help this to happen by requiring the U.S. and Mexican governments to give these men their day in court.

Justice is long overdue for Mr. Islas, his family, and the other braceros of that era, who sadly are passing away before this issue is resolved.

This resolution correctly praises the braceros for their contributions and should be passed, but there is still an injustice that needs rectification.

I urge the House leadership to bring the Bracero Justice Act to the floor for a vote and send a clear message that the U.S. is fair, just, and appreciative of those who toil on behalf of our country.

Mr. FARR of California. Madam Speaker, I strongly support H. Res. 522, a long overdue

resolution to thank the Braceros for their contributions to the war effort.

As the Representative of California's Central Coast, I have the distinct honor of representing the Salad Bowl of the Country, the Salinas Valley, known world wide for its lettuce and strawberry fields.

The agriculture industry in the Salinas Valley was memorialized in John Steinbeck's novel, "Grapes of Wrath." I am proud to state that the Bracero workforce contributed significantly to the economic development of the Salinas Valley and the surrounding region.

Their hard labor then became the foundation for a thriving \$2 billion fresh produce industry today.

At the onset of WWII, many Americans left their civilian jobs to join the war effort. This left labor shortages in many sectors of the national economy, particularly in agriculture and transportation. The U.S. government looked to Mexico as a ready source to fill these labor needs.

For the first time in our relationship with Mexico, the U.S. need for cooperation gave the Mexican government unprecedented bargaining power. The Mexican government insisted on a bilateral treaty to govern any large scale recruitment and movement of Mexican workers to the U.S.

In 1942, a treaty between the two governments was signed that allowed for the recruitment and employment of agricultural workers and contemplated that further agreements might be negotiated for recruitment of workers in other industries. The agreement regarding railroad workers followed shortly thereafter. This program became known as The Bracero Program.

These agreements covered a number of topics regarding recruitment, transport, salary and other terms and conditions of employment. The treaty contained a requirement that 10% of the salary of each worker was to be deducted by his employer and transmitted to the U.S. government for transfer to banks in Mexico. This 10% deduction was to be used for creation of a savings fund that the bracero could claim upon his return to Mexico. The savings fund for agricultural workers was to be held by Banco de Credito Rural; for railroad workers, by Banco del Ahorro Nacional. Both banks were wholly owned by the Mexican government, and the transfers were to occur through the Banco de Mexico, the equivalent of our Federal Reserve Bank.

According to documents from that era, an estimated \$35 million was transferred through these various deduction programs between 1942 and 1949. In 1949, the two governments dropped the 10% savings withholding and made several other reforms to the program. The Bracero program continued until 1964, but without the wage withholding provision.

Due to a series of problems, including maladministration of the program, delays in the sending of funds from the U.S. to Mexico, the lack of adequate information regarding how to retrieve funds, worker illiteracy, and the difficulty for workers residing in isolated rural areas in Mexico to access funds held in banks headquartered in Mexico City, a significant percentage of this money was never retrieved by the workers for whose benefit it was supposedly being held. The facts regarding the deduction and transmission of these funds have only recently come to light as a result of investigations of the savings fund program un-

dertaken by bracero advocates in recent years. Most of these workers appear to have been unaware of the savings funds supposedly held on their behalf until recent publicity regarding this program and the filing of the lawsuit.

In consequence, many Mexican workers—some of whom made a significant contribution to the effort of democratic governments to defeat fascism in Europe and Asia, never received the full salary to which they were entitled for their work. These men are now in their 60's, 70's, 80's and 90's. Many of them are in ill health. Due to the economic crises that have plagued Mexico for the last several decades, many are poor, and without any source of income to provide even the barest of necessities.

While this resolution is a good first step, it is only that, a first step. What this body really needs to do is pass H.R. 4918, the Bracero Justice Act of 2002. That bill will provide standing to the Braceros to take their case to court, statute of limitations notwithstanding. The responsible parties in this matter have made it clear that they intend to hide behind legal technicalities to prevent these Mexican workers and their families from recouping what they lost. H.R. 4918 would ensure that the workers receive these long overdue funds.

So I ask my colleagues today to pass H. Res. 522, but also to bring true justice to the Braceros and pass H.R. 4918 as well.

Ms. SOLIS. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 522, honoring braceros. During World War II, working people across the country left their jobs to fight the war in Europe and the Pacific. Under an agreement between Mexico and the United States, thousands of Mexicans, known as braceros, left their homelands and came to the United States to help fill the labor shortage.

The braceros performed labor-intensive work, toiling in the fields and building railroads. Their work kept the U.S. strong during a time of tremendous need and helped the Allies win World War II. Today, on International Bracero Day, we honor these hard-working men and pay them the respect they deserve.

Unfortunately, the braceros' struggle for full recognition of their work continues. The agreement between the U.S. and Mexican governments called for 10 percent of their wages to be deducted, with the promise that the money would be refunded when the workers returned to Mexico. Sixty years later, that promise has yet to be kept. Thousands have never received these wages.

I commend California Governor Gray Davis who recognized this struggle by signing into law yesterday a measure to help former braceros recover millions of dollars in lost wages by extending the applicable California statute of limitations.

The braceros worked hard and played by the rules established by the U.S. and Mexican governments. Some eventually served in the military defending our nation and became United States citizens. In return for their hard work, the braceros simply asked to be treated fairly and honorably. It is time that we honor our commitment to the braceros and their families. I am glad that the House is taking a step in that direction today.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the mo-

tion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, House Resolution 522.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING CAEL SANDERSON FOR HIS PERFECT COLLEGIATE WRESTLING RECORD

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 399) honoring Cael Sanderson for his perfect collegiate wrestling record, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 399

Whereas Cael Sanderson, continuing the storied tradition of Iowa State University wrestling, achieved a perfect collegiate wrestling record of 159 wins and no losses and is the first person ever to finish undefeated in collegiate wrestling;

Whereas Cael Sanderson is a four-time national wrestling champion, a four time National Collegiate Athletic Association championship outstanding wrestler, and a three time winner of the Dan Hodge Trophy;

Whereas the April 1, 2002, issue of Sports Illustrated ranked Cael Sanderson's perfect wrestling record second in a list of the top ten "most impressive college sports feats ever";

Whereas Cael Sanderson is a two-time Academic All-American, a champion in the classroom as well as on the mat;

Whereas Cael Sanderson's achievements have set a new benchmark for excellence in the sport of wrestling and will forever have an impact on college wrestling; and

Whereas through his persistence, hard work, and dedication, Cael Sanderson has set an example for all: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) congratulates Cael Sanderson for finishing his career as the first ever undefeated collegiate wrestler;

(2) recognizes the contributions of Cael Sanderson's parents, Stephen and Debbie Sanderson, his coach, Robert "Bobby" Douglas, the support staff of Iowa State University, and Cyclone fans;

(3) directs the Clerk of the House of Representatives to transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to—

(A) Cael Sanderson;

(B) Coach Robert "Bobby" Douglas of Iowa State University; and

(C) Cael Sanderson's parents, Stephen and Debbie Sanderson.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) and the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 399.

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