

RECOGNIZING MEMBERS OF AMVETS FOR THEIR SERVICE TO THE NATION

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 308) recognizing the members of AMVETS for their service to the Nation and supporting the goal of AMVETS National Charter Day.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 308

Whereas on July 23, 1947, AMVETS (American Veterans) was chartered by the United States as a not-for-profit corporation;

Whereas membership in AMVETS is open to veterans who have honorably served, or are serving, in the Armed Forces, including the Coast Guard, National Guard, and Reserves, during or since World War II;

Whereas the veterans of the Armed Forces have made great sacrifices to ensure the peace and security of the United States;

Whereas the members of AMVETS are dedicated to providing important services to their local communities and to their fellow veterans;

Whereas the motto of AMVETS is "We fought together, now let's build together";

Whereas the members of AMVETS consistently honor that motto through countless hours of patriotic service, including providing services to hospitalized veterans, assisting veterans with their problems regarding housing and employment, marching in parades, participating in color guards and burial details, and educating the Nation's youth;

Whereas the war on terrorism has emphasized the sacrifices that veterans have made, and continue to make, for the benefit of the Nation;

Whereas AMVETS has designated July 23 as AMVETS National Charter Day; and

Whereas the goal of AMVETS National Charter Day is to raise public awareness regarding AMVETS' commitment and service to veterans, the families of veterans, and the Nation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress recognizes the members of AMVETS (American Veterans) for their service to the Nation and supports the goal of AMVETS National Charter Day.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 308, legislation recognizing the members of AMVETS for their service to the Nation and supporting the goal of AMVETS on National Charter Day.

I want to recognize the gentleman from New York (Mr. BISHOP), the sponsor of this legislation, and thank him for his work on this resolution.

From its origins in the middle of World War II, AMVETS has a long and distinguished history of service to our Nation. They held their first national convention in Chicago in October of 1945, and just 2 years later, on July 23, 1947, President Harry Truman signed the AMVETS Charter. Originally orga-

nized for World War II veterans, AMVETS had their charter amended in 1966 to include veterans who served honorably during the Korean conflict and the Vietnam War, and again in 1984 to include those who served honorably during peacetime as well.

From its humble origins, AMVETS has grown to a national organization. Madam Speaker, with over 250,000 members, in addition to another 60,000 members of its ladies auxiliary.

As chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I can attest to the important role that AMVETS plays in Washington advocating for stronger Federal policies supporting veterans, their surviving spouses and dependents. Their legislative staff is among the finest, and they have played a key role in many important public policy debates. Members know that they can count on AMVETS for advice, counsel and support as we continue developing national policies to benefit our veterans.

Madam Speaker, I want to recognize and commend AMVETS National Commander John Sisler of Groveland, Illinois, who presented AMVETS legislative goals at our joint Senate-House Committee on Veterans' Affairs hearing earlier this year. He should be proud of the fact and of the success of AMVETS that they have achieved and continue to achieve, not just in Washington but also in communities across America. In addition to providing benefits and services to their fellow veterans, they also play an important role in the civic life of their communities.

I urge support for H. Con. Res. 308.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of our time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 308. This measure recognizes the members of AMVETS for their efforts on behalf of military families and service to our Nation.

During and following their military service, members of AMVETS have routinely worked to provide important services to their local communities and to their fellow veterans. They have truly been guided by the AMVETS motto: "We fought together, now let's build together."

This motto definitely rings true back in my home State of Maine, which is home to a very active and successful AMVETS chapter.

Madam Speaker, AMVETS has designated July 23 as its National Charter Day, with the goal to encourage public awareness of their commitment and service to veterans, their families and our country.

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I commend and applaud AMVETS for their past, present, and future service. I am pleased to support House Concurrent Resolution 308, and I ask other Members to do the same.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MICHAUD. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RODRIGUEZ).

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, we are incredibly blessed in this country to have a group of veterans service organizations looking out for the best interest of our veterans. For almost 60 years, American Veterans, commonly referred to as AMVETS, have been making a difference in the lives of those who have given so much for this country, our veterans and their families.

Through their national service foundations, AMVETS has service officers throughout the country who provide guidance and action on compensation claims and help them at no charge to our veterans.

Additionally, their Members and those of the AMVETS Auxiliary volunteer countless hours at our veterans and military hospitals throughout this country. During this time of increased military deployment, it is so important to have a network of veterans who help our injured soldiers and to whom they can turn for help and assistance.

Throughout my 7 years in Congress, I have met with AMVETS on a regular basis as they advocate for funding for veteran services, needs for homeless veterans, for better education benefits for our veterans, and many other issues. They have been there. Without them, we would not be where we are. They have been a voice for our veterans and continue to be there for our veterans. They have an incredible history, and I would like to take this opportunity not only to thank them for all they do for our veterans, but also to congratulate them on their upcoming National Charter Day.

Mr. MICHAUD. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 308, a bill that I introduced to honor the AMVETS veterans service organization's National Charter Day. AMVETS is an organization that is truly dedicated to helping this Nation's veterans, and I am pleased to see that this Congress is now acting to support this group which consistently works to help the men and women who have selflessly served this country.

I am proud to recognize AMVETS for its dedication to bettering the lives of veterans throughout this country. As we continue our military operations overseas, we must not forget that honoring veterans and their service must be something that we do every day, not just on Memorial Day and Veterans Day. We must always look to recognize and pay tribute to the sacrifices made to the individuals that have stared down the many faces of tyranny with undying dedication to our country.

On July 23, 1947, President Harry S. Truman signed Public Law 216 making

AMVETS the first World War II organization to be chartered by Congress. Today the organization is open to anyone who has served or is currently serving in the Armed Forces, including the National Guard and the Reserves.

AMVETS has a long history of helping veterans; and in a recent year, AMVETS processed more than 24,000 VA claims that resulted in veterans receiving approximately \$400 million in owed benefits. As Members of Congress, we all know how important it is to provide this kind of service to America's deserving veterans.

I am pleased that the House will soon adopt this resolution honoring AMVETS National Charter Day, and I hope that this Friday, as we celebrate national recognition of this organization, all Members of Congress will take the time to support their local members of AMVETS.

I am proud to support the five AMVETS posts located in my district, and I am sure that my colleagues share in the feeling of appreciation I have for the thousands of AMVETS members and their families who are dedicated to helping America's veterans.

Madam Speaker, I urge swift passage of this resolution.

Mr. MICHAUD. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I applaud the leadership of the gentleman from Maine, and I applaud particularly the sponsor and originator of this resolution, the gentleman from New York (Mr. BISHOP).

I celebrate with them as we commend AMVETS for their Charter Day on July 23, 1947. It has been said that Texas is a State that has probably the largest number of veterans living within it. Therefore, we are very much committed to our veterans. This is an excellent opportunity to honor the AMVETS because they honor us. Their theme, "We fought together, now let us build together," means they are vital components to our community.

As a congressional district that houses one of the largest veterans hospitals in the Nation, I thank them for their continued service to our veterans there, providing services to hospitalized veterans, assisting veterans in their problems regarding housing and employment, marching in parades, participating in Color Guards and burial details, and educating the Nation's youth.

On July 4, I had the opportunity to visit a homeless center where a number of men gathered. I provided them with a patriotic mission and message. In that group, however, it was interesting to note the many, many veterans that were there; and their point was our condition may not be the best now, but we love our country and want to improve our conditions in life. AMVETS are concerned about those veterans.

I expect we will have another legislative initiative on the floor today that will provide for the improved compensation for veterans sponsored by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH). I want to add my support for that legislation as well. But allow me to close by saying that the AMVETS deserve their full day of honor because they have honored us by their continued service in our community.

The very fact that these AMVETS include all of the veterans that have served honorably since World War II and during World War II is again a recognition of the Greatest Generation, but it is also a chance to be able to have these vets teach others.

I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. BISHOP) for presenting us with this honor and tribute to AMVETS, and I add my support for this legislation. I ask my colleagues to unanimously vote for this AMVETS resolution honoring those who served.

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

In closing, I want to thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) for his continued fighting for veterans issues. Also, I want to thank staff on both sides of the aisle for bringing these bills before us today. The staff has done a tremendous job in making sure that we have these bills before us in the proper form.

Also, I want to thank the veterans and the VSOs for all their work in helping keep Congress's feet to the fire in supporting issues important to our veterans in this country.

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

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I too want to thank the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) and the staff, Pat Ryan, chief of staff and general counsel, and Mary Ellen McCarthy who has done a very good job, and Kingston Smith on my right here. This is truly an effort to try to write legislation that really will make a difference. These four bills, and some of the others that are pending which will soon be before the body, really do advance the ball on behalf of our veterans.

I thank them for their cooperation and their partnership on this. That is what it is all about, "to try to care for him who has borne this Nation's battle, and for his widow and for his orphan," to quote President Lincoln.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 308.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR APPOINTMENT OF ELI BROAD AS CITIZEN REGENT OF BOARD OF REGENTS OF SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Mr. NEY. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate joint resolution (S.J. Res. 38) providing for the appointment of Eli Broad as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.

The Clerk read as follows:

S.J. RES. 38

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 (20 U.S.C. 43), the vacancy on the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, in the class other than Members of Congress, resulting from the death of Barber B. Conable, Jr., is filled by the appointment of Eli Broad of California. The appointment is for a term of 6 years, beginning upon the date of enactment of this joint resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) each will control 20 minutes.

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

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of Senate Joint Resolution 38, which provides for the appoint of Eli Broad as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution.

The Smithsonian is governed by a board of regents which is comprised of 17 members. These 17 members include the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the Vice President of the United States, three Members each of the U.S. House and Senate, and nine citizens who are nominated by the board and approved jointly in a resolution of Congress. The nine citizen members serve for a term of 6 years each, and are eligible for reappointment for one additional term.

Eli Broad will fill a vacancy on the board of regents for Barber Conable, Jr., who, sadly, passed away last year. Eli Broad is an accomplished business leader who built two Fortune 500 companies from the ground up. He serves on several boards, most notably; he is chairman of AIG Retirement Services and KB Home, formerly Kaufman and Broad Home Corporation. He is also the founding chairman of the board of trustees for the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles and currently a trustee and member of the executive committee of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Eli Broad and his wife, Edythe, are active philanthropists. Since 1984, the Broad Art Foundation has operated an active "lending library" of its extensive collection to more than 400 museums and university galleries worldwide.