

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFE INSURANCE, AND RECOGNIZING AND SUPPORTING NATIONAL LIFE INSURANCE AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 461) expressing the sense of Congress regarding the importance of life insurance, and recognizing and supporting National Life Insurance Awareness Month.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 461

Whereas life insurance is an essential part of a sound financial plan;

Whereas life insurance provides financial security for families in the event of a premature death by helping surviving family members to meet immediate and longer-term financial obligations and objectives;

Whereas nearly 50,000,000 Americans say they lack the life insurance coverage needed to ensure a secure financial future for their loved ones;

Whereas recent studies have found that when a premature death occurs, insufficient life insurance coverage on the part of the insured results in three-fourths of surviving family members' having to take measures such as work additional jobs or longer hours, borrow money, withdraw money from savings and investment accounts, and, in too many cases, move to smaller, less expensive housing;

Whereas individuals, families and businesses can benefit greatly from professional insurance and financial planning advice, including the assessment of their life insurance needs; and

Whereas the Life and Health Insurance Foundation for Education (LIFE), the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors (NAIFA) and a coalition representing hundreds of leading life insurance companies and organizations have designated September 2004 as "Life Insurance Awareness Month" the goal of which goal is to make consumers more aware of their life insurance needs, seek professional advice, and take the actions necessary to achieve the financial security of their loved ones: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—

(1) recognizes and supports the goals and ideals of "Life Insurance Awareness Month"; and

(2) requests the President to issue a proclamation calling on the Federal Government, States, localities, schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses, other entities, and the people of the United States to observe "Life Insurance Awareness Month" with appropriate programs and activities.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MICA. 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 the concurrent resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, House Concurrent Resolution 461 stresses the importance of life insurance. Frankly, I believe the resolution's message is an important one to convey.

According to the text of the resolution, nearly 50 million Americans do not carry life insurance policies. The implication for these families and their loved ones is clear and worrisome. These individuals run the risk of losing their assets in the event of an unexpected death.

Mr. Speaker, a death in the family is one of the most agonizing things a family or individual can endure. Forfeiting one's assets can compound the horrible grief or, worse, wreck the financial standing of the deceased person's immediate family. Life insurance brings security to millions of Americans and helps families meet many of their short- and long-term financial needs and goals. I urge all Americans to incorporate life insurance into their personal financial portfolios.

I understand hundreds of leading life insurance companies and organizations have designated September 2004 as Life Insurance Awareness Month. On behalf of the House of Representatives and our committee, I am pleased to support the goals and ideals of this commemoration.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT), who is a leader in Congress in encouraging Americans to be prudent with their personal finances. Again, few things are more important for a person or family than effectively managing their financial resources. So I commend my colleague on her efforts to recognize, again, the importance of life insurance in our society.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 461, which expresses the sense of Congress regarding the importance of life insurance and recognizes and supports National Life Insurance Awareness Month.

Like so many Americans, I worry about the financial security and solvency of my own family. With the economy worse than it has been since the early 1990s, many American families are strapped for money and forced to make difficult decisions about where to spend the precious resources they have and still make ends meet.

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During these difficult times, some parents are forced to choose between providing for loved ones now or securing their future. Life insurance is an important financial resource for loved

ones in the event of death, and it should not be overlooked when financial resources are limited.

The necessity of life insurance is well documented. Recent studies have found that when a premature death occurs, insufficient life insurance coverage on the part of the deceased often results in the surviving family members being placed under an insurmountable burden. Adult members are forced to work longer hours or take on extra jobs, borrow money, and spend less time with their children. Worse yet, this occurs when it is most important that family members spend time together in order to heal and recover from their tragic loss.

By designating September as Life Insurance Awareness Month we are putting aside a time for families to learn and to educate themselves about life insurance. As a society, we must take steps to make sure that our children are provided for and are safe. Almost 50 million Americans say that they have insufficient life insurance to care adequately for their loved ones in case of death. By supporting Life Insurance Awareness Month, we are signaling to the American people that this is an important issue that they should consider for the well-being of their families.

I know that oftentimes people will come by my office after the death of a loved one, and they will often have insufficient funds even for a burial, and collections are taken up. By making sure that we have life insurance coverage prevents these situations from occurring. I want to commend the maker of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that I am going to have any additional requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield as much time as she may consume to the distinguished gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT), a colleague of mine and author of this legislation and resolution.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support House Concurrent Resolution 461, which supports the goals and ideals of designating September as National Life Insurance Awareness Month.

I want to thank my friend the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KANJORSKI), the ranking member of the Committee on Financial Services, for introducing this resolution with me and for his support on this important issue. He could not be here this evening, and I would submit his testimony under general leave.

I also want to thank the gentleman from Virginia (Chairman TOM DAVIS) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) for moving this resolution through the Committee on Government Reform expeditiously and, of course, my good friend on the committee the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. Speaker, life insurance is too often thought of only when it is too late. How many times have any of us heard friends or loved ones sadly reflect that the deceased had no life insurance or had too little life insurance? Today, only 4 in 10 adult Americans own an individual life insurance policy, and among those who do have life insurance the amount is often too small to safeguard the financial future of their loved ones.

Because of insufficient coverage, family members are often forced to take a second job, to work longer hours, borrow money, or sell the family home. In short, these outcomes are only the symptoms of the crisis of underinsurance that exists in our Nation today.

Mr. Speaker, many of my colleagues on both the Committee on Financial Services and the Committee on Education and the Workforce have been working very hard to increase the level of financial literacy and economic education in this Nation. Understanding how financial products work and how they can work to build financial security are two important ingredients in a complete financial education.

To call attention to the problem of the uninsured and the underinsured, the Life and Health Insurance Foundation for Education, the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisers, and many other leading insurance companies and organizations designated September 2004 as Life Insurance Awareness Month. They have launched programs to reach out to Americans and educate them about life insurance, and my colleagues might have seen some of their ads on TV.

The goal of this resolution is to further educate Americans about the importance of life insurance to a sound financial plan. Losing a family member is painful enough without it being compounded by financial difficulties.

It is my hope that recognizing Life Insurance Awareness Month will motivate Americans to seek out information about the benefits of life insurance so that if the premature death of a loved one does occur, they will be spared the economic hardships that often accompany tragedy.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting designating September 2004 as Life Insurance Awareness Month.

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

Again, I want to thank the gentleman from Illinois for her work and also the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KANJORSKI) for his efforts in preparing House Concurrent Resolution 461. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my thoughts about House Concurrent Resolution 461, which I helped to introduce with the gentledady from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT). House Concurrent Resolution 461 would designate September as National Life Insurance Awareness Month.

Life insurance is a financial planning tool that all families should explore. It can provide

security in the event of an untimely death. In families where a premature death occurs, surviving family members are often required to work additional jobs or longer hours, borrow money, withdraw money from savings and investment accounts, and, in too many cases, move to smaller, less expensive housing.

By designating September as National Life Insurance Awareness Month, we will hopefully highlight the importance of this financial instrument for the nearly 50 million Americans who presently lack the life insurance coverage needed to meet the long-term financial needs of their families.

In closing, I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution to promote financial literacy.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHOCOLA). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 461.

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.

SERGEANT RIAVAN A. TEJADA POST OFFICE

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4046) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 555 West 180th Street in New York, New York, as the "Sergeant Riayan A. Tejada Post Office," as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4046

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SERGEANT RIAVAN A. TEJADA POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 555 West 180th Street in New York, New York, shall be known and designated as the "Sergeant Riayan A. Tejada Post Office".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the Sergeant Riayan A. Tejada Post Office.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MICA. 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 H.R. 4046, the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise in support of H.R. 4046. This measure designates a postal facility in New York city as the Sergeant Riayan Tejada Post Office. Each member of the New York State delegation cosponsored this tribute to one of America's fallen heroes.

On April 11, 2003, 26-year-old Sergeant Riayan Tejada of the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, was tragically killed in combat in Baghdad. He was a true American hero, despite not being a United States citizen.

Riayan was born in the Dominican Republic and moved with his family to the United States as a child. From the time he first arrived in America, he dreamed of becoming a United States marine. Upon graduation from high school in upper Manhattan, he enlisted in the Marine Corps where he served for some 8 years.

Sergeant Tejada worked hard as a soldier, and he became the best sniper in his regiment. He proudly served in Thailand, South Korea, the Philippines, Australia, East Timor and Iraq.

Sergeant Tejada never earned United States citizenship during his life but he was awarded posthumously that citizenship of this great Nation.

Sergeant Tejada is survived by a mother, a father, and two young daughters, ages 3 and 6.

Riayan Tejada loved being a marine. He loved America. For these reasons and for his service and for his patriotism to his adopted native homeland, I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring Sergeant Riayan A. Tejada by naming this post office after this hero.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the distinguished gentleman from New York, the sponsor of H.R. 4046, for honoring this tremendously brave young man.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleague in consideration of H.R. 4046, legislation naming a United States postal facility in New York, New York, after Sergeant Riayan Tejada.

This measure, which was unanimously passed by our committee on September 15, 2004, was introduced by the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) on March 25, 2004. H.R. 4046 enjoys the support and cosponsorship of the entire New York delegation.

Riayan A. Tejada was a Dominican citizen who came to the United States at the age of 12. He graduated from the Fashion and Design High School in New York and joined the United States Marines. He was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment in Camp Pendleton, California.

Sadly, Staff Sergeant Tejada was killed in a battle that followed the fall