

funds to support locally designed comprehensive school improvement efforts. This increased flexibility is provided in exchange for increased accountability for results.

Specifically, Ed-Flex allows the Secretary of Education to delegate the authority to States to waive certain Federal statutory or regulatory requirements affecting the State and local school districts and schools, if they have adopted challenging academic standards and strong provisions for holding schools accountable for student achievement.

I would also like to point out that there are some provisions of Federal law that cannot be waived under the Ed-Flex program. Those provisions include requirements relating to fiscal accountability standards, equitable participation by private school pupils and teachers, parental involvement, allocation of funds to States and local school districts, as well as health, safety and civil rights.

I am pleased that my home State of Delaware is one of the States that has been participating in the Ed-Flex program. They have used the additional flexibility provided by Ed-Flex to better serve students and schools with a high level of poverty.

I urge all of you to support the bill. In exchange for accountability, we can give States and local schools increased flexibility and more freedom from unnecessary and burdensome Federal regulations that can so often get in the way of attaining educational excellence. I ask my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

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

I join my colleague in supporting S. 2363, a bill to extend the current Ed-Flex authority.

The Ed-Flex program was first established in 1994 through the Goals 2000 Act. I was chief sponsor of the bill and Bill Goodling of Pennsylvania was the author of the Ed-Flex language. This was part of an early effort to provide States with greater flexibility as they begin to implement education reform initiatives.

Ed-Flex addressed criticism that certain Federal education requirements stymied local education reform and allowed local school districts to apply to waive select education requirements.

In exchange for greater flexibility, the local school district must demonstrate improved academic performance. Twelve States were granted Ed-Flex authority in 1999. Ten States continue to have the authority: Colorado, Delaware, Kansas, Massachusetts, Maryland, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Vermont.

S. 2363 would extend Ed-Flex for these 10 States until Congress reauthorizes No Child Left Behind.

By extending this authority for these 10 States, local school districts in these States will not have to interrupt the measures they currently have in place.

In Maryland, this includes allowing school districts that receive title I funds to allow all the students in the school to take advantage of title I services, such as extra attention in reading, in writing for elementary school students.

In Massachusetts, seven school districts are using Ed-Flex authority to provide title I service to schools that previously had access to these services; but due to shifts in school populations, these schools were no longer eligible for these funds, even though the need still existed.

I am pleased that States have been responsible in approving waivers requested by the school districts. States have adhered to the law which prohibits certain waivers such as those affecting civil rights and maintenance of effort. These provisions are important and exist to maintain necessary protection for students and funding.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me also mention that the Department of Education has provided assurances that it will not allow States to waive compliance with a highly qualified teacher provision in No Child Left Behind. All States must be in compliance with this provision by the end of this school year.

The highly qualified teacher provision is critical to improving student academic performance. All children should have the benefit of a teacher who is certified in the subject area they teach. The highly qualified teacher provision in No Child Left Behind ensures that that will happen, and I appreciate the Department's oversight on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is well thought out and deserves the support of this House.

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

□ 1445

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 2363.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SENSE OF HOUSE THAT AMERICANS SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN MOMENT OF SILENCE REGARDING ARMED FORCES

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 698) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that

all Americans should participate in a moment of silence to reflect upon the service and sacrifice of members of the United States Armed Forces both at home and abroad.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 698

Whereas it was through the brave and noble efforts of the Nation's forefathers that the United States first gained freedom and became a sovereign nation;

Whereas there are more than 1,300,000 active component and more than 1,100,000 reserve component members of the Armed Forces serving the Nation in support and defense of the values and freedom that all Americans cherish;

Whereas the members of the Armed Forces deserve the utmost respect and admiration of their fellow Americans for putting their lives in danger for the sake of the freedoms enjoyed by all Americans;

Whereas members of the Armed Forces are defending freedom and democracy around the globe and are playing a vital role in protecting the safety and security of all Americans;

Whereas the nation officially celebrates and honors the accomplishments and sacrifices of veterans, patriots, and leaders who fought for freedom, but does not yet officially pay tribute to those who currently serve in the Armed Forces;

Whereas all Americans should participate in a moment of silence to support the troops; and

Whereas March 26th, 2006, is designated as "National Support the Troops Day": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that all Americans should participate in a moment of silence to reflect upon the service and sacrifice of members of the United States Armed Forces both at home and abroad.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 698 calls on all Americans to take a moment and reflect on the sacrifices that our young men and women in the United States military make every single day. I am honored to support this resolution.

Today we stand here, not as Republicans or Democrats, not as liberals or conservatives, but as Americans, able to put our differences aside and remember the commitment and sacrifices of those who are willing to go into harm's way to preserve the very freedoms we sometimes take for granted.

As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I sometimes have

the great distinction of traveling with my colleagues and meeting and listening to these brave men and women; and in talking with these young men and women, I can never help but to come away inspired by the strength of their convictions.

Last year, I was honored to fly aboard the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* as it was preparing for its recent deployment and spend the night aboard the massive aircraft carrier. It was there that I was able to see firsthand the thousands of 18- and 19-year-olds who transformed the *Roosevelt* from a floating piece of metal into the most powerful tool of American foreign policy.

I gained a deeper understanding of the sacrifices that these young sailors endure in defense of our Nation. Many of them will work on that flight deck and in the bowels of the ship for 17-hour days enduring a heat much worse than we ever experience on a summer day here in Washington. When they finally get some rest at the end of a long and grueling day, it is in cramped quarters with little or no privacy.

I was astounded by the dedication, professionalism, and heart of the young men and women who make up her crew. They truly show that the legacy of the Greatest Generation lives on in the spirit of our youth.

Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, the *Theodore Roosevelt* came home to Norfolk, which I proudly represent, at the end of its 6-month deployment to the Middle East, where it launched over 5,000 sorties in support of the global war on terror. This resolution is for those brave sailors, as well as all the brave men and women who have time and time again answered the call and proudly served this Nation when its principles and values have come under attack. They have never wavered in their defense of freedom and their sacrifice should never be forgotten, least of all by us here in Washington.

I would like to thank Mr. KNOLLENBERG for introducing this very important resolution and for his commitment and dedication to our fighting men and women.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise in support of House Resolution 698, which expresses the sense of the House that all Americans should reflect upon the service and sacrifice of members of the United States Armed Forces. I want to thank and recognize the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE) for her leadership on this matter. I also want to acknowledge the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) for bringing this measure forward.

Mr. Speaker, there are over 2.4 million men and women in uniform, who have volunteered to defend this Nation. Today, over 281,000 of these extraordinary individuals are deployed in over 120 countries around the world. Active

and reserve component personnel are answering the call to duty in the global war on terror, as we, the homeland, defend challenges back at home.

It is only fitting, Mr. Speaker, that we recognize the service and sacrifice they make each and every day. The resolution before us calls upon all Americans to participate in a moment of silence and reflect upon the service and sacrifice that is being made by our Armed Forces, both here at home and abroad.

I would like to take this opportunity to also remind all Americans that in the coming months, May, in particular, the month of May, will be National Military Appreciation Month. It is another opportunity for us to recognize and honor those who serve and have served in our Armed Forces. I urge my colleagues to work with their communities to raise awareness and honor those who chose to serve their Nation in uniform.

Today we have thousands of soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen, and Coast Guardsmen who serve in harm's way.

I urge our communities throughout this Nation to reach out to those brave and honorable Americans and recognize their contributions by adopting a servicemember or unit or a family that is left behind. While we should take a moment to reflect upon these sacrifices these individuals are making, there are also tangible efforts that Americans can take to show their love and appreciation to our Armed Forces.

I urge all Americans to continue their strong support for our troops and to express their support in appropriate venues.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this great resolution.

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

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG), the sponsor of the bill.

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Virginia for allowing me to speak on this very important resolution today.

Mr. Speaker, last month, I came across a story of a young constituent of mine, Alexandra McGregor, who started a grass-roots campaign for a National Support the Troops Day.

After watching a news report about a fallen soldier, Alexandra began to think of all the days set aside to honor great Americans. Her idea for a National Support the Troops Day was hatched because of her belief that our active duty troops should be honored in the same way as veterans, Presidents, and other great Americans.

Alexandra was inspired to contact local, State, and Federal officials about her idea. She even went so far as to write to one high school in each State to encourage them to participate in a National Support the Troops Day.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today because of Alexandra and those like her

who wish to show their appreciation to the troops.

Currently, the U.S. officially honors the service veterans and patriots with designated national holidays. However, there is no official national day of recognition for active duty troops. We need to honor these men and women and show them that Americans across the country are appreciative of their hard work and sacrifice.

This resolution calls for Americans to participate in a moment of silence on March 26 to recognize our active duty troops. Mr. Speaker, this is no arbitrary day. Alexandra choose this day because it is the birthday of her late grandfather, a World War II veteran.

Today, there are over 1.3 million active duty troops both here at home and abroad. These men and women range from first-year military academy cadets to colonels and generals fighting in the global war against terrorism. Although we cannot thank them all individually, they all deserve our respect and admiration for their dedication to this great country. This resolution will honor our active duty troops as they deserve to be honored. On March 26, we will stand and salute these brave men and women.

With this resolution, it is my hope that our troops will know that the American people, from a 16-year-old girl in Waterford, Michigan, to the Members of the U.S. House of Representatives, are grateful for their service. With our country at war, it is more important than ever to show our appreciation for our troops.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today to ask for support of this resolution. I appreciate very much those that have joined in support of this resolution and for the support of the dedicated, courageous, heroic men and women of our Armed Forces.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO).

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 698, offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) to express the sense of this body that all Americans should participate in a moment of silence to reflect upon the service and the sacrifice of the members of the United States Armed Forces, both at home and abroad. Our Nation is unified in support of our men and women who sacrifice to keep us free.

This past year, Mr. Speaker, the U.S. Territory of Guam lost several servicemembers in combat. The toll seems unbearable to those who have lost loved ones, and in many ways it is. But the price that these men and women were willing to pay and ultimately did can be understood when one takes a simple moment to stop and notice what our way of life provides for us: liberty, freedom, and democracy.

Our Nation's fallen heroes know that freedom is not free. They died to protect our liberty so that we can remain

free. In many cases, they gave so others could also have a chance to live as we do, because we believe freedom-loving democracies will live at peace with us.

So as we honor all who serve with this resolution, I especially honor those who have made the greatest sacrifice. A moment of silence is especially appropriate for these fallen heroes, men and women, to whom we owe a debt of gratitude that is simply unpayable.

It allows us to reflect on our freedom; but mostly, Mr. Speaker, it captures the enormity of their individual sacrifices. Forever, each has fallen silent. For those who love them, there is consolation in knowing that our Nation will remember their sacrifice.

So let us take a moment to reflect upon and honor their memory. Today, as I read off the names of Guam's fallen heroes in the war on terror, I ask, Mr. Speaker, that we observe a brief moment of silence here today in this House on this floor to honor these men and women who sacrificed and continue to sacrifice like they did:

Specialist Christopher Wesley; First Lieutenant Michael Aguon Vega; Sergeant Yihjyh Lang Chen; Corporal JayGee Meluat; Sergeant Skipper Soram; Specialist Jonathon Pangelinan Santos; Staff Sergeant Steven Bayow; Specialist Derence Jack; Sergeant Wilgene Lieto; Specialist Richard Naputi; and Specialist Kasper Dudkiewicz.

Now for a brief moment of silence.

God bless our service men and women, and God bless our great country, the United States of America.

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER).

□ 1500

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in very, very strong support of this resolution offered by my colleague from the great State of Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG).

Mr. Speaker, since September 11, 2001, our Nation has been at war against the cowardly terrorists who attacked our Nation on that horrible day. The men and the women who served in our Armed Forces have made tremendous sacrifices to make America and the world a safer place.

They toppled the Taliban and they brought freedom and democracy to 25 million people in Afghanistan. Because of that service and that sacrifice, Mr. Speaker, Afghanistan today is a partner and an ally in the war on terror, instead of the friendly host of our enemy.

For the past 3 years, the Armed Forces have been engaged in Operation Iraqi Freedom. That mission has been very long, very difficult, and the sacrifices have been many. But the mission is being achieved. The Iraqi people have gone to the polls three times and are now finishing the work on establishing a Democratic national unity government.

Once democracy takes root in Iraq, freedom will have gained another foothold in a part of the world where it is so desperately needed. None of these incredible accomplishments would have been possible without the sacrifice of our men and our women in uniform.

All of our volunteer military, made up of citizen soldiers, are the best emissaries of freedom our Nation has to offer. These are men and women willing to give up their lives to spread freedom and to make our Nation more secure. And for that we owe them a debt which can never be repaid.

The least we can do as Americans is to pause to reflect on everything that they have sacrificed, for the incredible service that they have given to the cause of freedom. And so to every soldier in the Army, to every airman in the Air Force, to every sailor in the Navy, to every Marine, to every member of the National Guard or the Reserves, to every brave member of the Coast Guard, thank you.

Thank you for your service and thank you for your sacrifice. Thank you all for serving the cause of freedom. Every American should observe the moment of silence asked for by this resolution and reflect upon all of our Armed Forces and all that they have done to protect our freedoms, our liberty, our democracy. And following that moment of silence, we should also personally thank every service member that we meet in our everyday lives.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this very important resolution.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution and thank the gentleman (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) for introducing it. No matter what one's views are on the Iraq war, or war in general, our men and women in uniform sacrifice a great deal so that we may live freely.

It is a fact of life that in every war anyone who serves in war runs the very real risk of losing their lives. This is a tremendous burden that few of us can ever imagine. However, from the moment they rise in the morning, every U.S. soldier knows that they could fall in the line of duty that day.

Unfortunately, 2,309 U.S. soldiers have paid the ultimate price in Iraq and 278 have died in Afghanistan. Thousands have died in the wars that the U.S. has fought—Vietnam, World War I and World War II, Korea, Desert Storm and others. All of these soldiers, regardless of when they served, deserve our thanks, our prayers, and our respect.

This burden is shared by not only every man and woman that puts on the uniform, but each of their families, too. In order to adequately honor those that have fallen, we must continue our responsibility to those that they have left behind.

Mr. Speaker, we must show our support for these fallen heroes and their families. This resolution is a small way of showing our gratitude.

I strongly support this resolution and thank our soldiers for their service. My prayers are with those who have lost their lives and their families.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. DRAKE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 698.

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.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT OF CONGRESS REGARDING ACCESS OF MILITARY RECRUITERS TO INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 354) expressing the continued support of Congress for requiring an institution of higher education to provide military recruiters with access to the institution's campus and students at least equal in quality and scope to that which is provided to any other employer in order to be eligible for the receipt of certain Federal funds.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 354

Whereas on March 6, 2006, the Supreme Court ruled 8-0 in favor of the Government in the case of *Rumsfeld v. Forum for Academic and Institutional Rights, Inc.*, upholding the authority of Congress to withhold Federal funds from an institution of higher education that prevents military recruiters from gaining access to the institution's campus and students in a manner that is at least equal in quality and scope to that which is provided to any other employer;

Whereas this important decision comes at a time when the Nation finds itself at war and reaffirms the constitutional obligation of the Government to provide for the defense of the Nation;

Whereas the decision recognizes the authority of Congress under section 8 of article I of the Constitution to raise and support armies, provide and maintain a navy, and make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces;

Whereas the national security interests of the United States are best served by a high level of military personnel readiness;

Whereas the ability of the Armed Forces to recruit the best possible candidates from the widest available pool of talent is of paramount importance to national security;

Whereas institutions of higher education are an important source of recruits for the Armed Forces;

Whereas an institution of higher education that prevents military recruiters from gaining access to the institution's campus or students in a manner that is at least equal in quality and scope to that which is provided to any other employer does a disservice to those students who desire the opportunity to serve in the Armed Forces; and

Whereas section 983 of title 10, United States Code, requires institutions of higher education to provide such equal access to military recruiters in order to be eligible for the receipt of certain Federal funds: Now, therefore, be it

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