

Zogby poll showed that a majority of service members who knew a gay member in their unit said the person's presence had no negative impact on the unit or personal morale. Senior leaders such as retired Gen. John Shalikashvili and Lt. Gen. Daniel Christman, a former West Point superintendent, are calling for a second look.

Second, 24 nations, including 12 in Operation Enduring Freedom and nine in Operation Iraqi Freedom, permit open service. Despite controversy surrounding the policy change, it has had no negative impact on morale, cohesion, readiness or recruitment. Our allies did not display such acceptance back when we voted on "don't ask, don't tell," but we should consider their common-sense example.

Third, there are not enough troops to perform the required mission. The Army is "about broken," in the words of Colin Powell. The Army's chief of staff, Gen. Peter Schoomaker, told the House Armed Services Committee in December that "the active-duty Army of 507,000 will break unless the force is expanded by 7,000 more soldiers a year." To fill its needs, the Army is granting a record number of "moral waivers," allowing even felons to enlist. Yet we turn away patriotic gay and lesbian citizens.

The Urban Institute estimates that 65,000 gays are serving and that there are 1 million gay veterans. These gay vets include Capt. Cholene Espinoza, a former U-2 pilot who logged more than 200 combat hours over Iraq, and Marine Staff Sgt. Eric Alva, who lost his right leg to an Iraqi land mine. Since 2005, more than 800 personnel have been discharged from "critical fields"—jobs considered essential but difficult in terms of training or retraining, such as linguists, medical personnel and combat engineers. Aside from allowing us to recruit and retain more personnel, permitting gays to serve openly would enhance the quality of the armed forces.

In World War II, a British mathematician named Alan Turing led the effort to crack the Nazis' communication code. He mastered the complex German enciphering machine, helping to save the world, and his work laid the basis for modern computer science. Does it matter that Turing was gay? This week, Gen. Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, said that homosexuality is "immoral" and that the ban on open service should therefore not be changed. Would Pace call Turing "immoral"?

Since 1993, I have had the rich satisfaction of knowing and working with many openly gay and lesbian Americans, and I have come to realize that "gay" is an artificial category when it comes to measuring a man or woman's on-the-job performance or commitment to shared goals. It says little about the person. Our differences and prejudices pale next to our historic challenge. Gen. Pace is entitled, like anyone, to his personal opinion, even if it is completely out of the mainstream of American thinking. But he should know better than to assert this opinion as the basis for policy of a military that represents and serves an entire nation. Let us end "don't ask, don't tell." This policy has become a serious detriment to the readiness of America's forces as they attempt to accomplish what is arguably the most challenging mission in our long and cherished history.

TRIBUTE ON THE OCCASION OF THE 186TH ANNIVERSARY OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE

HON. MICHAEL R. McNULTY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

Mr. McNULTY. Madam Speaker, the American people join with the people of Greece in celebrating the 186th anniversary of the revolution that freed the Greek people from the Ottoman Empire.

The bedrock of our close relationship with Greece is our mutual devotion to freedom and democracy and our unshakable determination to fight, if need be, to protect these rights.

Greek philosophers and political leaders—Cleisthenes and Pericles and their successors—had great influence upon America's Founding Fathers in their creation of these United States.

We, as a Nation, owe a great debt to Greece. Greece is the birthplace of democracy, as we know it.

Thomas Jefferson said, "To the ancient Greeks, we are all indebted for the light which led ourselves (American colonists) out of Gothic darkness."

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 were an attack on democracy and freedom—not just against our people, but also against all freedom-loving people everywhere in the world. The Greek people understand this.

I congratulate the people of Greece and wish them a Happy National Birthday.

ON THE 4TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE IRAQ WAR

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my support both for the men and women fighting for our Nation with immeasurable courage and commitment and for the legislation that would bring them home, the "U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health and Iraq Accountability Act."

While I have opposed this war from the beginning, our duty now is to resolve this conflict as quickly as possible. We must stabilize the country, protect innocent Iraqis, and lay the groundwork to return our troops to their families.

We were lead into war on the basis of false presumptions drawn from faulty intelligence. Our soldiers are now being attacked daily by anonymous road-side bombs that the factions fighting in a civil war are targeting against our troops—whom we were told would be greeted as liberators.

Billions of taxpayer dollars have simply vanished in Iraq, while billions more have been given away in no-bid contracts or embezzled. At the same time, our troops are going without the body armor and the advanced HUMVEE protections—such as the MRAP system—that would reduce casualties. This is simply inexcusable.

Further, at the present time, according to a survey by USA Today and other media, 6 in 10 Iraqis (61 percent) believe their lives are

going badly, while only a third (35 percent) agree that improvements in current conditions are on the horizon.

Unfortunately, there are no easy answers to the disaster that the Administration's actions in Iraq have created.

However, I believe we must try to ensure that we do not leave Iraq worse off than it was before the invasion. Until Iraqis feel safe in their country and see progress in their lives, it will not be possible to bring stability to that nation.

Importantly, as the most recent National Intelligence Estimate has made clear, this is not something that can be accomplished by the use of military force—it can be achieved only when Iraqis come together to make the difficult political decisions that will create a government truly capable of governing.

Further, the Iraq Study Group advised that a gradual draw-down of troops is most likely to stabilize the country when combined with serious negotiations with all of Iraq's neighbors—including Iran and Syria.

This is why I stand here today in support of the "U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health and Iraq Accountability Act." This bill would hold the President and Iraq to the benchmarks President Bush himself has stated must be reached to resolve this crisis.

If these benchmarks are not being met in the months to come, this Act would require that our troops be redeployed. Frankly, if we are not making progress in Iraq, we have no reason to be there.

Further, we owe it to the Iraqis, who have lost tens of thousands of their loved ones, to require that the political solutions that are central to their success are the benchmarks against which we measure our progress.

Additionally, let me note that this bill would also require that all forces sent to battle be adequately rested, trained, and equipped. While the President could waive this requirement, frankly I do not believe it is ever in our interest to send forces into combat who are not fully ready and who do not have the latest protective equipment we can provide.

Our forces have done all and more than we have asked of them and their families have been patiently sacrificing for four long years. We owe it to them to adequately protect them while they are deployed and to bring them home before the 5th anniversary of this war passes.

That is why I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill.

IN MEMORY OF BOB HATTOY

HON. JANE HARMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

Ms. HARMAN. Madam Speaker, Bob Hattoy was a true American original. Sadly, he passed away earlier this month due to AIDS-related complications. His passionate voice on social justice and environmental issues helped break down barriers and moved the country in a better direction.

Bob's defining trait was his passion. He always fought hard for what he believed in—no matter who or what stood in his way. This was especially true during his time as the California regional director for the Sierra Club.

Bob never wavered in fighting for issues such as protecting the California desert and preventing offshore drilling along the coast. He also worked to change the way the Sierra Club operated, putting a more human face on the organization.

He never shied away from taking on people in power—not even Presidents. With his characteristically sharp tongue, he described a proposal to name a national forest after former President Reagan was like “naming a day-care center after W.C. Fields.”

But it was in the debate over AIDS in America where Bob will truly be remembered. In many ways, he helped transform the debate and became, as he joked, a “poster boy for AIDS” in the process.

In 1992, nearly 2 years after being diagnosed, Bob gave one of the most evocative and impassioned speeches at the Democratic National Convention. The first person with AIDS to speak at a party convention, Bob spoke honestly and frankly to millions of Americans. He became an icon in the AIDS movement, and helped change the hearts and minds of many.

I will always remember the unique way he blended this passion for progressive issues with a charming sense of humor. It was his wit that often won over those who disagreed with him and endeared to him those he fought for. Though he will be missed, his legacy, reputation and humor will live on.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

Mr. CONAWAY. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 157, H. Res. 138—Recognizing the importance of Hot Springs National Park on its 175th Anniversary. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea.”

TRIBUTE TO RALPH FRANZEN AND RICHARD PARADIS

HON. JOHN T. DOOLITTLE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Madam Speaker, today I wish to recognize and honor two fine volunteers, Ralph Franzen and Richard Paradis, upon their retirement after years of service ensuring the health and safety of the residents of California on the slopes of the famed and historic Squaw Valley Ski Resort.

Ralph and Richard both served on the Squaw Valley National Ski Patrol (SVNSP), an organization of approximately 95 unpaid volunteers who are trained in outdoor emergency care, CPR, and winter rescue. They combined first aid and skiing skills to serve the ski area and public at Squaw Valley USA near Lake Tahoe, California. While on duty at Squaw Valley, patrollers are agents of the resort and work under the direction of the Squaw Valley Ski Patrol Department. Together with the paid patrol staff, they are always among the first on the mountain in the morning and the last off, regardless of weather or snow conditions.

The patrollers' primary function is to provide basic life support, first aid, rescue, and on-the-slope transportation to injured resort guests. Besides first aid and winter rescue duties, volunteer patrol members frequently assist with the skier safety program on the two-mile long Mountain Run to ensure the general safety of the skiing/snowboarding public at Squaw Valley.

Madam Speaker, both of these distinguished gentlemen have spent 35–40 days a year working as volunteers on the Squaw Valley Ski Patrol, providing for the health and safety of the skiers on the mountain. Richard Paradis joined the Squaw Valley National Ski Patrol in 1961 and Ralph Franzen in 1972. They have provided care for countless injured skiers with every level of injury. Over the course of their careers, Ralph Franzen and Richard Paradis have received commendations for rescuing individuals from life threatening situations and injuries. Today, they deserve further recognition upon their retirement.

Ralph and Richard are outstanding volunteers who have proven themselves over the years as certified instructors in first aid, outdoor emergency care, toboggan, and rescue equipment usage. These gentlemen have dedicated countless hours to training the current generation of ski patrol men and women and, as a result, have received the admiration and respect of their fellow Ski Patrol members.

Ralph Franzen and Richard Paradis truly are heroes to the many they have helped save and mend over the years. They are outstanding representatives of the community who have proven records of commitment to public service and their fellow man.

Thank you, Ralph Franzen and Richard Paradis, for your years of dedicated service.

PLUG-IN HYBRID VEHICLES

HON. DAVE CAMP

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

Mr. CAMP of Michigan. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing legislation that aims to help propel the introduction of plug-in hybrid vehicles by automobile manufacturers. These clean, efficient, high performance vehicles have the potential to reduce the nation's dependence on foreign oil, lower emissions, and help the nation's auto manufacturer's move forward into the next generation of advanced technology vehicles.

Government mandates are no substitute for the power of capital markets. That is why my bill is aimed squarely at consumers. Providing tax credits to consumers for the purchase of any type of plug-in hybrid vehicle, allows people to pick and choose the model that suits their needs and preferences. The goal of this legislation is to stimulate consumer interest in these new vehicle technologies.

The current bottleneck for producing plug-in vehicles is battery technology. The Administration has proposed millions of new research dollars aimed at advanced battery technology. This type of research is important. Breakthroughs are needed to usher today's concept plug-in vehicles into the showrooms and ready for customer purchase. To date, the types of batteries needed to power cars and trucks are

too heavy, too expensive, and too limited. I am confident, however, that America's ingenuity and desire to take a global lead in battery research will soon overcome the current barriers to entry that exist for plug-in hybrid vehicles.

My bill stimulates consumer demand by providing taxpayers a maximum tax credit of 10 percent of the cost of any plug-in hybrid vehicle up to a maximum \$4,000 in the case of a plug-in with a 4kWh battery. Each additional kWh would get an extra \$250 credit. This model is based on the electric vehicle tax credit.

Most auto manufacturers are already working on plug-in hybrid vehicle technologies. I believe with greater consumer demand, Detroit's automakers can, and will produce vehicles that meet the demands of consumers and address concerns over foreign oil, high gas prices, and cleaner air. My bill is just one of many ideas to help bring about this desired result.

TRIBUTE TO MR. LUCIOUS CARROLL RICHARDSON

HON. ROBERT B. ADERHOLT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

Mr. ADERHOLT. Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize Mr. Lucious Carroll Richardson, known to his friends as “Sonny,” who retired from the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs on August 31, 2006. He is a man who truly embodies the American principles of hard work, patriotism, dedication to one's family and service to one's community.

For the past 30 years, the veterans in Walker County, AL, have had no better friend than Sonny Richardson. During that time he unselfishly served Walker County and the State of Alabama with great dedication and distinction. He worked tirelessly to ensure our veterans and their families received the benefits they had earned. His one driving goal was simply to help people. As Sonny once said, “this job is not a position, it is a calling. If you are not interested in helping people, then you do not need to be in this job”.

Sonny began his career with the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs in January 1977. At that point there were approximately 6,800 veterans in Walker County receiving approximately \$4,800,000 in benefits. Today, more than \$19,400,000 in benefits are distributed to approximately the same number of veterans. It was also on his watch that a new Veterans Clinic was opened at Walker Baptist Medical Center in Jasper. In 1987, he rose to the rank of district manager and upon his retirement was supervising two different districts covering 21 counties in north Alabama.

One of Sonny's better known accomplishments was his role in Walker County's annual Veterans Day parade. For 21 years he was the organizer of the parade. Due to his leadership the event grew to become the second largest Veterans Day parade in the State of Alabama. He turned over the reins as organizer 5 years ago to concentrate more on serving the needs of the veterans in Walker County. However, the Walker County Veterans Day parade continues as an annual tradition.

Sonny is a veteran of the United States Army and retired with 20 years of service.