

improving many facets of unit readiness, including a 99 percent retention rate and 90 percent attendance rate for drill. The family readiness group engaged in many community activities and each member attended special events of importance to the other families. It was these initiatives and community activities that helped bring the families of the deployed soldiers together and made enduring the long deployment more bearable.

The recognition awarded to the Charlie Company emphasizes the critical importance of providing the best family support possible during deployments. When families of the deployed soldiers are taken care of it relieves our soldiers of worrying about their daily tasks at home and helps them to focus on the mission at hand. Indeed, the readiness of our men and women in uniform goes beyond providing the best equipment or training that is available. It is required that we provide a strong sense of community for their families at all times. Family readiness must be viewed as a continuum of support that continues beyond a servicemember's mobilization. Without volunteers who donate countless hours to this effort, family assistance would not be as effective and the readiness of our Armed Forces would not be as strong as they are today. House Concurrent Resolution 181 raises appropriate awareness of the readiness of our Armed Forces and the value of military families. I hope that all of us will recognize the important ways in which families and family readiness groups contribute to the strength of our Nation's Armed Forces.

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, at this time I don't have any further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, at this time I have no further requests for time and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ORTIZ) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 181.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING THE SACRIFICE AND COURAGE OF THOSE WHO WERE KILLED IN THE CRANDALL CANYON MINE DISASTER, AND RECOGNIZING THE RESCUE CREWS FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING EFFORTS

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 631) honoring the sacrifice and courage of the six missing miners and three rescuers who were killed in the Crandall Canyon mine disaster in Utah, and recognizing the rescue crews for their outstanding efforts in the aftermath of the tragedies.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 631

Whereas on August 6, 2007, six miners, Kerry Allred, Don Erickson, Juan Carlos Payan, Brandon Phillips, Manuel Sanchez, and Jose Luis Hernandez, were trapped 1,800 feet below ground in the Crandall Canyon mine in Utah;

Whereas Federal, State, and local rescue crews worked relentlessly in an attempt to locate and rescue the trapped miners;

Whereas three rescuers, Gary Jensen, Brandon Kimber, and Dale "Bird" Black lost their lives during the rescue attempt;

Whereas the loss of the miners has had a tremendous effect on the local community;

Whereas the emergency efforts coordinated by the Emery County Sheriff's Department have been exemplary;

Whereas Utah is one of the largest coal producing States in the Nation, producing over 21 million tons of coal in 2005;

Whereas coal continues to be the economic engine for many communities;

Whereas during the last century over 100,000 coal miners have been killed in mining accidents in the Nation's coal mines;

Whereas the Nation is greatly indebted to coal miners for the difficult and dangerous work they perform to provide the fuel needed to operate the Nation's industries and to provide energy to homes and businesses; and

Whereas many residents of Emery County and Carbon County, Utah, and the surrounding areas, came together to support the miners' families and the community has been steadfast in its efforts to help the families of the missing and deceased: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House—

(1) recognizes Kerry Allred, Don Erickson, Juan Carlos Payan, Brandon Phillips, Manuel Sanchez, Jose Luis Hernandez, Gary Jensen, Brandon Kimber, and Dale "Bird" Black for their sacrifice in the Crandall Canyon, Utah coal mine;

(2) extends the deepest condolences of the Nation to the families of these men;

(3) recognizes the many volunteers who participated in the rescue efforts and provided support for the miners' families during the rescue operations; and

(4) honors the long national heritage of coal mining families and supports the tradition for the future.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) and the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may insert material relevant to H. Res. 631 into the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

(Ms. WOOLSEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, this resolution is sponsored by Representative MATHESON from Utah where, just last month, six miners and three rescuers were lost in a mine tragedy at the Crandall Canyon mines.

Let me begin by expressing the horror and outrage I felt as I, like millions of other Americans, watched this tragedy unfold last month. First, six min-

ers, working some 1,500 feet underground, were trapped when the mine collapsed. And then three rescuers were killed as they mounted a dangerous operation to rescue their fellow miners. The operation was so dangerous it was actually called off.

The Crandall Canyon disaster joins the other mine tragedies that have occurred in the last 2 years. My heart goes out to the families of the lost miners. My heart goes out to the rescuers who were also killed at Crandall Canyon.

This tragedy is compounded by the fact that the administration and the mining industry have not taken the necessary steps to stop them. There is a background piece on mine safety actually that has been prepared by the staff of the Education and Labor Committee and is available on the committee Web site. I really hope that Members will access this information. The paper actually provides background on the situation prior to the year 2006, the accidents that year, the enactment of the MINER Act, and the work of the committee so far this year. It also includes a summary of the legislation introduced in June of this year by Chairman MILLER, by Chairman RAHALL, myself and others that are particularly relevant to the incident in Crandall Canyon. And this piece has some initial thoughts on the lessons of Crandall Canyon.

The full committee will be holding a hearing on the Crandall Canyon incident on October 3. Thereafter, the committee will be holding a markup on the legislation on which my subcommittee held a legislative hearing just before the recess. I hope all Members on both sides of the aisle will join us in our effort to bring the mine safety and health laws of this country into the 21st century.

But today, we are not here to talk about deficiencies in the laws or in problems with particular mine operators; rather, we're here to honor those whose lives were lost in this tragedy, all those who tried bravely to rescue them, honoring their families and all who lent a helping hand.

I know Representative MATHESON spent hours at the site and with the families, and I commend him for his hard work and courage.

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to join both of my colleagues from Utah, as well as, apparently, the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee in expressing our profound sympathies for the Utah families who lost their loved ones at the Crandall Canyon mine. I'm not a miner, but I have been told that unless one has been a miner, it's impossible to understand the profession, the mindset and the courage that is displayed by those who work daily under dangerous conditions so that the rest of us can live in an element of comfort.

Today, this body honors six competent, courageous men who labored to

provide a better future for their families and all of us.

On August 6, the Crandall Canyon mine experienced a shift in the Earth that registered a 4 on the Richter scale at the nearby University of Utah. This left almost 2,000 feet of debris between the working area of the mine and the last known location of these miners. Kerry Allred, Don Erickson, Luis Hernandez, Carlos Payan, Brandon Phillips and Manuel Sanchez were lost in this catastrophe.

In addition, three very courageous heroes sacrificed their lives to rescue their fellow miners. Only miners fully understand this commitment to those they consider brothers. Dale Black, Brandon Kimber, Gary Jensen, miners and a mine safety official lost their lives during this rescue effort. We cannot also forget the five other miners and the Mine Safety and Health Administration officials who were injured in this effort.

Dozens of miners and officials put their life at risk by entering this mine to try and find and recover their colleagues, and over a period of 4 weeks the rescue efforts tried to reach these men through the working section of the mine, as well as horizontally, with seven bore holes drilled in a vain attempt to find the trapped miners. This self-sacrifice has been demonstrated throughout mining history.

I have the firm belief that this life is not finite, and we shall all be reunited again; that these noble men who lost their lives will be reunited with their loved ones in the future. And though the separation may be short, it is extremely difficult for those left behind to bear that separation.

I applaud our colleague, Congressman MATHESON, for introducing this resolution, one which deals with the sympathy for those who were involved in this particular effort and as an effort to try and comfort them at this particular time.

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. MATHESON).

Mr. MATHESON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution. And I would like to recognize and thank Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member MCKEON of the House Education and Labor Committee for their support of this resolution and enabling us to move it to the floor so quickly. I'd also very much like to thank both of my colleagues from Utah, Mr. BISHOP and Mr. CANNON, who are here on the floor today also in support of this resolution. And I'd like to acknowledge the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, who is here also to speak on this resolution today.

I rise today to honor the sacrifice and the courage of six missing miners and the three rescuers who died in a mine disaster at the Crandall Canyon coal mine in Huntington, Utah just a

few weeks ago. It was in the early hours of August 6, the six miners were trapped when rocks and debris exploded off the walls of the tunnel where they were working more than 1,800 feet underground. And the cave-in created a ground shock that measured 3.9 on the Richter scale at the University of Utah's seismographic center. Very quickly, rescue crews assembled in an effort to locate and reach the six men, but, to date, Kerry Allred, Don Erickson, Juan Carlos Payan, Brandon Phillips, Manuel Sanchez and Jose Luis Hernandez are still missing.

Ground movement, what miners calls bumps or bounces, continued at the mine. During the rescue attempt further disaster struck. Three rescue miners, Gary Jensen, Brandon Kimber, and Dale "Bird" Black were killed when once again underground activity caused a burst of rubble to explode off the cavern walls. Rescuers had to literally dig with their hands to get their colleagues out from beneath piles of coal and rocks. Their efforts saved another six rescuers who were injured but are thankfully recovering.

Throughout this catastrophe the local community has remained steadfast. The Emery County Sheriff, his deputies and other first responders worked round the clock to maintain order as private, State and Federal teams maintained the search effort.

Community leaders and the families of these mining towns in Emery and Carbon Counties came together to support the trapped miners' families, the rescuers and the emergency crews. They did what they have always done in coal country during hard times; they held each other close, they hoped, and they prayed.

Today the House honors the missing and the dead. We extend condolences of our Nation to their families. We recognize the many volunteers who rushed to their aid and who provided endless hours of compassionate support.

And finally, we honor the proud heritage of coal mining families. Their skill, their hard work and their dedication contributes to the prosperity and quality of life that each and every one of us enjoys.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield to the senior member of our delegation to, once again, signify and symbolize the unity that the entire State feels as we face this disaster. I yield as much time as he may consume to Mr. CANNON of Utah.

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank first of all my colleague, ROB BISHOP, for yielding me time and my colleague, JIM MATHESON, for bringing this resolution before us. We appreciate his introduction. This is an area that he represents. It is an area that I have represented in the past. It's an area which I expect to represent in the future if we get the fourth, if the Senate will act on giving a vote to the District of Columbia and a fourth seat to the State of Utah.

I rise in support of this resolution and in support of the thousands of miners throughout Utah and the rest of the United States and throughout the world who undertake this difficult and dangerous work.

After weeks of watching demonstrations, videos and explanations of the process, no American can doubt the courage and dedication of these brave men and women who work in darkness so that the rest of us can work with light.

John Wayne defined courage the way a miner would define it. "Courage is being scared to death and saddling up anyway." The miners of Utah saddle up every day, and they deserve our thanks.

Miners Kerry Allred, Don Erickson, Juan Carlos Payan, Brandon Phillips, Manuel Sanchez and Jose Luis Hernandez all "saddled up" in the best traditions of Utah and make us proud.

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The tragedy on August 6 is indelibly imprinted on the hearts and minds of all Utahns. But as it always has in times of need, America's best responded. The rescue effort spared no expense and left no stone unturned in trying to reach the six sons of Utah trapped below. In the process three rescuers lost their lives and more were injured.

Americans should take heart to know that we have such men as Gary Jensen, Brandon Kimber, and Dale "Bird" Black who would risk their lives for others. The Bible tells us that greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for another. Imagine the love, dedication, and courage it takes to lay down one's life for a friend or stranger.

In moments such as these, politicians tend to try to do too much and accomplish too little. While there will be time to decide what, if anything, we need to do to ensure that such tragedies as these can be averted, now is the time for elected representatives for the people to thank those involved on behalf of the people.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "The true test of civilization is not the census, nor the size of cities, nor the crops, no, but the kind of man the country turns out." Utah and America turn out the best, and for that we thank their families, our communities, and Almighty God.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL).

Mr. RAHALL. I thank my colleague from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) for yielding and for bringing this resolution to the floor.

I also can sympathize and empathize with what my colleagues Mr. MATHESON and Mr. BISHOP and Mr. CANNON have said and the experience through which they have been the last month or longer.

Mr. Speaker, coal mining is a dangerous occupation. Many of these individuals, these brave, courageous individuals that work in coal fields across our Nation and especially those in the Appalachian coal fields that I have the honor of representing will go to work before the sun comes up. They will not see their loved ones again until after the sun has gone down. They will do this for 5, 6, even 7 days a week, never seeing the light of day so that our Nation, as the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON) has said, will be able to have light, so that those in the big cities who automatically turn on their air conditioning and their lights every morning can reflect on from where that power comes.

We in West Virginia have known our share of tragedies, and it is unfortunate that when we look back over the history of our mine safety laws in this Nation that it has taken a tragedy for the Congress to act. It is unfortunate that every mine safety and health law on the books today is written with the blood of our Nation's coal miners. Congress has responded. We did respond, as has been referred to already, in passing the MINER Act after the West Virginia disasters of Sago and Aracoma in my district, and I hope that we will respond again.

The gentlewoman from California has referred to the mine safety legislation introduced by the chairman of the Education and Labor Committee, Mr. MILLER, and myself and several other Members of Congress in a bipartisan fashion. This builds upon the MINER Act that this Congress passed and, yes, President Bush signed into law. While I agree we do not know the causes of this latest disaster and we know a little more about the causes of the West Virginia disasters over a year ago, it is important that we take a look at those responsible for enforcing our mine safety laws in this country, those at MSHA, currently serving under a recess appointment director. And it is important that we beef up that agency, that we do all we can within this Congress's power to give them the morale, the authority, and the knowledge that they must enforce our mine safety laws without fears of retribution, that there cannot be the cozy relationships that perhaps have existed in the past between those who inspect our mines and those who operate our mines. That relationship, if it has existed, must no longer exist.

But that is getting into what comes down the pipe later on. What we are here today to do is to praise those miners that lost their lives, all of our Nation's coal miners, in fact, and to pray for their families. We also especially recognize those three brave individuals that went into the bowels of this Earth to try to rescue and find their friends and their fellow workers and lost their lives in the process of trying to save other lives, those mine rescuers. That tragedy was most unfortunate and only made the original tragedy that much worse.

So I join with my colleagues in offering our prayers, in offering our sympathies to the families of the lost miners as well as the rescuers because myself, having spent time with coal miners' families while they wait word from below as to the fate of their loved ones, it is a cruel experience that no individual should have to experience. But, unfortunately, unless the Congress acts and even when we do act, it may yet occur again because mining is a dangerous occupation.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON).

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 631 and to honor the memories of the miners who lost their lives in the Crandall Canyon mine accident. Our thoughts and prayers are with the miners' families and with those miners and the Mine Safety Health Administration personnel killed as well as those injured in subsequent rescue operations.

The Committee on Education and Labor has announced an investigatory hearing for October 3 to begin examining the circumstances surrounding the Crandall Canyon mining accident, including the response to the accident by the Mine Safety Health Administration and other stakeholders. Only then will we be able to determine what steps Congress should take in the aftermath of the Crandall Canyon tragedy to further ensure the safety of our Nation's miners.

As a former member of the South Carolina Mining Council, I plan to continue to track this issue closely. I am committed to maintaining the openness and integrity of this process so that the issue of miner protection receives the fair and comprehensive consideration it deserves.

Coal miners have a very dangerous job, and it is our role to ensure that the conditions in which they work are as safe as possible. We renew our commitment to examining our Nation's mining laws to ensure they are protective for the changing mining environment.

Last year, in the wake of the Sago and other mine disasters, Congress worked in a bipartisan fashion to pass the MINER Act. That legislation took significant steps to improve mining safety. It requires the Mine Safety Health Administration to revise its penalties, increase penalties for major violations to \$220,000, undertake several studies regarding mining practices, and to work to improve the technology for communications underground.

No law passed by Congress can console the families of those who have lost loved ones as a result of this tragedy. In the coming months, we will thoroughly review what happened at Crandall Canyon and what steps may be considered to prevent it from happening again. But today we are here to

mourn the tragic loss of life at that mine in Utah and pay our respects to the families of these brave miners.

Kerry Allred, Dale Black, Don Erickson, Gary Jensen, Luis Hernandez, Brandon Kimber, Carlos Payan, Brandon Phillips, and Manuel Sanchez. We honor these men today, express our condolences to their families, and recognize the important work of the rescuers who volunteered to enter the mine to try to rescue their fellow miners.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this resolution.

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, though the structure of these resolutions require a Republican and Democrat both to present legislation, on this day when we deal with an issue of comfort, not on politics, this day we are all united as we honor these miners who were trapped and those who worked to find these men. We grieve with their families in our hearts, our prayers, our thoughts. The memory of these nine men will not diminish, and I urge all my colleagues to join with Mr. MATHEWSON, Mr. CANNON, and myself in supporting this resolution.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 631.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING THE CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE DEATH OF THE HONORABLE PAUL E. GILLMOR, A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE STATE OF OHIO

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged resolution (H. Res. 632) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 632

Resolved, That the House has heard with profound sorrow of the death of the Honorable Paul E. Gillmor, a Representative from the State of Ohio.

Resolved, That a committee of such Members of the House as the Speaker may designate, together with such Members of the Senate as may be joined, be appointed to attend the funeral.

Resolved, That the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House be authorized and directed to take such steps as may be necessary for carrying out the provisions of these resolutions and that the necessary expenses in connection therewith be paid out of applicable accounts of the House.

Resolved, That the Clerk communicate these resolutions to the Senate and transmit a copy thereof to the family of the deceased.

Resolved, That when the House adjourns today, it adjourn as a further mark of respect to the memory of the deceased.