

amended so that siblings and spouses of members can also become associate members.

I am pleased that H.R. 1119, the Purple Heart Family Equity Act of 2007, as amended by the Judiciary Committee, provides that spouses and siblings of persons eligible to be active members of the Military Order of the Purple Heart can become associate members.

If I just look at the bill for the sake of clarity, Mr. Speaker, the current law is parents and lineal descendants. This strikes parents and lineal descendants and replaces it with the parents, spouse, and lineal descendants. This is something that has been agreed to and promoted by the members of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, by Republicans and Democrats in the Judiciary Committee. I do not recall opposition to this. I believe one could say that it is clearly without opposition, perhaps unanimous on the Judiciary Committee.

I urge adoption of H.R. 1119.

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

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 4 minutes to the author of the bill, my colleague from California, Congresswoman DAVIS.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from California as well.

Mr. Speaker, I was honored for the opportunity to introduce the Purple Heart Equity Act along with Representative VIRGINIA FOXX, Minority Whip ROY BLUNT, Chairman JOHN MURTHA, and a number of other bipartisan sponsors. We came together, and this is a unanimous bill because honoring the women who have won the Purple Heart is something that we can all stand behind.

As commander of the Continental Army, as has been mentioned, George Washington wanted to recognize soldiers whose sacrifices and distinction forwarded the cause of independence. As a result, he created the Military Merit. He also designed the award, shaped it like a heart in the color purple. And after the Revolutionary War, this award was actually abandoned. But in honor of the bicentennial of Washington's birth, President Herbert Hoover revived the award in 1932, and it maintained its original design and became more known today, of course, as the Purple Heart.

In that same year the Military Order of the Purple Heart formed with the mission of fostering a positive environment among wounded veterans as well as providing services to all veterans and their families. But when the organization was federally chartered in 1958, few women actually had won the Purple Heart. So, under the current law, male members today can invite their wives to join the Ladies Auxiliary of the Purple Heart, but there is no place in this organization for the husbands of female members.

So that's why H.R. 1119 is important today, because it adds the word

"spouses" to the Federal Charter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart. And with this small update, the husbands of female members will have the option of joining the organization just as the wives do.

Just a little bit more history, Mr. Speaker. The first woman to be awarded the Purple Heart was Lieutenant Annie G. Fox after she was killed in the attack on Pearl Harbor. Since then, the Military Order of the Purple Heart has identified at least 97 female Purple Heart recipients who have joined the organization.

It has been 66 years since Lieutenant Fox earned the award, and now it is time, certainly time, that we act to fully honor the courageous women who are bestowed with the Purple Heart. H.R. 1119 honors and recognizes these brave women and future recipients of the Purple Heart. This is the least, certainly, we can do for the women who sacrifice for our country.

And, finally, H.R. 1119 will allow the siblings of all who belong to the organization to join as associate members.

By passing this legislation today, we certainly honor every family whose son or daughter or sister or brother has won the distinguished Purple Heart.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I urge support for this bipartisan bill.

Mr. Speaker, 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 gentlewoman from California (Ms. ZOE LOFGREN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1119, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to amend title 36, United States Code, to revise the congressional charter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart of the United States of America. Incorporated, to authorize associate membership in the corporation for the spouse and siblings of a recipient of the Purple Heart medal."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

KENDELL FREDERICK CITIZENSHIP ASSISTANCE ACT

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2884) to assist members of the Armed Forces in obtaining United States citizenship, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2884

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Kendell Frederick Citizenship Assistance Act".

SEC. 2. FINGERPRINTS FOR MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, including section 552a of title 5, United States Code (commonly referred to as the "Privacy Act of 1974"), the Secretary of Homeland Security shall use the fingerprints provided by an individual at the time the individual enlisted in the Armed Forces to satisfy any requirement for fingerprints that is part of an application for naturalization if—

(1) the individual may be naturalized pursuant to section 328 or 329 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1439–1440);

(2) the individual was fingerprinted in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Defense at the time the individual enlisted in the Armed Forces;

(3) the individual submits an application for naturalization not later than 24 months after the date on which the individual enlisted in the Armed Forces; and

(4) the Secretary of Homeland Security determines that the fingerprints are sufficient to adjudicate the applicant's naturalization application.

(b) MOST TIMELY AND EFFECTIVE ADJUDICATION.

Nothing in this section shall preclude an individual described in subsection (a) from submitting new fingerprints to the Secretary of Homeland Security. If the Secretary of Homeland Security determines that submitting new fingerprints would result in more timely and effective adjudication of the individual's naturalization application, the Secretary shall inform the individual that submitting new fingerprints would result in more timely and effective adjudication of the individual's naturalization application, along with a description of how to submit new fingerprints.

(c) *COOPERATION.*—The Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, shall determine the format of fingerprints acceptable for usage under subsection (a). The Secretary of Defense, or any other official having custody of the fingerprints referred to in subsection (a), shall make such prints available to the Secretary of Homeland Security for the purpose described in subsection (a) without charge and shall otherwise cooperate with the Secretary of Homeland Security in fulfilling the Secretary's satisfaction of the requirement under subsection (a).

SEC. 3. PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON MILITARY NATURALIZATION.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Not later than 30 days after the effective date of any modification to a regulation related to naturalization under section 328 or 329 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1439–1440), the Secretary of Homeland Security shall update as necessary the appropriate Internet site or sites maintained by the Secretary to reflect such modification.

(b) *SENSE OF CONGRESS.*—It is the sense of the Congress that the Secretary of Homeland Security should update as necessary the appropriate application form or forms promulgated by the Secretary not later than 180 days after an effective date described in subsection (a).

SEC. 4. REPORTS.

(a) *ADJUDICATION PROCESS.*—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the entire process for the adjudication of an application for naturalization filed pursuant to section 328 or 329 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1439–1440), including the process that begins at the time the application is mailed to, or received by, the Secretary of Homeland Security, regardless of whether the Secretary determines that such application is complete, through the final disposition of such application. Such report shall include a description of—

(1) the methods of the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of Defense to prepare, handle, and adjudicate such applications;

(2) the effectiveness of the chain of authority, supervision, and training of employees of the Federal Government or of other entities, including contract employees, who have any role in such process or adjudication; and

(3) the ability of the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of Defense to use technology to facilitate or accomplish any aspect of such process or adjudication.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—

(1) STUDY.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study on the implementation of this Act by the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of Defense, including studying any technology that may be used to improve the efficiency of the naturalization process for members of the Armed Forces.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date that the Comptroller General submits the report required by subsection (a), the Comptroller General shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the study required by paragraph (1). The report shall include any recommendations of the Comptroller General for improving the implementation of this Act by the Secretary of Homeland Security or the Secretary of Defense.

(c) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(1) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ZOE LOFGREN) and the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 2884, the Kendell Frederick Citizenship Assistance Act, pays tribute to the memory of 21-year-old Army Reserve Specialist Kendell K. Frederick, who was killed in Iraq while attempting to become an American citizen.

Specialist Frederick was born in Trinidad and immigrated to the United States when he was 15 to join his mother, stepfather, and two sisters. He attended Randallstown Senior High in Baltimore County, Maryland, where he joined the school's ROTC program. Specialist Frederick enlisted in the Army Reserve in his senior year and was deployed to Iraq in December of 2004. As he was serving our country, Specialist Frederick sought to apply for U.S. citizenship; yet one bureaucratic hurdle after another delayed his application.

First, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service failed to route his application to the unit that processed naturalization applications for mem-

bers of the military. That agency then rejected his application for failure to pay an application filing fee, despite the fact that active military personnel applying for U.S. citizenship do not need to pay a filing fee.

Thereafter, this agency directed Specialist Frederick to get his fingerprints taken in Maryland, despite the obvious fact that he was deployed in Iraq at the time. Also, he had recently had his fingerprints taken and undergone a background check when he enlisted in the Army Reserve. When his mother called the agency's “help line,” she was told that there was nothing that could be done.

After trying for more than a year to become a U.S. citizen and having his application rejected and delayed as a result of various bureaucratic failings, Specialist Frederick was forced to travel on a convoy to a base where he could get his fingerprints taken for his naturalization application. Tragically, he was killed en route by a roadside bomb. Specialist Frederick was posthumously granted U.S. citizenship a week after his death.

H.R. 2884 would remove unnecessary procedural hurdles like the one Specialist Frederick faced for naturalization applicants who are serving or who have recently served in the military. It would require the Department of Homeland Security to use the fingerprints provided by military naturalization applicants at the time of their enlistment in the Armed Forces if the applicants were fingerprinted in accordance with DOD requirements, if the naturalization applications are filed within 24 months of enlistment, and if the fingerprints are deemed sufficient by the Department of Homeland Security for naturalization purposes.

The bill would require DHS to inform a member of the armed services applying for naturalization when submitting new fingerprints would result in a more timely and effective adjudication of the naturalization application along with the description of how to submit the new fingerprints.

It would also ensure that the DOD complies with the requirements of this bill so that fingerprints they hold are sent to DHS. It would clarify the time frame in which DHS is required to publicize changes in regulations and forms regarding the naturalization of members of the Armed Forces. And, finally, it would promote accountability by requiring the GAO to report on the naturalization process for Armed Forces members.

Approximately 35,000 lawful permanent residents are currently serving in our Armed Forces. More than 13,000 noncitizen members of the military have applied for U.S. citizenship since 2002.

This is an excellent bill that will help ensure that from now on, American soldiers do not face the kinds of unnecessary and unreasonable hurdles to American citizenship that cost Specialist Frederick his life.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill and would note that this was passed unanimously out of the House Judiciary Committee. I urge my colleagues, again, to support the bill.

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

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, Specialist Kendell Frederick was a 21-year-old U.S. Army soldier serving in Iraq. He dreamed of becoming an American citizen. He was born in Trinidad and came to this country when he was 15 years old. Specialist Frederick joined ROTC while in high school, and he joined the Army after he graduated.

I want to make the point about how important ROTC is in the recruitment of our military personnel and having that available at the high school and also at the college level. And I reflect, as mention was made in the previous debate about the Purple Heart and George Washington, the historians that I talk to point out to me that George Washington most likely received his commission to command the Continental Army outside the gates of Harvard near the commons. And it's interesting also that the ROTC recruiters aren't allowed on that campus. But they were allowed on the campus that recruited Specialist Kendell Frederick.

On October 19, 2005, very sadly, Kendell Frederick was killed by a roadside bomb while traveling in a convoy to a base. He was granted U.S. citizenship posthumously, but he never knew that he was an American citizen. Tragically, the very reason that he was in the convoy that day was to get fingerprinted in order to achieve his dream of citizenship.

He had been trying to become an American citizen for over a year, having started the process while he was in training. His mother and his sergeant in Iraq tried to help him, but they didn't know the rules. His efforts to become a citizen were thwarted by bureaucratic misinformation and other obstacles.

Although he was fighting for our country in Iraq, he was told that he had to have his fingerprints retaken in Maryland. When his mother called 1-800-IMMIGRATION, a USCIS, that is, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, hotline for immigration assistance and tried to explain that he was fighting in the war and could not come home to Baltimore to be fingerprinted, she was told that there was nothing that they could do. Not a very good answer from a government that has people who put their lives on the line for our freedom.

This is wrong, Mr. Speaker. And it is intolerable that our soldiers are unable to get correct information, particularly with regard to the citizenship that they fight to defend. They should be given every possible assistance in applying for citizenship.

H.R. 2884 provides that a soldier who submits a naturalization application

within 24 months of enlistment can have that application process using the fingerprints that were taken at the time of enlistment. This is a very simple, very commonsense solution, and it's too bad that Congress has to take action on this to get this kind of a thing done, but it is dealt with the kind of compassion for patriotism that I think reflects the Members of this Congress, both sides of the aisle, and the people of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support H.R. 2884 to honor Specialist Frederick and all of our permanent resident servicemembers who seek citizenship.

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I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the author of this bill, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUMMINGS. To Chairwoman LOFGREN, I want to thank you for your leadership. And certainly to Chairman CONYERS and the ranking member and ranking member of the subcommittee, I want to thank all of you for getting this bill to the floor. Finally, I want to thank the professional staff on the Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration for working so diligently with my staff to bring this legislation again to the floor of the House.

Mr. Speaker, the Kendell Frederick Citizenship Assistance Act truly is a step towards correcting and honoring our non-citizen servicemembers, many of whom continue to serve in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is appropriate, therefore, that we consider this legislation as we approach Veterans Day, honoring all who have risked their lives to protect our own.

I introduced the Kendell Frederick Citizenship Assistance Act to ensure that those who are willing to fight relentlessly on the battlefield to protect our great Nation do not have to also battle through a drawn-out citizenship process. Specifically, H.R. 2884 will assist our noncitizen servicemen and -women on the road to citizenship by making the following needed adjustments:

Requiring the United States Department of Homeland Security to use the fingerprints taken by the Defense Department at induction for citizen applications;

Requiring noncitizen military servicemembers to submit their citizenship applications within 24 hours of enlistment;

Requiring the Department of Defense and DHS to determine a single acceptable format for fingerprint submission;

Requiring DHS to update appropriate application forms for naturalization, the instruction and guidebook for obtaining naturalization, and the DHS Web site when naturalization procedures pertaining to members of the Armed Forces are changed; and

Ensuring efficiency and accountability to Congress by requiring the Government Accountability Office to report on DHS's training of personnel, methods and effectiveness in adjudicating applications by members of the Armed Forces.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation honors the memory of a young man from my district, 21-year-old Army Reserve Specialist Kendell K. Frederick. He was a resident of Baltimore County and a native of Trinidad who was stationed in Iraq and died while trying to journey to another post in order to meet the citizenship application fingerprinting requirement. In other words, if he didn't have to go through the changes that he went through, he probably would still be with us today. And one of the interesting things that was mentioned a little bit earlier, he was part of the ROTC process, but he was also a young man, when he entered the military, he entered and made agreement to serve in the military for 8 years. I mean, even knowing that there was a war going on, he bravely said, I want to serve my country. And he claimed this as his country and still went out there and fought, but he wasn't even a citizen yet of our country.

Namely, after trying for more than a year to become a citizen and having his application delayed at least five times due to miscommunication and misinformation in processing his fingerprints, keep in mind the reason why he was killed was he was on his way trying to get his fingerprints done over there in Iraq. Specialist Frederick had no choice but to travel with a convoy to a base to resolve this issue. Unfortunately, he was killed on the way by a roadside bomb, never realizing his dream of becoming an American citizen. And the interesting thing is that he was in the last vehicle of the convoy.

Mr. Speaker, Specialist Frederick embraced a Nation that had failed to fully embrace him by honoring him with citizenship during his lifetime. And it's interesting I think that it was a day or so after he died, then they gave him citizenship. That is why I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 2884 to make certain that no other soldier who wants to be a citizen will have to jump through unnecessary bureaucratic hoops. These outstanding noncitizen soldiers such as Specialist Frederick have made the choice to give voluntarily to our Nation by fighting the terrorist groups that threaten us, putting their lives on the line, sacrificing their blood, their sweat, their tears, and their lives.

I urge my colleagues to please vote in favor of this legislation. I know his mother is watching, and I know that she will be very moved. This is something that has been a long journey for her. And with that, I thank the gentlelady for your courtesy.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker I yield myself such time as I may consume just for a brief conclusion for this.

I want to thank my colleagues for their work on this. I thank the gentleman for coming to the floor to speak up and speak on behalf of Kendell Frederick and the memory and the legacy that he leaves here for us in this country; one of many who stepped forward to defend this country; one of, tragically, too many who lost their lives. And his life has contributed in a number of ways, one of them being the freedom that he helped to protect and the safety and security of the American people, and another, always this legacy of this bureaucratic snafu that will, I pray, forever be straightened out by this bill, the Kendell Frederick bill.

So I urge adoption of this bill, and I thank my colleagues.

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

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I would just close by noting that the mishandling of this application is just infuriating to read through what happened and to have lost this young man who volunteered for our service in such a way is so distressful. But I think we can take a stand by supporting this bill named in Kendell Frederick's honor to make sure this does not happen to another serviceman or servicewoman and also that his family can know that in addition to serving in Iraq, he served as a model for a change in the law and that they may take some comfort with that.

So I urge passage of the bill.

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. ZOE LOFGREN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2884, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAMS ACT OF 2007

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3866) to reauthorize certain programs under the Small Business Act for each of fiscal years 2008 and 2009, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3866

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Small Business Programs Act of 2007”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Reauthorization of small business programs.

Sec. 3. BusinessLINC grants reauthorization.