

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) cited the initial investment in the college program that stimulated young Barrington's interest and facilitated his skill in aviation, and appropriately mentioned our former colleague, Bill Lehman, who served as Chair of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, and that brought a very touching memory back to me as I worked with then-Chairman Lehman in my capacity as Chair of the Aviation Subcommittee to resolve a number of complex issues in aviation. He was always gracious and caring and helpful and astute. I appreciate the gentleman's reference.

And let us move quickly to enact this legislation to acknowledge Barrington Antonio Irving's contribution to aviation, an inspiration to young people.

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 661 is a resolution honoring the accomplishments of Barrington Antonio Irving, the youngest pilot and first person of African descent ever to fly solo around the world.

I want to thank our colleague, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, for introducing this important legislation.

On June 27, 2007, Barrington Irving flew solo around the world to inspire youth, in particular inner-city youth and minority youth, throughout the Nation to consider pursuing careers in aviation and aerospace. In doing so, he became the first African American and youngest pilot to make such an extraordinary trip.

In order to make his dream a reality, he received donations from airplane manufacturers and others, which he used to assemble the plane that carried him around the world. He named his plane "Inspiration" in hopes that his flight would inspire others to reach for their dreams.

In addition to such an amazing accomplishment, Barrington continues to work tirelessly to provide additional resources for young people pursuing careers in the field of aviation.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Irving is a remarkable man, which should serve as a motivation to us all that dreams can come true if you put your mind and heart into a project. That is why I support H. Res. 661 and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. OBERSTAR. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 661, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING THOSE WHO HAVE VOLUNTEERED TO ASSIST IN THE CLEANUP OF THE NOVEMBER 7, 2007, OIL SPILL IN SAN FRANCISCO BAY

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 853) honoring

those who have volunteered to assist in the cleanup of the November 7, 2007, oil spill in San Francisco Bay.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 853

Whereas the oil spill that occurred on November 7, 2007, in the San Francisco Bay resulted in the discharge of between 53,570 and 58,000 gallons of toxic bunker fuel, causing one of the Bay Area's worse environmental disasters;

Whereas 28 beaches were closed and over 1,300 birds so far have been severely impacted by the spill;

Whereas thousands of individuals throughout the San Francisco Bay Area immediately volunteered to assist with the cleanup;

Whereas Bay Area community non-profit organizations, such as San Francisco Connect, have also rallied to support the response and recovery work by supporting these volunteer efforts;

Whereas Bay Area environmental organizations, such as Baykeeper, Save the Bay, and the Bay Institute, have provided invaluable leadership in reporting, assessing, and helping to remediate the damage to the Bay's ecosystem;

Whereas the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, members of the San Francisco Crab Boat Owners Association, commercial crabbers, and other Bay Area fishermen have all joined the cleanup efforts as well; and

Whereas the city of San Francisco, particularly through its Department of Emergency Management, has significantly contributed to the overall response, bringing considerable resources to bear. Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives honors those individuals and organizations who have volunteered to assist in the cleanup of the November 7, 2007, oil spill in one of our Nation's most beloved national treasures, the San Francisco Bay.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TAUSCHER) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 853, introduced by my good friend and distinguished Speaker of the House, NANCY PELOSI.

This resolution honors thousands of volunteers who helped clean up the Bay Area's beaches and wildlife after the harmful oil spill of November 7 of this year. The public's response to 58,000 gallons of fuel polluting the bay typified how the San Francisco Bay community comes together during a crisis. Our Bay Area constituents were eager to volunteer their time and help minimize the negative effects to the Bay Area's fragile ecosystem. For days and days after the spill, they cleaned birds and combed the shoreline for oil residue, and in some cases put their own health at risk in order to protect our bay.

In order to coordinate the volunteer efforts, numerous organizations mobilized their members in support of the

cleanup, including Save the Bay, the Fishermen's Association and the Crab Boat Owners. I am so proud of our Bay Area constituents, how much energy they showed, how much passion they showed, and such dedication that they showed to the bay during this environmental disaster. These volunteers deserve recognition from the House of Representatives.

I strongly support House Resolution 853.

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

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 853 honors the efforts of all of those that volunteered to assist the response to the recent oil spill in San Francisco Bay. Last month a cargo vessel collided with a span of the San Francisco Bay Bridge, resulting in a gash to the vessel's hull and the release of approximately 58,000 gallons of fuel oil into the bay.

Following reports of the oil spill, the Coast Guard, with its Federal, State and local government partners, initiated a response to the spill which has resulted in the deployment of 440 personnel and the recovery of more than 4,000 cubic yards of oily solids.

In addition to the critical work performed by the Coast Guard and other government officials, literally thousands of volunteers have assisted in cleanup operations at beaches throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. Volunteers have assisted professional cleanup crews in removing oil from beaches and have reported sightings of oil-affected areas and impaired wildlife to oil spill response personnel.

Additionally, volunteers were required to undergo at least 4 hours of hazardous waste and emergency response training before participating in the cleanup efforts.

I want to commend the Speaker of the House, Ms. PELOSI, and join with her today in thanking these volunteers and honoring their efforts to respond to this unfortunate event.

I also want to take time to thank all of the Federal, State, and local officials for their efforts to contain and minimize the environmental and economic impacts of the spill.

I urge all members to support this resolution.

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H. Res. 853.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak personally from my position as someone who lives in the Bay Area. I live on the east bay in Alamo, California, far from where the spill was. But I have to tell you that of the 8 or 9 million people that live in the Bay Area, not one single one was completely unaffected by what happened on this terrible day of November 7. Many of us are deeply concerned that this was an accident that shouldn't have happened, that this was something that may have been prevented. And I have to commend the Speaker and the delegation from the Bay Area for moving very quickly on a bipartisan basis to begin hearings to be sure that we actually know what exactly happened so that it can be prevented in the future. But today we're really here to celebrate the thousands of Bay Area members that came forward so quickly to volunteer to assist in the cleanup of the bay at a time when it was in great jeopardy, at a time when they put their own health at risk when, for many of them, it was as simple as just going down the road to the beach near their house and attempting to do whatever kind of cleanup they could have.

The environmental impact of the spill is still being felt, and certainly for the wildlife of the Bay Area, it is still a question of how many will survive in the long term. When you have this kind of bunker oil, which is pretty toxic stuff, come into the bay and flow on to these wild fowl and other animals, it puts them in great jeopardy.

We believe that in San Francisco the bay is a national treasure. We believe it is not only a source of environmental pride, but it is also a place where many thousands of San Franciscans and Bay Area people work. We have obviously a very big crab industry, a big fishing industry; and tourism, of course, is a big part of what we do in the Bay Area. So we are deeply concerned about what happened on November 7.

But I think that this is a good time to celebrate the activism and the volunteerism of people of the Bay Area and the San Francisco area.

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

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I would advise my friend and colleague from California that I have no further speakers at this time and would reserve until she finds herself in a similar position.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. The Speaker became as concerned as we all were immediately upon hearing about this, and brought the California Bay Area delegation together to understand what we can do in our Federal capacity to move this issue. And it was the Speaker's intention today to speak about the volunteerism of the Bay Area people. Her speech will be in the RECORD.

At this time I ask all of my colleagues to support H. Res. 853.

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

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, again I yield myself such time as I might consume just simply to thank the honorable Speaker of the House for introducing this resolution and, again, to commend the selfless acts, thousands of selfless acts of the volunteers in the San Francisco Bay Area, also my good friend on the Transportation Committee, Mrs. TAUSCHER, for her stewardship of this bill. I urge passage.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents in San Francisco and my colleagues in the Bay Area delegation, I want to thank Chairmen OBERSTAR and CUMMINGS, and Ranking Members MICA and LATOURETTE, for their cooperation in bringing this resolution to the floor.

The San Francisco Bay is one of Northern California's most precious resources. Its biodiversity and fundamental role in commerce and recreation make it essential to the vitality of the entire Bay Area.

The Bay is special to San Franciscans. We bring our kids and grandkids here to play and learn about the environment. We surf and sail. And we appreciate the precious ecosystem that exists on the beaches, in the estuaries, under the water, and in the nearby National Marine Sanctuary—the Gulf of the Farallones. So protection of this Bay—its safety and its health—has always been a high priority. Any harm to the Bay is a serious matter, and when disaster struck on November 7th our community was quick to respond.

Thousands of Bay Area residents immediately volunteered to clean beaches, rescue wildlife and undo the damage caused by this devastating spill. City officials worked with federal authorities on a volunteer management agreement to train and deploy local volunteers who were qualified to assist with difficult shoreline and wildlife recovery efforts. As a result, over 1,000 members of the Bay Area community were quickly trained and credentialed.

In addition, community non-profit organizations such as San Francisco Connect and the San Francisco Volunteer Center rallied support; environmental organizations like Baykeeper, Save the Bay and the Bay Institute offered their expertise; and the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, members of the San Francisco Crab Boat Owners Association, commercial crabbers and other Bay Area fishermen offered their equipment and experience.

Today's resolution honors all of the individuals, organizations and officials who volunteered their time, their skills and their energy in response to this disaster. Their commitment to both the environment and their community saved wildlife from oil residue, protected the Bay's ecosystem and made our beaches safe again for Bay Area families.

As it says in the Bible, 'to minister to God's creation is an act of worship. To ignore those needs is to dishonor the God who made us.'

To all of those who ministered to the Bay, I thank you as a San Franciscan, as one who is honored to represent our great city in this House, and as Speaker of the House.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 853 honoring those who have volunteered to assist in the cleanup of the November 7, 2007 oil spill in San Francisco Bay.

My district lies roughly 50 miles south of the area affected by the oil spill. Even though they

were not directly affected by the spill, the institutions and people in my district offered their help and support to their northern neighbors. The Marine Wildlife Center at the Long Marine Lab in Santa Cruz treated birds injured by this spill, the NOAA Weather Service in Monterey played a pivotal role in providing wind and sea forecasts necessary to predict the spill's trajectory and assist in containment, and local organizations such as the Santa Cruz Surfrider Chapter organized volunteers to assist cleanup efforts in the San Francisco Bay.

I am proud of all of the people who unselfishly volunteered to assist the cleanup. Their unselfish response to this environmental disaster highlights just how important marine resources are to our communities. But, despite our best intentions "business as usual" is killing our oceans. We can no longer rely on the generosity of the citizens of this country to clean up the mess created by big business and poor governance.

When my constituents invest their valuable time to take care of the environment, I take notice. Actions speak louder than words, and with their actions in November, the people of the Central Coast are asking us to do more to ensure that we protect the environment while we conduct our business. If there is one thing that this oil spill shows, it is that if we don't make protecting the environment a higher priority, it will come back to haunt us . . . look at climate change.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, we were reminded about just how fragile our waterways are when a ship ran into the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge and spilled 58,000 gallons of oil into the San Francisco Bay. The spill spread and soiled the pristine beaches of Marin County, in my district. It also threatened the Point Reyes seashore and restoration projects in Richardson Bay and San Pablo Bay.

Thousands of volunteers, including many of my constituents, spent countless hours cleaning up. Fishermen volunteered their boats and their time to help with clean up efforts. Without their help, the cleanup efforts would have taken much longer, more birds could have died, and more of the oil would have been unrecoverable.

Unfortunately, not enough training sessions were offered and many potential volunteers were turned away from helping with the clean up efforts because they lacked the necessary training. We need to learn from this and provide more training opportunities and better utilize potential volunteers.

As we move forward, we must also look into new technologies to prevent spills and protect water and beaches. In Marin County, booms across Bolinas Lagoon and Drakes Estero failed and left these areas vulnerable to oil spill contamination. We need to ensure that we have enough equipment to respond quickly and effectively, especially for areas somewhat distant from spill mobilization centers. We also need to ensure that we have enough people trained to handle this equipment and manage the response efforts at these sites.

Thank you, Speaker PELOSI and Representative TAUSCHER for your leadership on this resolution. Thank you to my constituents and to all the volunteers who assisted with clean up efforts.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 853 and to honor those selfless individuals who volunteered to help cleanup the recent San Francisco Bay oil spill.

On November 7, a cargo vessel inexplicably collided with the San Francisco Bay Bridge, spilling more than 58,000 gallons of toxic bunker fuel and causing one of the worst environmental disasters the region has ever seen. The impact on wildlife and surrounding beaches has been extremely detrimental, with over 28 beaches closing and severely impacting wildlife all around the bay.

However, in a strong testament to the American spirit, through this disaster we saw resolve and self-sacrifice. I am extremely proud of the thousands of individuals from around the area who immediately volunteered to assist with the cleanup. Bay Area non-profit community organizations like San Francisco Connect have supported the response and recovery of volunteers, while Bay Area environmental organizations like Baykeeper, Save the Bay, and the Bay Institute have provided invaluable leadership in assessing the damage and remediating this beautiful ecosystem.

Specifically, I want to recognize two of my constituents, Lynn Adams and Deborah Nagle-Burks who, with the Pacifica Beach Coalition, solicited volunteers while working through red tape to make sure anyone who wanted to participate in the clean-up was able to. They remain involved, and have advocated for a proactive approach to training volunteers before a spill occurs so that the response of local citizens can be faster and the damage limited.

In addition, the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, members of the San Francisco Crab Boat Owners Association, commercial crabbers, and other Bay Area fishermen have all joined the cleanup efforts, making an indelible contribution.

The collaborative effort of state and local agencies deserves our thanks as well. The City of San Francisco, particularly through its Department of Emergency Management, has significantly contributed to the overall response.

Mr. Speaker, we owe a deep debt of gratitude to all the volunteers who have given their time, the fishermen who have given their boats, and the first responders who have given their expertise to this clean up. Without the extraordinary efforts of these men and women it is certain the scope of damage to the fragile Bay ecosystem would be even greater than what we face today.

I will never cease to be proud and amazed by the dedication of my constituents and of the American people. This why I rise in very strong support of H. Res. 853. It is my hope that this resolution will be swiftly passed and the selfless individuals who volunteered to clean up the oil spill will be duly recognized.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TAUSCHER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 853.

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.

□ 1545

PROVIDING FOR CONCURRENCE BY HOUSE WITH AMENDMENTS IN SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 797, DR. JAMES ALLEN VETERAN VISION EQUITY ACT OF 2007

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 855) providing for the concurrence by the House in the Senate amendment to H.R. 797, with amendments.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 855

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution the bill (H.R. 797) entitled "An Act to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve compensation benefits for veterans in certain cases of impairment of vision involving both eyes, to provide for the use of the National Directory of New Hires for income verification purposes, to extend the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide an educational assistance allowance for qualifying work study activities, and to authorize the provision of bronze representations of the letter 'V' for the graves of eligible individuals buried in private cemeteries in lieu of Government-provided headstones or markers.", with the Senate amendment thereto, shall be considered to have been taken from the Speaker's table to the end that the Senate amendment thereto be, and the same is hereby, agreed to with the following amendments:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the "Dr. James Allen Veteran Vision Equity Act of 2007".

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—LOW-VISION BENEFITS MATTERS

Sec. 101. Modification of rate of visual impairment for payment of disability compensation.

Sec. 102. Improvement in compensation for veterans in certain cases of impairment of vision involving both eyes.

TITLE II—MATTERS RELATING TO BURIAL AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

Sec. 201. Provision of medallion or other device for privately-purchased grave markers.

Sec. 202. Improvement in provision of assistance to States relating to the interment of veterans in cemeteries other than national cemeteries.

Sec. 203. Modification of authorities on provision of Government headstones and markers for burials of veterans at private cemeteries.

TITLE III—OTHER MATTERS

Sec. 301. Use of national directory of new hires for income verification purposes for certain veterans benefits.

Sec. 302. Extension of authority of Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide an educational assistance allowance to persons performing qualifying work-study activities.

TITLE I—LOW-VISION BENEFITS MATTERS

SEC. 101. MODIFICATION OF RATE OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT FOR PAYMENT OF DISABILITY COMPENSATION.

Section 1114(o) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking "5/200" and inserting "20/200".

SEC. 102. IMPROVEMENT IN COMPENSATION FOR VETERANS IN CERTAIN CASES OF IMPAIRMENT OF VISION INVOLVING BOTH EYES.

Section 1160(a)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking "blindness" both places it appears and inserting "impairment of vision";

(2) by striking "misconduct;" and inserting "misconduct and—"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraphs:

"(A) the impairment of vision in each eye is rated at a visual acuity of 20/200 or less; or

"(B) the peripheral field of vision for each eye is 20 degrees or less."

TITLE II—MATTERS RELATING TO BURIAL AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

SEC. 201. PROVISION OF MEDALLION OR OTHER DEVICE FOR PRIVATELY-PURCHASED GRAVE MARKERS.

Section 2306(d) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(5) In lieu of furnishing a headstone or marker under this subsection, the Secretary may furnish, upon request, a medallion or other device of a design determined by the Secretary to signify the deceased's status as a veteran, to be attached to a headstone or marker furnished at private expense."

SEC. 202. IMPROVEMENT IN PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE TO STATES RELATING TO THE INTERMENT OF VETERANS IN CEMETERIES OTHER THAN NATIONAL CEMETERIES.

(a) **REPEAL OF TIME LIMITATION FOR STATE FILING FOR REIMBURSEMENT FOR INTERMENT COSTS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The second sentence of section 3.1604(d)(2) of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, shall have no further force or effect as it pertains to unclaimed remains of a deceased veteran.

(2) **RETROACTIVE APPLICATION.**—Paragraph (1) shall take effect as of October 1, 2006 and apply with respect to interments and funerals occurring on or after that date.

(b) **GRANTS FOR OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF STATE VETERANS' CEMETERIES.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subsection (a) of section 2408 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"(a)(1) Subject to subsection (b), the Secretary may make a grant to any State for the following purposes:

"(A) Establishing, expanding, or improving a veterans' cemetery owned by the State.

"(B) Operating and maintaining such a cemetery.

"(2) A grant under paragraph (1) may be made only upon submission of an application to the Secretary in such form and manner, and containing such information, as the Secretary may require."

(2) **LIMITATION ON AMOUNTS AWARDED.**—Subsection (e) of such section is amended—

(A) by inserting "(1)" before "Amounts"; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(2) In any fiscal year, the aggregate amount of grants awarded under this section for the purposes specified in subsection (a)(1)(B) may not exceed \$5,000,000."

(3) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—Such section is further amended—

(A) in subsection (b)—

(i) by striking "Grants under this section" and inserting "A grant under this section for