

marines to be raised for use as naval infantrymen. From that day forward, marines have defended this Nation in every American military conflict. They first saw combat in the Bahamas in 1776 under the leadership of Captain Samuel Nicholas, the officer who is considered by most to be the first marine commandant.

Though the Marines were disbanded following the Revolutionary War, they were reestablished on July 11, 1798, and from that day forward have protected and defended Americans and our allies around the world. From Europe to the Philippines, South America to Asia, and the Middle East, marines have fought in every corner of the world.

In addition to traditional military duties, marines protect our embassies and dignitaries around the world. They have served in a humanitarian capacity bringing relief and aid to citizens of other nations as well.

In the global war on terrorism, 76,000 marines have been deployed to Iraq to help establish peace, root out insurgent remnants and al Qaeda terrorists, and bring stability to that young democracy. I am grateful for my son, a naval doctor, who is working with the marines in Iraq today.

As part of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, marines have helped topple the repressive Taliban regime and dismantle the al Qaeda network. For their service on these two fronts of the global war on terrorism, marines have been decorated with thousands of honors and medals. These decorations include 7,720 Purple Hearts for wounds suffered during combat, and 866 Bronze Stars with "V" for exceptional valor in a combat situation.

Since the inception of the United States Marine Corps, 298 marines have earned the Congressional Medal of Honor, our Nation's highest military honor. On a personal note, the Second District of South Carolina, which I have the honor of representing, is home to Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort and Parris Island. All marine recruits east of the Mississippi River go through Parris Island.

Marines are the most elite fighting force in our military. Their reputation for professionalism and selfless duty has earned them the thanks of a grateful Nation and the appreciation of millions around the world over two centuries of service and sacrifice. My late father-in-law, Major Julian Dusenbury, and my late brother-in-law, Captain Tim Dusenbury, were proud marines, and our family especially appreciates the service of the Marine Corps.

On behalf of my colleagues in the House of Representatives and the American people, I want to thank the tireless men and women of the United States Marine Corps for their service and sacrifice. Each and every day they are working to protect our Nation and our allies around the world.

I encourage all my colleagues to join me in supporting and expressing our most humble appreciation for the few, the proud, the Marines.

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

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. At this time, I have no further requests for time, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Having no further speakers, I would like to make one further statement.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity, 2 years ago, of visiting in Muzaffarabad, Pakistan, where the Marine Corps ably served to assist the people of Pakistan in their recovery from the horrific incidents of the earthquake. And it was so reassuring to visit and see the hospital that they set up, with female doctors, due to the cultural concerns of the people in that region. It had just an extraordinary impact.

I had the privilege of meeting with President Musharraf, who indicated that at that time the most famous toy, the most appreciated toy, in all of Pakistan was the Chinook helicopter, representing the deep affection of the people of Pakistan for the Marine Corps and their service.

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

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. SHEA-PORTER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 246.

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.

EXPRESSING UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 542) expressing the unconditional support of the House of Representatives for the members of the National Guard, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 542

Whereas the National Guard has made tremendous contributions in support of United States military operations around the world;

Whereas, between September 11, 2001, and September 30, 2007, 329,982 members of the National Guard have been mobilized to support numerous military operations;

Whereas members of the National Guard typically leave other employment to serve on active duty in the Armed Forces;

Whereas the National Guard has responded admirably in times of domestic emergencies to lead rescue and recovery efforts; and

Whereas many members of the National Guard have made the ultimate sacrifice, giving their lives in service to the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) unconditionally supports the members of the National Guard;

(2) recognizes the tremendous sacrifices made by members of the National Guard on behalf of the United States;

(3) will work to ensure that the National Guard receives the resources it needs; and

(4) will support the families of members of the National Guard, especially those who have died while serving on active duty.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. SHEA-PORTER) and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Hampshire.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the National Guard and in celebration of their 371 years of service. I would like to thank my colleague from Florida, GINNY BROWN-WAITE, for bringing this measure to the floor.

In my State of New Hampshire, the first citizen militia formed in 1623 with the settlement of Portsmouth. In 1679, the New Hampshire National Guard was formally established, marking the humble beginnings of my State's storied tradition of service.

Today, nearly 2,700 men and women continue that same tradition of service in the New Hampshire National Guard, and they, too, are distinguishing themselves on the battlefield and at home.

In New Hampshire, our Guardsmen routinely perform search and rescue operations. They respond to floods and to ice storms that threaten the region each year. And the New Hampshire Guard joined many other States that answered the call to aid victims from Hurricane Katrina.

This story of selfless sacrifice is not unique to the members of New Hampshire's National Guard, but it is one example of how all National Guardsmen put others before self, and their service and sacrifice is honored here in this bill.

Today, over 30,000 Guardsmen are serving on the ground and in the skies over Iraq and Afghanistan. As we celebrate the National Guard for its 371 years of service, our thoughts are with those men and women who continue to serve bravely overseas and with their families back home. And our hearts are heavy remembering the 483 Army and Air Guardsmen that have given their last great measure of devotion. For them we vow to care for their families and honor their sacrifice.

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield so much time as she

may consume to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE).

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. I thank the gentleman from South Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 542, which expresses the unconditional support of the House of Representatives for the members of the National Guard. I certainly want to thank the chairman and ranking member of the Armed Services Committee.

As we all know, December 13 was the 371st birthday of the National Guard. I could not think of a better way to celebrate this tremendous milestone than to honor the men and women who serve in the National Guard with the resolution before us today.

The National Guard certainly serves a unique purpose. Its main duty, of course, is to secure and defend our homeland. However, the National Guard also plays a vital role in aiding States when natural disasters strike. Whether it is helping to harness the wildfires that recently raged throughout California, or aiding in the aftermath of hurricanes or tornadoes in Florida and across the Southeast, the National Guard has been there lending a helping hand.

While helping out in times of need across the United States leaves a lasting impact, it is the work that the National Guard does on beyond our borders that truly sets it apart. When National Guard units are called up, the men and women who answer the call leave their careers, families, and loved ones behind. These men and women put their lives on hold to protect this great country, and for that we must be eternally grateful. In fact, over 329,000 members of the National Guard have been mobilized in support of numerous military operations since September 11, 2001.

The National Guard units from my district have played a critical role in many of these operations, and I want to take this opportunity to thank them for everything they do in defense of all of our freedoms. Their contributions have been a tremendous asset, and without the National Guard, the United States Armed Forces would not be able to operate at the high level it currently does.

As many of you know, an issue that is extremely important to me and the people of my district, and most likely your district too, is illegal immigration and the need for greater border security. That's why it is also important to note that the National Guard is playing a vital role in protecting our borders.

There are currently 6,000 National Guardsmen serving along our borders, doing their best to stem the tide of illegal immigration that threatens this country. The National Guard is playing an every-increasing role in the defense of our great country, and I encourage my colleagues to show their support for the sacrifices these men and women make by supporting this resolution.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank Representative GINNY BROWN-WAITE for introducing this resolution and my colleagues on the Armed Services Committee for bringing it to the floor for our consideration.

As a proud co-sponsor, I am honored to have this opportunity to recognize the contributions of our citizen soldiers in the United States National Guard.

From the earliest days of our country's founding to today, average Americans have stepped forward to serve their Nation. Soldiers of the National Guard have served in every major combat throughout our great history, and since September the 11th, they have taken a tremendous role in support of the global war on terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Since these terrible attacks 6 years ago, 329,982 members of the National Guard have been mobilized for military operations around the world. Unlike their traditional military comrades, National Guard members are not career military soldiers. They are most often employed in other careers and serve when called upon to assist with combat operations and as first responders during domestic emergencies and rescue and recovery situations. This unique role underscores an immense dedication to their patriotic duty and to this Nation.

As a 31-year veteran of the Army Reserve and National Guard, I am honored to have known and worked with many of these extraordinary and dedicated individuals.

□ 1415

My former unit, the 218th Mechanized Infantry Brigade of the South Carolina Army National Guard is currently serving in Afghanistan under the leadership of Brigadier General Bob Livingston. Its 1,800 troops are the largest deployment of National Guard since World War II. I have visited the troops in June, August and November, and I know firsthand they are training Afghani police and military forces to help that young democracy stand on its own two feet. The best way to stop terrorism is to deny terrorists safe havens anywhere in the world. Additionally, my son, Alan, was deployed with the South Carolina National Guard to Iraq, along with my son, Julian, with Guard service in Egypt. And my family and I are grateful for their service and the service of their comrades, led by Major General Stan Spears, America's longest serving adjutant general. Our family knows that National Guard membership is rewarding for service for America and for our State while receiving extraordinary opportunities for education, travel and meeting talented people of competence and patriotism. I encourage every American to consider National Guard service.

With this resolution, we recognize the contributions of the Guard, but we also pledge to support their efforts with the necessary resources and express our deepest gratitude to the families whose loved ones serve this Nation. Above all, our deepest sympathies go to the families whose loved ones have been lost.

On behalf of my colleagues in the House of Representatives and the American people, I want to thank the brave men and women of the Guard for their service. In times of peace and times of war, there they are working to protect our Nation and our allies around the world and the citizens here at home. I want to thank Representative GINNY BROWN-WAITE for introducing this resolution. I encourage all of my colleagues to join me in supporting it and expressing our most humble appreciation for the citizen soldiers of the National Guard.

Ms. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 542 which expresses the unconditional support of the House of Representatives for our brave men and women who serve as members of the National Guard.

Over the past several years, the National Guard has confirmed their willingness to serve our country, often giving up their civilian careers to be deployed in Iraq or Afghanistan or other parts of our country where their particular expertise is needed.

The National Guard has done this all the while fulfilling their traditional duties in times of domestic emergencies, leading recovery efforts in case of flood, fire, hurricane, snowstorm, tornado or civil disturbance.

Mr. Speaker, I am especially proud of the Army and Air National Guard units from my district, the U.S. Virgin Islands, who are deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan and at other bases and installations across the country. Our entire territory gives its overwhelming support to the 651st GS Maintenance Company in Iraq, D Company 126th Aviation at Ft. Benning, GA, other individual soldiers stationed in Afghanistan, Iowa, Hawaii and Kuwait.

We also remember that two of our Guard, LTC David Canegata and Staff Sgt. Floyd Lake, made the ultimate sacrifice earlier this year when their Blackhawk helicopter went down in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, along with my constituents in the territory, I pray for the safe return of all our men and women in the military.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. SHEA-PORTER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 542, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further

proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

VETERANS GUARANTEED BONUS
ACT OF 2007

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3793) to amend title 37, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Defense to continue to pay to a member of the Armed Forces who is retired or separated from the Armed Forces due to a combat-related injury certain bonuses that the member was entitled to before the retirement or separation and would continue to be entitled to if the member was not retired or separated, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3793

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 "Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. CONTINUATION OF ENTITLEMENT TO BONUSES AND SIMILAR BENEFITS FOR MEMBERS OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES WHO DIE, ARE SEPARATED OR RETIRED FOR DISABILITY, OR MEET OTHER CRITERIA.

(a) DISCRETION TO PROVIDE EXCEPTION TO TERMINATION AND REPAYMENT REQUIREMENTS UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.—Section 303a(e) of title 37, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by inserting "; TERMINATION OF ENTITLEMENT TO UNPAID AMOUNTS" after "MET";

(2) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking "A member" and inserting "(A) Except as provided in paragraph (2), a member"; and

(B) by striking "the requirements, except in certain circumstances authorized by the Secretary concerned." and inserting "the eligibility requirements and may not receive any unpaid amounts of the bonus or similar benefit after the member fails to satisfy the requirements, unless the Secretary concerned determines that the imposition of the repayment requirement and termination of the payment of unpaid amounts of the bonus or similar benefit with regard to the member would be contrary to a personnel policy or management objective, would be against equity and good conscience, or would be contrary to the best interests of the United States."; and

(3) by redesignating paragraph (2) as subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1).

(b) MANDATORY PAYMENT OF UNPAID AMOUNTS UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES; NO REPAYMENT OF UNEARNED AMOUNTS.—Section 303a(e) of title 37, United States Code, is amended by inserting after paragraph (1), as amended by subsection (a), the following new paragraph (2):

"(2)(A) If a member of the uniformed services dies (other than as a result the member's misconduct) or is retired or separated for disability under chapter 61 of title 10, the Secretary concerned—

"(i) shall not require repayment by the member or the member's estate of the unearned portion of any bonus or similar benefit previously paid to the member; and

"(ii) shall require the payment to the member or the member's estate of the remainder of any bonus or similar benefit that was not yet paid to the member, but to

which the member was entitled immediately before the death, retirement, or separation of the member, and would be paid if not for the death, retirement, or separation of the member.

"(B) The amount to be paid under subparagraph (A)(ii) shall be equal to the full amount specified by the agreement or contract applicable to the bonus or similar benefit as if the member continued to be entitled to the bonus or similar benefit following the death, retirement, or separation.

"(C) Amounts to be paid to a member or the member's estate under subparagraph (A)(ii) shall be paid in a lump sum not later than 90 days after the date of the death, retirement, or separation of the member, whichever applies."

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS REFLECTING CONSOLIDATED SPECIAL PAY AND BONUS AUTHORITIES.—

(1) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 373 of title 37, United States Code, as added by section 661 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008, is amended—

(A) in subsection (a)—

(i) in the subsection heading, by inserting "AND TERMINATION" after "REPAYMENT"; and

(ii) by inserting before the period at the end the following: "; and the member may not receive any unpaid amounts of the bonus, incentive pay, or similar benefit after the member fails to satisfy such service or eligibility requirement"; and

(B) by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following new subsection:

"(b) EXCEPTIONS.—

"(1) DISCRETION TO PROVIDE EXCEPTION TO TERMINATION AND REPAYMENT REQUIREMENTS.—Pursuant to the regulations prescribed to administer this section, the Secretary concerned may grant an exception to the repayment requirement and requirement to terminate the payment of unpaid amounts of a bonus, incentive pay, or similar benefit if the Secretary concerned determines that the imposition of the repayment and termination requirements with regard to a member of the uniformed services would be contrary to a personnel policy or management objective, would be against equity and good conscience, or would be contrary to the best interests of the United States.

"(2) MANDATORY PAYMENT OF UNPAID AMOUNTS UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES; NO REPAYMENT OF UNEARNED AMOUNTS.—(A) If a member of the uniformed services dies (other than as a result the member's misconduct) or is retired or separated for disability under chapter 61 of title 10, the Secretary concerned—

"(i) shall not require repayment by the member or the member's estate of the unearned portion of any bonus, incentive pay, or similar benefit previously paid to the member; and

"(ii) shall require the payment to the member or the member's estate of the remainder of any bonus, incentive pay, or similar benefit that was not yet paid to the member, but to which the member was entitled immediately before the death, retirement, or separation of the member, and would be paid if not for the death, retirement, or separation of the member.

"(B) The amount to be paid under subparagraph (A)(ii) shall be equal to the full amount specified by the agreement or contract applicable to the bonus, incentive pay, or similar benefit as if the member continued to be entitled to the bonus, incentive pay, or similar benefit following the death, retirement, or separation.

"(C) Amounts to be paid to a member or the member's estate under subparagraph (A)(ii) shall be paid in a lump sum not later than 90 days after the date of the death, re-

tirement, or separation of the member, whichever applies."

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—

(A) SECTION HEADING.—The heading of such section is amended to read as follows:

"§ 373. Repayment of unearned portion of bonus, incentive pay, or similar benefit, and termination of remaining payments, when conditions of payment not met"

(B) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 5 of title 37, United States Code, is amended by striking the item relating to section 373 and inserting the following new item:

"373. Repayment of unearned portion of bonus, incentive pay, or similar benefit, and termination of remaining payments, when conditions of payment not met."

(d) CONDITION ON IMPLEMENTATION.—The implementation by the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary concerned (as defined in section 101 of title 37, United States Code) of sections 303a(e) and 373 of such title, as amended by this section, during fiscal year 2008 shall be subject to the availability of funds for this purpose included in an appropriations Act enacted on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. SHEA-PORTER) and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Hampshire.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, today the House has a unique opportunity to clarify the law to protect the financial security of wounded veterans, their families and the families of soldiers who have been killed in the line of duty. As recently as last month, we have heard a number of cases in the media suggesting that the Department of Defense has been requiring soldiers wounded in combat to pay back part of their enlistment bonuses if they hadn't yet served their full term, or even worse, that it would require these benefits to be paid back by the grieving families of soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

Quite simply, this is wrong. If a soldier signed up to serve our country and is unable to serve out the full term of his or her enlistment due to wounds received in the line of duty, this soldier should not then be asked to return any part of their signing bonus. For a soldier who has faced the hardships and battle and is now facing the challenges of recovery, we should not add the additional burden of paying back money that is rightfully theirs.