

For all of these days, our veterans have done without these additional resources.

So why the delay? Why were our veterans made to wait when a nearly identical bill could have been passed and signed by the President prior to October 1?

I believe our veterans deserve an explanation and an apology. Playing political games with veterans funding not only hurts our veterans but the credibility of this Congress and the American people. Our Nation and its heroes deserve better.

EXPLOITS OF MIKE FLYNT

(Mr. CONAWAY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, last August a man named Mike Flynt attempted to use his final year of college eligibility by walking on at Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas. He endured the rigors of two-a-days and made the team. Although a nagging groin injury prevented him from participating in games through the first half of the season, his leg healed to the point that he could participate in several games on special teams and, in the final game of the season, played at linebacker for the final defensive series.

Mr. Speaker, so far, this story is not unusual. However, Mike Flynt's story is unique in that he will turn 60 years of age next year. Mike and I graduated from high school together and played on the first State championship team at Odessa Permian.

Mike fulfilled a 30-year desire to compete one more time in a game he loves. His efforts and accomplishments amaze us all. He was an inspiration to his teammates, coaches and fellow Sul Ross students. His efforts brought positive publicity to a small university in far west Texas.

Mr. Speaker, in a world where athletes often seem to let us down, it's refreshing to see the example of hard work, dedication and perseverance that is Mike Flynt.

THE GRINCH WHO STOLE CHRISTMAS

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, Christmas will be here in less than 1 week. Most of us will be with people that are very important to us.

But not so for Border Agents Ramos and Compean who are locked up tonight for protecting the Texas-Mexico border from smugglers, especially an admitted drug smuggler. These agents are in prison for their failure to fill out proper paperwork after shooting this drug smuggler bringing in \$1 million worth of dope to the United States.

The U.S. Attorneys Office made a backroom deal with the drug smuggler

for his testimony, and even the U.S. Attorneys Office admits that he told some lies. Be that as it may, our government was on the wrong side of the border war in this case.

The border agents should be freed by Christmas and put the drug dealer in jail. So there will not be justice this Christmas for our border agents because the U.S. Attorneys Office is obviously the grinch who stole Christmas from our border agents.

And that's just the way it is.

IN MEMORY OF SPECIALIST MATTHEW KYLE REECE, U.S. ARMY

(Mr. BOOZMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise solemnly this afternoon to memorialize one of my constituents who's been described as one who makes this country great. I rise to remember Army Specialist Matthew Kyle Reece of Jasper, who passed away in Iraq in December of 2007.

Kyle Reece was born in Harrison and went to school in Jasper and Alpena. He fished, played ball and prayed while growing up in Newton County. His name can be seen in the Alpena gym, marking two championship teams, and his name will long be remembered for the duty he performed on behalf of his country, his friends and his family.

Kyle was a grenadier in the 82nd Airborne who deeply cared for the men in his charge. He accepted his duty proudly, telling his 3-year-old daughter before he left that he had to go to Iraq so she and everyone else in the U.S. could remain free.

There's no way we can adequately thank Kyle, or his family, for his service. However, I will take to heart the words of his wife, Chauntelle, who urges that we not wait until a soldier dies before we honor him. Rather, we should shake their hands and thank them for all that they do for America.

TRIBUTE TO JOYCE HAMLETT: A WOMAN CONTINUING TO BLAZE NEW TRAILS AS KEEPER OF THE MACE

(Mr. MEEK of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give honor to one of our great House employees here that works in this Chamber every day, and that's Joyce Hamlett.

Joyce has had the opportunity to be appointed as Assistant Sergeant at Arms in charge of the mace of the House of Representatives. I think this is a very high accomplishment for someone like Ms. Hamlett who has a meek-like spirit and very nice lady, and I've been working with her, and she's been working not only with me but my mother and other Members that have served here in the House.

She's the first African American woman to serve as keeper of the mace.

Her high moral upbringing prepares her for this honorable position.

Mr. Speaker, I can go further, and I do as it relates to my CONGRESSIONAL RECORD statement, but we honor not only her presence here, but we honor the fact that she gives God all of the grace and the glory for her accomplishments here in the House of Representatives.

Mr. Speaker and Members of Congress, as a Member of Congress, I am moved by Ms. Joyce Hamlett's trust in patience, trust in truth and trust that God has planned a great path for her life.

I rise to ask you to join me in recognizing the excellent service and continued professional success of Ms. Joyce Hamlett, newly appointed Assistant Sergeant of Arms for the U.S. House of Representatives.

Congressional business begins when the Mace is set, and ends when it is lifted.

There is one woman with the great responsibility to ensure that the Mace is available for this historical purpose.

And, in times of emergency, one woman guards the Mace and preserves its protection.

Ms. Joyce Hamlett is the first African American woman to serve as the Keeper of the Mace. Her moral upbringing prepared her for this honorable position.

Ms. Hamlett was raised by her grandfather in a church community that fostered the importance of honesty and faith.

Indeed, Ms. Hamlett's strong heritage has served as the guiding force throughout her career on Capitol Hill.

In the early 1980s, Ms. Hamlett departed Broadway, North Carolina and began her successful professional journey alongside her mother, Betty Pearson, at the Capitol Café.

Within five years, Ms. Hamlett rose to cook for lawmakers upstairs in the Capitol Hill restaurant.

Her respectable interaction with lawmakers continued when she went on to serve as elevator operator under the Architect of the Capitol. During that time, she formed long-lasting friendships with many Members of Congress.

In the early 1990s, Ms. Hamlett interviewed for the position of chamber security, and soon after began to firmly enforce House rules on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.

As chamber security, she was well-known as one who worked hard to safeguard the principles and rich tradition of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Because of her excellent service, Ms. Hamlett was promoted to her current position as Keeper of the Mace.

Ms. Hamlett is not only Keeper of the Mace, but she is also keeper of a strong moral foundation and keeper of the wisdom and principle represented by the Mace's solid-silver eagle.

Mr. Speaker and Members of Congress, I congratulate Ms. Joyce Hamlett, a woman that continues to blaze new trails with distinction as Assistant Sergeant of Arms for the U.S. House of Representatives.

Thank you Mr. Speaker and Members of Congress.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ELLSWORTH). The Chair will recognize

Members for Special Order speeches without prejudice to possible further legislative business.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

THE PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT IS TO PROTECT THE PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the purpose of government is to protect the people. It is a very simple but yet fundamental principle of the United States Constitution.

Our Federal Government has to protect us from enemies from abroad, and our government does a good job of doing that. Our government also has the secondary responsibility to protect citizens in our country, and our government does a fairly good job of that.

But there is a unique problem where our government seems to be lacking, and that's protecting citizens that are working overseas for American contractors against other American citizens who commit crimes against them.

Today, Mr. Speaker, in the Judiciary Committee, a brave young lady came and testified about what happened to her, an individual by the name of Jamie Leigh Jones from my congressional district down in Texas.

As a young 20-year-old she went to work for KBR Construction Company overseas in Iraq. She was there just a few days when she was sexually assaulted by several individuals. After she was assaulted, Army doctors intervened and treated her initially for her medical injuries, which were devastating. The medical doctors took and prepared a rape kit, as is supposed to be done in cases like a criminal investigation, and for some reason, they never turned that rape kit over to the Federal Government, to the Justice Department, to the FBI. They turned it over to the company, and it has subsequently been damaged and destroyed.

After Jamie Leigh Jones was sexually assaulted, she was imprisoned as a hostage in a trailer, as she says, where she was not allowed to leave, was not allowed to eat or drink water. She frantically was able to find a cell phone that one of her guards let her borrow. She called her father in Texas, and he called me. And within 48 hours the State Department had dispatched two agents from Baghdad Embassy, found Jamie Leigh Jones, rescued her, and brought her back to the United States.

We would hope, then, that our government would continue this investigation to find the rapist who committed this crime against Jamie Leigh Jones.

This occurred in the year of 2005, and for these 2 years we have heard blissful silence from the United States Justice Department on what they are doing, if anything, to find these criminals who committed this crime.

After Jamie Leigh Jones has now come public with this, my office has received numerous phone calls from other workers who were contract workers, civilians, all females who were assaulted while working in Iraq who are now coming forward to tell their stories. And in their case, like Jamie Leigh Jones, nobody has been prosecuted and held accountable for the crimes committed against these women, these American citizens, these American patriots who are working overseas with our military, but yet crimes are being committed against them. And there is silence from the Justice Department about what is being done, if anything.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that Iraq and what has taken place against civilian workers is reminiscent of the days of the Old West, the Wild West, where crime was committed and no one was held accountable for their conduct.

There are hundreds of Department of Justice officials in Baghdad doing all kinds of things. Why aren't they investigating crimes against civilian workers that are being committed by other Americans? We don't know the answer. It's important that our government fulfill its first duty to its people, which is to protect them, and when crimes are committed against American civilians by other Americans in foreign lands, where we have jurisdiction in the green zone of Baghdad, that our government be relentless in bringing those people, those criminals, to the bar of justice and put them in jail rather than remain silent and not responding at all to these crimes.

So I would hope, Mr. Speaker, as this year ends and the next year begins that our Federal Government, our Justice Department, has a renewed interest in the Americans that are overseas. More Americans are serving in Iraq that are civilians than are serving in the military. And we know that crimes are being committed against them. It's important that those criminals be brought to the bar of justice and held accountable in a public trial because, Mr. Speaker, justice is what we do in America.

And that's just the way it is.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. CARDOZA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CARDOZA addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HOUSE SHOULD VOTE ON TREATMENT PARITY BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, with 54 million Americans suffering the ravages of mental illness and 26 million suffering from chemical addiction, the failure of this Congress to pass the Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act is a slap in the face to millions of Americans with mental illness and/or drug and alcohol addiction. It's also the biggest failure of this session of Congress.

Congress' failure to knock down the discriminatory barriers to treatment is a matter of life or death for people suffering from mental health and addiction diseases, diseases that took the lives of over 200,000 Americans last year alone.

Just 2 weeks ago, my friend of over 25 years took his own life as a result of depression. He joined 34,000 other Americans who have committed suicide from depression this year.

In my home State of Minnesota, Anna Westin was a young woman with anorexia. She suffered for several years from this terrible disease. Her parents' insurance company refused to cover the inpatient treatment that she desperately needed. Distraught at her condition and being a financial burden on her parents, young Anna took her own life.

Representative PATRICK KENNEDY and I held 14 field hearings across our country this year on the need to end insurance discrimination against mental illness and addiction. We heard story after story after story like these.

We heard from Steve Winter, who traveled in his wheelchair to several of our field hearings. When Steve was a young teenager, he awoke one morning with a stinging pain in his back. He stumbled downstairs to breakfast. He realized that blood was streaming down his back. He heard his mother's voice say, "Your sister is in heaven, and now you and I are going there to join her." His mother was pointing a gun at him. She had been taken off the schizophrenia drugs she desperately needed. As Steve put it, "My mother didn't shoot my sister and me; her mental illness did."

Clearly there are not many families in America, Mr. Speaker, who haven't been touched in some way by mental illness or addiction. Like my close personal friend, like Anna Westin and Steve Winter's sister, I could have been one of the thousands of Americans who die each year from mental illness and chemical addiction.

For on July 31, 1981, I awoke in a jail cell in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, as