

make this compromise I am proposing a reality.

Mr. Chairman, my amendment allows for my colleague's constituents to achieve their goal while protecting the budgets of our Federal land management agencies, who have a difficult time managing the lands they already own.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment and its wise use of Federal resources.

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, this amendment is inconsistent and unfair. As I stated earlier, the enhancement and preservation of this site is a national responsibility. This amendment abdicates that responsibility by prohibiting the use of Federal funds to fulfill this role. Strangely, it allows Federal funds to be used for development but requires State and local landowners to shoulder the costs of protecting the historic viewshed.

Philanthropy has and will continue to play an important role in the care of our national parks and is something that we are all thankful and grateful for. A perfect example is the State of North Carolina. Recognizing the importance of protecting the historic viewshed, it has purchased 22 of the 110 acres identified as needing protection and would like to donate them to the National Park Service. The National Park Service will, of course, continue to welcome any donation of land or money to help protect the remainder of this land.

However, it is irresponsible to expect the State to shoulder the total responsibility of purchasing all 110 acres, nor should small landowners have the responsibility to donate their property to the National Park Service. We need to maintain the option to purchase the land from willing sellers, so that when it is on the sale block, the Federal Government's hands are not tied.

The amendment is not about the availability of Federal funds. This is a funding source specifically set aside for Federal acquisitions of land identified as important for conservation. The Land and Water Conservation Fund has a current balance of \$16 billion. I would say that is sufficient to allow the possibility of using appropriated funds for this 110-acre addition.

□ 1430

This amendment is also inconsistent. It allows the use of Federal funds to purchase 5 acres for construction of a visitor center, yet does not allow the use of Federal funds to purchase 110 acres of land or easements to protect the historic viewshed.

Finally, this amendment is unfair. Committee Republicans raised no objections nor offered any amendments when the Natural Resources Com-

mittee favorably reported a Republican bill that would add more than 3,000 acres to the Jean Lafitte National Historic Park. That bill allows appropriated funds to be used, and the CBO estimate put the cost at up to \$5 million. Why should appropriated funds be available for that bill but specifically protected in this bill?

Mr. Chairman, land protection at a national historic site is a national responsibility, as recognized by my Republican colleagues in the Jean Lafitte legislation. The Heller amendment is inconsistent and unfair. I believe Mr. SHULER's predecessor did not recognize the importance of enhancing and protecting this valuable viewshed. We should not penalize the author of this legislation for recognizing it.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to Mr. SHULER for his comments.

Mr. SHULER. Mr. Chairman, while my preference is for as much land to be donated or purchased privately, this amendment would tie the hands of the government if it ever decided to step in and protect the Carl Sandburg home's viewshed.

Mr. HELLER did not offer this amendment to Mrs. CUBIN's bill or Mr. JINDAL's bill in committee, both Republican bills very similar to H.R. 1100.

It is not reasonable to expect all of the land to be donated from small landowners who are currently living on the land. I urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment.

Mr. HELLER of Nevada. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP).

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I wish to simply address a couple of the issues that have been brought up again.

In comparing this particular bill to two others, one specifically still held up in the committee, it is true that one bill did have a donation, which is what he is patterning after, so the Grand Teton bill is very similar to this: Willing donor.

The other bill by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JINDAL) is with the Jean Lafitte National Park. This is the ability of coming up with area that is necessary for protecting from the devastation of hurricanes. It is also area coming mainly from State and local lands, not from private owners, and we do not actually oppose the boundary revisions because it makes sense on a case-by-case basis in this particular area, especially when the cost for the land is only \$1,000 per acre. It would only increase the size of this particular national site by 15 percent, not the 44 percent as in this one.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HELLER of Nevada. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HELLER).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chairman announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mr. HELLER. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Nevada will be postponed.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PAS-  
TOR) having assumed the chair, Mr. ROSS, Acting Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1100) to revise the boundary of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site in the State of North Carolina, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

#### URGING AMERICANS AND PEOPLE OF ALL NATIONALITIES TO VISIT THE AMERICAN CEMETERIES, MEMORIALS AND MARKERS

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 392) urging Americans and people of all nationalities to visit the American Cemeteries, Memorials and Markers.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

#### H. RES. 392

Whereas the United States has fought in wars outside of its borders to restore freedom and human dignity;

Whereas the United States has spent its national treasure and shed its blood in fighting those wars;

Whereas many of those who died on the battlefield were laid to rest exactly where they fell;

Whereas those plots of ground are now known as American Cemeteries, Memorials and Markers, and they exist in 10 foreign countries on four continents;

Whereas these cemeteries exist as the final resting place for American servicemen who fought valiantly in battles across the globe, including Ardennes and Flanders, Belgium; Manila, the Philippines; North Africa, Tunisia; Florence, Italy; and Normandy, France;

Whereas each year millions of American and foreign citizens visit the American Cemeteries, Memorials and Markers;

Whereas these overseas sites annually recognize Memorial Day with speeches, a reading of the Memorial Day Proclamation, wreath laying ceremonies, military bands and units, and the decoration of each grave site with the flag of the United States and that of the host country; and

Whereas the splendid commemorative sites inspire patriotism, evoke gratitude, and teach history: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That House of Representatives strongly urges Americans and people of all nationalities to visit the American Cemeteries, Memorials and Markers abroad, where the spirit of American generosity, sacrifice, and courage are displayed and commemorated.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, we are about to take up a package of seven bills that have come to the floor from the Veterans Committee, a committee which I am very proud of that has worked together over the first 4 or 5 months of this session to keep our contract with our Nation's veterans. And there is no better time than just before Memorial Day to say thank you. Memorial Day celebrates those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our Nation's freedom. We are here on the floor today to say thank you to those, and to those who are still deployed, and to veterans from past wars.

In the recent election, Mr. Speaker, the Democrats promised to do more for our Nation's veterans. We said we had a President who was saying, support the troops, support the troops, support the troops; but when they came home, where was that support? Walter Reed ripped off the veil of our incompetency of dealing with veterans and showed that so many were not getting the care they were promised and people thought they were getting.

We have had story after story in the Nation's press about how returning veterans with PTSD or brain injury have not been getting the care which this Nation has promised at the highest quality medical system in the world. So we have to do better.

We have a system that is really about to break and collapse. What we saw as the majority party is that the first thing that had to be done was give the VA the resources to carry out the job; secondly, we had to have accountability for the spending of those resources.

Well, in the first three spending bills that went through this House, we were able to add \$13 billion for the health care of our veterans. That is an unprecedented increase from one year to the next, an increase of 30 percent in the health care budget.

We have put in the resources to clean up the backlog of claims for disability pensions that have built up to 600,000. We have put in the money to open up new Centers of Excellence for traumatic brain injury, to finally give the mental health care that the tens of thousands of veterans who are coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan need.

We call it PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder, but virtually every soldier subject to at least five blasts that would give them brain injury, seeing their buddies shot and killed in front of them, maybe having to kill even by accident some innocent people in Iraq, they come back with tremendous mental issues. They have to be worked out. They need medical care, and too many have been falling through the cracks.

So we have said we will provide the resources to make sure that does not

occur. We have provided the resources to meet these needs. Now we have to have accountability for their spending. The Veterans' Affairs Committee of this Congress has pledged to do that.

So we have a collection of bills on the floor this afternoon to say thank you to our Nation's veterans, thank you for your efforts in this war, thank you for your efforts in past wars, and we honor those who gave the ultimate sacrifice on Memorial Day.

This resolution before us now, H. Res. 392, comes to us under the leadership of the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LAMBORN), and I thank him for his activity on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. This resolution encourages people to visit the cemeteries, memorials, and markers overseen by the American Battle Monuments Commission. I am sure many people who hear this say, what is the American Battle Monuments Commission?

In 1923, Congress created the Battle Monuments Commission to control the construction of military cemeteries, monuments and markers erected to honor American servicemembers killed on foreign soil. Host countries provide the necessary lands for these sites to the United States in perpetuity and free of charge.

The Commission cares for 24 military cemeteries and 25 memorials, monuments and markers in 15 nations around the world. These sites serve as the final resting places for almost 125,000 Americans who fought in the Mexican-American War through World War I and II. The Commission takes special care that all cemeteries under its supervision are maintained to the highest standard attainable.

The Battle Monuments Commission extends an open invitation to all to visit these splendid shrines and go beyond the most well known, like Normandy, and venture into others. Each site has its own sense of history, sacrifice and beauty; each offers a different and unique experience. No two have the same garden or architecture. Perhaps only the spiritual qualities are similar.

In less than a month from now, on June 6, the Battle Monuments Commission will commemorate the 63rd anniversary of the D-Day landing by opening a new Normandy American Cemetery Visitor Center. Under construction since 2002, the center will tell the story of the American servicemembers memorialized at Normandy.

I encourage everyone to visit this new D-Day center and any of the other sites under the jurisdiction of the Commission.

Overseas American cemeteries are lasting reminders of America's willingness to come to the defense of others. These tangible symbols of American values endure long after the fighting is over.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. LAMBORN for bringing this resolution to us.

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

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman of the committee for the good work he has done and also the ranking member, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER), for the good work he has done in helping shepherd this package of bills and resolutions that are on the floor today paying tribute to our Nation's veterans.

Mr. Speaker, on House Resolution 392, I want to commend this resolution urging Americans and people of all nationalities to visit the American cemeteries, memorials and markers located on and near the battlefields where members of our Armed Forces fought and died to secure our Nation's freedom, and to actually secure the freedom of the whole world.

Properly honoring a veteran's memory is one of our most solemn and sacred obligations. These patriots and their families are due the tribute and thanks of a grateful Nation.

The overseas national cemeteries of the American Battle Monuments Commission provide these heroes honored repose in a national shrine far from the homes they left to serve us. These cemeteries are the gold standard in memorializing the priceless gift given us by those who fell in our defense.

The Commission oversees 24 overseas military cemeteries that serve as resting places for almost 125,000 American war dead; on Tablets of the Missing that memorialize more than 94,000 United States service men and women; and through 25 memorials, monuments and markers.

These memorials and cemeteries are the final resting place for Americans who fought valiantly in battles whose names ennoble our history: Ardennes and Flanders, Belgium; Manila in the Philippines; North Africa, Tunisia, Italy, and Normandy.

With Memorial Day less than a week away, this is a most fitting time to consider this resolution. I ask my colleagues to support it. I look forward to its passage.

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

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the ranking member, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER).

□ 1445

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 392 that encourages Americans and people of all nationalities to visit American cemeteries, memorials and markers operated by the American Battle Monuments Commission.

More than 125,000 American war dead of the Mexican, Civil, Spanish American and both World Wars are buried in American cemeteries across the globe. Our overseas cemeteries are under the jurisdiction of the American Battle Monuments Commission. I believe they

are the gold standard in preserving the final resting place of this Nation's heroes.

I've had the privilege of visiting our cemeteries in Normandy, in Luxembourg and Cyrennes which is just outside Paris. I believe that those who work at these cemeteries, in fact, when I said they set the gold standard, it is a standard to which our VA cemeteries here in this country should achieve. It's emblematic, I believe, of our Nation's regard to those who made the highest sacrifice.

They are true shrines to Americans who came to lands that they had never seen, to fight for a people that they had never met. They fought for no bounty of their own and left freedom in their footsteps.

Normandy, the American cemetery, is probably the most famous of our Nation's overseas cemeteries. It is the final resting place of more than 10,000 Americans who died in one of the greatest and most decisive battles of the epic struggle against tyranny in World War II. This year the Commission will open a new visitors center to help communicate the story of this site to those who fought and died over its length and breadth in time.

I had the opportunity to deliver the Memorial Day address, along with my friend HENRY BROWN of South Carolina, at Normandy as I stood there on the cliffs at Omaha Beach in 2005, an experience that I will never forget.

When I visited the Luxembourg cemetery last year, I was in awe of the beauty of the white stone chapel flanked by two very large stone pylons as the centerpiece of this cemetery in which then-General Patton lies in rest before his men. These pylons have maps and inscriptions telling the achievements of the U.S. Armed Forces in the region. Inscribed here are the 371 names of missing who gave their lives near this site but whose remains were not recovered or identified.

The Luxembourg cemetery is also the final resting place for some 5,000 GIs who repulsed Hitler's final offensive in the Battle of the Bulge, including several members of the famous Band of Brothers, deposited in Steve Ambrose's book.

I think if you visited any of these cemeteries all over the world you can't help but walk away with the same feeling that I have, a strong sense of humility and very humbled that these individuals gave everything in the name of freedom and in the name of liberty.

I just encourage everyone so when you go overseas and you're on a trip, or you go to Paris, pause for a moment and go visit one of our cemeteries on foreign land.

And I'm pleased that after World War II we now make every effort to bring these bodies back to our own country. So from Korea and Vietnam and the first Gulf War, second Gulf War, we try everything we can to bring these bodies back.

And speaking of Korea, now that the chairman is here on the floor, I would

even ask of the chairman, there is a bill that was filed by one of our colleagues to bring recognition to Raymond Jerry Murphy, to name the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in New Mexico after this Medal of Honor winner. And I've given you several letters as to why this bill shouldn't be brought up. We're hopeful that you could have brought this bill to the floor while he was alive, but now he has since deceased.

So I would ask the chairman if he has knowledge as to why this bill shouldn't be brought to the floor and given the same honor to which you're giving here with regard to this bill.

I yield to the chairman.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, this is not a germane issue, and I will stick to dealing with the bills on the floor.

Mr. BUYER. So the chairman would raise an issue of germaneness rather than addressing the issue of how we honor the men and women who serve this country. That is disappointing.

This is a Medal of Honor winner from the Korean War in which we tried to seek to give recognition, just like we're doing in this bill, in how we honor our Nation's sacred fallen. This is an individual of whom is so respected in New Mexico the entire delegation supports it. It passed by unanimous consent in the Senate. The Senate bill lies upon this desk, but the chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee won't bring it to the floor, and I don't understand.

I will now yield back to the gentleman for a better explanation, rather than germaneness, as to why you will not honor this veteran that the entire delegation of New Mexico supports.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROSS). Does the gentleman from Indiana yield back the balance of his time?

Mr. BUYER. No, the gentleman from Indiana yields to the chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.

#### PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

Does the yeldee have to make time for an extraneous comment from the yielder?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman from Indiana yield for a parliamentary inquiry?

Mr. BUYER. I absolutely yield for a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. FILNER. Is the yeldee required to give time to the yielder for a matter that has nothing to do with the matter under discussion?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members may yield to one another during debate, but remarks must be confined to the question under debate.

Mr. FILNER. So are they through with their time? Have they yielded back the balance of their time?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Indiana has the floor.

Mr. BUYER. I will reclaim my time since the gentleman now is not speaking of a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Indiana is recognized.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I think by silence, by omission, the chairman just spoke, and how disappointed I am that veterans, that he just said that he wanted to come to the floor, that he was going to take this moment as a thank-you to veterans and all they do; yet here we have an opportunity in bipartisanship to recognize this Medal of Honor winner from Korea, whereby he wouldn't even do it when the gentleman was alive, and now he's deceased, and he still won't even give this individual the recognition. Yet the Senate bill, in a bipartisan fashion, lays upon this desk.

I am very disappointed, and I don't know what it's going to take to get you to move this bill and give the recognition. The Governor supports it. The two Senators support it. The Members of Congress from New Mexico support it. All the veterans service organizations support the bill, and I support this bill.

And if you know of a particular reason as to why this Medal of Honor winner, Mr. Murphy, should not receive this recognition by having the veterans hospital named in his honor, please let all of us know, because if you're blocking this for political motive, now we're upset.

Mr. LAMBORN. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of H. Res. 392, I have nothing more to add except I do want to thank the chairman and I want to thank the ranking member for their words on behalf of H. Res. 392, and I urge its adoption by the entire House. I yield back the balance of my time.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 392.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join Mr. LAMBORN and me to unanimously support H. Res. 392. I have no further requests for time, and I yield back my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 392.

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.

#### VETERANS OUTREACH IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2007

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 67) to amend title 38, United