

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Indiana has 11½ minutes.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as she may consume to Dr. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN of Florida.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I thank the gentleman from Indiana, the ranking member of Veterans' Affairs, for this time.

I am so honored to be here tonight congratulating our good friend, Mr. MILLER of Florida, for this bill, and Congressman BILIRAKIS, another Florida colleague, for speaking on this bill as well.

I rise in strong support of House Resolution 4264 to rightfully name the Department of Veterans Affairs Spinal Cord Injury Center in Tampa, Florida as the "Michael Bilirakis Department of Veterans Affairs Spinal Cord Injury Center."

I had the honor and the pleasure of serving with Congressman Mike Bilirakis here in the House for almost 17 years. He was a colleague, a statesman, a fellow Floridian. Mike was and continues to be a strong voice for our country's men and women proudly serving our country. He was also an advocate for Florida's environment, including the protection of our pristine coastlines. But his time here in the House was truly defined by his supreme dedication to veterans, serving on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs for his entire tenure in the U.S. House.

After 24 years in Congress, this fine public servant retired in 2006. However, we all have the wonderful pleasure to serve with his son, GUS BILIRAKIS, and I'm honored to serve with GUS on our Foreign Affairs Committee. We're delighted to see him follow in his father's footsteps in his passion for our veterans.

Naming this Department of Veterans Affairs after Congressman Mike Bilirakis is certainly a sound tribute to a man who gave so much to his community, to our brave service men and women, and indeed, to our country.

I urge all Members to vote in favor of this resolution that rightfully honors a man such as Congressman Mike Bilirakis, a friend to all, and especially to our veterans.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, our good friend, Michael Bilirakis, and his wife, Evelyn, I'm sure are listening right now. And to my good friend Michael, I know this is a little uncomfortable listening to your colleagues say nice things about you while you're alive, so I thank the chairman for doing this bill.

And we recognize you, Michael Bilirakis, because your presence here was significant. You heard a very personal admission on behalf of the chairman. And I think all of us on the committee could say the very same thing that the chairman had said. Michael was very good at keeping and maintaining civility, and it's about who he was as a person.

I also had the opportunity to serve with him on the powerful House En-

ergy and Commerce Committee. And we honor his work, not only on behalf of America's veterans, but I also remember his work on the Health Subcommittee. It worked out very well, his knowledge of Energy and Commerce along with his work on the Health Subcommittee on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. And he was able to integrate his work with Health and Human Services and NIH and research and met with the VA and research. Your work is highly recognized and remembered by the House.

But I also know that, Michael, if you were still here, you would be just as concerned as I am with regard to the high cost of energy because you voted on a lot of efforts to bring down energy prices for all Americans, which include our veterans.

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So with that I urge all my colleagues to support the legislation before us in naming this spinal cord facility on behalf of Michael Bilirakis.

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

Mr. FILNER. To the now Congressman BILIRAKIS, you honor your father with your work on the committee and your advocacy, and we look forward to many years of that.

And, of course, Mr. Speaker, this is not an obituary. Mike Bilirakis is very much alive and working for veterans still. His work on the Commission for the Future of America's Veterans is important. It's going to be very timely. It's going to be significant. And I hope we all listen to what he says in his new role on that commission.

And, Michael, if you're watching, I don't always meet your ideal of civility, but I remember your teaching. I remember your example every day.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4264.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4264, legislation to designate the "Michael Bilirakis Department of Veterans Affairs Spinal Cord Injury Center" at the James A. Haley Hospital in Tampa.

First, I want to commend my colleague from Florida, JEFF MILLER, a distinguished member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, for introducing this legislation to honor our former colleague and my friend MIKE BILIRAKIS.

There is no member of this House who devoted more of his time and energy to improve the quality of care for our Nation's veterans than MIKE BILIRAKIS. Long a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, he made the establishment of the Spinal Cord Injury Unit at Tampa one of his highest legislative priorities.

As a result of these efforts, we have at Tampa the finest center of its kind anywhere in our Nation taking care of seriously injured veterans. We are thankful that MIKE had the

foresight to pursue this project as it has become a critical center in taking care of returning heroes from the war against terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Naming the Spinal Cord Injury Center for MIKE BILIRAKIS will be a lasting tribute to a man who never forgot our Nation's commitment to our veterans. It is also a special honor to a member of this House who did not seek acclaim or recognition. He just worked hard every day for the people of his district and for the veterans who wore the uniform.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join in approving this legislation to honor one of this House's quiet heroes who is a champion of those who bore the uniform in the past, do so now, and will into the future.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to unanimously support the bill.

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 gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4264.

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. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

EURIPIDES RUBIO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OUTPATIENT CLINIC

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4289) to name the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Ponce, Puerto Rico, as the "Euripides Rubio Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4289

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

SECTION 1. NAME OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OUTPATIENT CLINIC, PONCE, PUERTO RICO.

The Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Ponce, Puerto Rico, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the "Euripides Rubio Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic". Any reference to such outpatient clinic in any law, regulation, map, document, record, or other paper of the United States shall be considered to be a reference to the Euripides Rubio Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER) 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.

I rise today to offer my support of H.R. 4289, a bill to name the VA outpatient clinic in Ponce, Puerto Rico, after Euripides Rubio.

The Congressional Medal of Honor, Mr. Speaker, is the highest military decoration for bravery beyond the call of duty and action in the face of enemy attack. Euripides Rubio was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously. His citation reads as follows:

“For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Captain Rubio, Infantry, was serving as communications officer, 1st Battalion, when a numerically superior enemy force launched a massive attack against the battalion defense position. Intense enemy machinegun fire raked the area while mortar rounds and rifle grenades exploded within the perimeter. Leaving the relative safety of his post, Captain Rubio received two serious wounds as he braved the withering fire to go to the area of most intense action where he distributed ammunition, re-established positions, and rendered aid to the wounded. Disregarding the painful wounds, he unhesitatingly assumed command when a rifle company commander was medically evacuated. Captain Rubio was wounded a third time as he selflessly exposed himself to the devastating enemy fire to move among his men to encourage them to fight with renewed effort. While aiding the evacuation of wounded personnel, he noted that a smoke grenade which was intended to mark the Viet Cong position for air strikes had fallen dangerously close to the friendly lines.

“Captain Rubio ran to reposition the grenade but was immediately struck to his knees by enemy fire. Despite his several wounds, Captain Rubio scooped up the grenade, ran through the deadly hail of fire to within 20 meters of the enemy position, and hurled the already smoking grenade into the midst of the enemy before he fell for the final time. Using the repositioned grenade as a marker, friendly air strikes were directed to destroy the hostile positions. Captain Rubio’s singularly heroic act turned the tide of the battle, and his extraordinary leadership and valor were a magnificent inspiration to his men. His remarkable bravery and selfless concern for his men are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit on Captain Rubio and the United States Army.”

In the words of the veterans’ groups who support this legislation, “Captain Euripides Rubio’s selfless and courageous actions, which earned him the Congressional Medal of Honor, reflect the highest ideals of the United States Army and serve as an inspiration for the people of Puerto Rico, soldiers and civilians alike.” Today, by passing

H.R. 4289, which would designate the outpatient clinic in Ponce, Puerto Rico, as the “Euripides Rubio Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic,” we honor the bravery and sacrifice of Captain Rubio.

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

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4289, a bill to name the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Ponce, Puerto Rico, as the “Euripides Rubio Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic.”

I commend my colleague Mr. FORTUNO of Puerto Rico for introducing the bill.

I cannot improve upon the words of Chairman FILNER. I urge my colleagues to support this bill and honor the extraordinary valor of Captain Euripides Rubio.

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4289.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FORTUNO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I submit this statement for the record in support of H.R. 4289, which will name the Veterans’ Affairs Outpatient Clinic in Ponce, Puerto Rico after Captain Euripides Rubio. Captain Rubio was an officer in the United States Army who fought and, at age 28, died in combat in the jungles of South Vietnam. For the actions that led to his death, Captain Rubio was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, one of four residents of Puerto Rico to have earned this supreme honor. By naming the veterans’ clinic after Captain Rubio, Congress pays tribute to his courage and, by extension, honors the hundreds of thousands of sons and daughters of Puerto Rico who have served in the armed forces of this great Nation. I thank the Congress, and particularly the Veterans’ Affairs Committee, for helping to preserve the memory of an extraordinary American.

It is fitting that Ponce, where Captain Rubio was born in 1938, is known as “the City of Lions.” Captain Rubio truly had the qualities of a lion—strength, courage, and fidelity. Those who served alongside him in the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry remember him as an inspirational leader and as a model soldier completely committed to his country and to his comrades.

It is impossible to read Captain Rubio’s Medal of Honor citation without shaking one’s head and wondering how the world produces men of such caliber. On the day of his death—November 8, 1966—enemy forces launched an attack against the battalion’s defensive position in the Tay Ninh province. Machine gun fire, mortar rounds and rifle-launched grenades exploded within the defense perimeter. Captain Rubio chose to leave the relative safety of his post and “braved the withering fire to go to the area of most intense action where he distributed ammunition, re-established positions and rendered aid to the wounded.” In the process, Captain Rubio was wounded twice.

Moments later, when a rifle company commander was medically evacuated, Captain Rubio assumed command. He received a third wound as he “selflessly exposed himself to the devastating enemy fire to move among his men to encourage them to fight with renewed effort.”

While helping to evacuate wounded comrades, Captain Rubio observed that a smoke grenade, intended to mark the Viet Cong position for U.S. air strikes, had fallen perilously close to friendly lines. Captain Rubio ran to reposition the grenade but was immediately brought to his knees by enemy fire. Despite his many wounds, Captain Rubio picked up the grenade, ran through the deadly hail of fire to within 20 meters of the enemy position, and threw the grenade into the midst of the enemy before he fell for the final time. Because of Captain Rubio’s actions, U.S. aircraft were able to identify and destroy the hostile positions.

The Medal of Honor citation ends with these simple and powerful words: “Captain Rubio’s singularly heroic act turned the tide of battle, and his extraordinary leadership and valor were a magnificent inspiration to his men. His remarkable bravery and selfless concern for his men are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit on Captain Rubio and the U.S. Army.”

There are many important ways in which this Congress and this country can honor our Nation’s warriors. We can—and should—work to ensure they have the proper equipment they need to fight. We can—and should—work to ensure that their families are taken care of during long deployments. We can—and should—work to ensure that, having left the service, our veterans receive the best educational opportunities and medical care available. Simply put, we should fight and sacrifice on behalf of those who have fought and sacrificed for us.

There is something else we can do, too. Something we as a country do not do enough of. And that is to publicly honor the most remarkable instances of bravery on the battlefield displayed by our men and women in uniform. In the last two years, six Americans have won the Medal of Honor for their actions in Afghanistan and Iraq. And yet one must struggle—often in vain—to find stories in the mainstream press about these present-day Euripides Rubios. Had they lived, these heroes would likely have been reluctant to talk about themselves. Such is the nature of soldiers. It is our obligation—and it should be our privilege—to publicly honor their achievements. And H.R. 4289 does precisely that.

Thanks to Congress’s actions today, I know that many children in Puerto Rico, looking upon the clinic that bears his name, will ask their parents or grandparents who Euripides Rubio was. It is my fervent hope that, from the answer given, they will learn about this Lion of Ponce, who died far too young, but whose short life was filled with greatness.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to approve H.R. 4289.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of 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 pass the bill, H.R. 4289.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the

rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

BRUCE W. CARTER DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4918) to name the Department of Veterans Affairs medical center in Miami, Florida, as the "Bruce W. Carter Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4918

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

SECTION 1. NAME OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER, MIAMI, FLORIDA.

The Department of Veterans Affairs medical center in Miami, Florida, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the "Bruce W. Carter Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center". Any reference to such medical center in any law, regulation, map, document, record, or other paper of the United States shall be considered to be a reference to the Bruce W. Carter Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer my support for the bill to name the VA Medical Center in Miami, Florida, after Bruce W. Carter.

I have a biography, but I never knew Mr. Carter and I'm sure Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN knows him best or knows his record the best.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my support of H.R. 4918, a bill to name the VA Medical Center in Miami, Florida, after Bruce W. Carter.

For his actions during Operation Idaho Canyon in the Quang Tri Province of the Republic of Vietnam in 1969, PFC Bruce W. Carter was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in 1971. The citation reads, in part:

Pfc. Carter and his fellow marines were pinned down by vicious crossfire when, with complete disregard for his safety, he stood in full view of the North Vietnamese Army soldiers to deliver a devastating volume of fire at their positions. The accuracy and aggressiveness of his attack caused several enemy casualties and forced the remainder of the soldiers to retreat from the immediate area. Shouting directions to the marines around him, Pfc. Carter then commenced leading them from the path of the rapidly approaching brush fire when he observed a hostile grenade land between him and his companions. Fully aware of the probable consequences of his action but determined to protect the men following him, he毫不犹豫地 threw himself over the grenade, absorbing the full effects of its detonation with his body. Pfc. Carter's indomitable courage, inspiring initiative and selfless devotion to duty upheld

the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the U.S. Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life in the service of his country.

H.R. 4918, which would designate the VA Medical Center in Miami, Florida, as the "Bruce W. Carter Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center" honors the service and sacrifice of this Marine Corps hero.

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

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to Dr. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN of Florida to speak on the bill.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I thank the chairman and the ranking member.

Mr. Speaker, I am so honored that we have this legislation before us. H.R. 4918 honors a brave soldier, a brave marine, who gave his life for our country. And this legislation to name the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center located in my hometown of Miami, Florida, as the "Bruce W. Carter Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center" is a great honor not just to the family and to the legacy that Bruce left, but also it honors the selfless sacrifice of all of our members and all of our veterans.

Bruce was born in New York, and he moved with his family to Texas, then Louisiana, and then they settled in South Florida. He attended Miami Springs Elementary School and then Miami Springs High School before enlisting in the U.S. Marine Corps in Jacksonville, Florida. He was promoted to Private First Class January 1, 1969, and deployed to Vietnam in April of that year, serving as a radio operator with Hotel Company, 2nd battalion, 3rd Marines, 3rd Marine Division.

Sadly, his hopes, his dreams, his life-long ambitions were brutally cut short in Vietnam. On August 7, 1969, in combat north of the Vandegrift base in the Quang Tri province, Private First Class Carter threw himself on an enemy grenade, giving his life in service to our country so that his fellow Marines could survive.

His sacrifice embodies the honor, the courage, and the commitment to freedom which is characteristic of both a hero and a United States Marine.

On September 19, 1971, at a ceremony attended by his mother, Georgianna "Georgie" Carter-Krell and other family members, Private First Class Carter was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his unwavering patriotism and sacrifice. For his valor Private First Class Carter has also received the Purple Heart, the Combat Action Ribbon, the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with one Bronze Star, and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

However, the legacy of Private First Class Bruce Carter's commitment to our Nation endures. It endures in his mother, Georgie, who has carried on her son's legacy through her leadership in an organization known as the Gold Star Mothers organization. Today Georgie is serving her second term as national president of Gold Star Moth-

ers, an organization committed to paying tribute to the men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of liberty.

I am privileged to represent the 18th Congressional District of Florida, hometown to many servicemen and women who have bravely defended our interests every day. My husband, Dexter, served our country in Vietnam as a U.S. Army ranger and was severely wounded in combat. My stepson Doug and his wife are captains in the U.S. Marine Corps, having served our country in Iraq. And I am deeply and personally interested in all of the affairs related to veterans to make sure that we honor them with the benefits that they so richly have earned through their sacrifice. They have served our country proudly, and they deserve to be treated with great respect.

Those who dedicated their lives to the service of others truly embody the heart and the spirit of all that is best in America. And that can truly be said of Private First Class Carter, of his dedication to freedom and of his fellow Marines, and it must never be lost in the dusty pages of our history book. Through the naming of this medical center, we will be remembering not just Bruce's sacrifice but the sacrifice and service of all of the brave men and women who proudly serve and wear our Nation's uniform.

I thank the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee for this opportunity, and I especially want to thank the ranking member, my good friend from Indiana, for this time.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I would ask all colleagues to support H.R. 4918, a bill to name the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Miami, Florida, as the "Bruce W. Carter Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center."

I want to thank my colleague Dr. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN of Miami, Florida, for introducing the bill.

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

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I also thank the gentlewoman from Florida for telling us so eloquently about Mr. Carter.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 4918.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. I would urge my colleagues to support unanimously H.R. 4918 and yield back the balance of 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 pass the bill, H.R. 4918.

The question was taken.