

When a disabled servicemember comes home to a family and to bills, every little bit helps. The VA has the authority to provide immediate temporary benefits to a severely injured servicemember until a claim is processed. However, we are concerned that they do not use this authority as often as possible. We want to make the VA's application of this authority mandatory. Under this bill, if you qualify for temporary benefits, you automatically will get these benefits instead of waiting for the VA to act.

Mr. Speaker, America's veterans have fought and have sacrificed for our Nation, and we owe them our greatest efforts to enable them to receive their disability benefits in a timely fashion.

My colleague Mr. HARE mentioned about the 800,000 claim backlog. He and I and all Members of this body want to see that go to zero. We will continue that work, and I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation today.

Mr. FILNER. I have no further speakers.

Let me just say in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, that I think it's safe to say that for every single Member of this House, when they have town meetings with veterans, the single biggest complaint is the disability claims system. They've been waiting months, years even—decades—for decisions. This is an insult to their service. We have a long way to go in changing that. This bill is a big step toward erasing that incredible backlog. This situation is the biggest single factor that leads veterans to think that "VA" means veterans' adversary instead of veterans' advocate. So we have to change it. It is going to be changed as rapidly as we can, and I encourage all Members to support this bill.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. I would ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 5892, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, we are at the conclusion of a set of eight pieces of legislation that will each one improve the quality of life for our Nation's veterans. Each one is a step forward to recognizing their service. We have thanked all the Members for working on this.

I want to thank the staff on both sides of the aisle. When you have a collection of bills like this, it takes a lot of time, especially on a weekend, unfortunately, for them. So we thank all the staff—Republican and Democrat—for getting all of the reports and all of the work done for today's bills, which really contribute to the well-being of our veterans.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5892, as amended, the Veterans Dis-

ability Benefits Claims Modernization Act of 2008, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to modernize the VA disability benefits claims processing system, to help ensure the accurate and timely delivery of compensation to veterans and their families.

I commend the leaders of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, Chairman JOHN HALL and Ranking Member DOUG LAMBORN, for introducing and developing this comprehensive bill. Their bipartisan efforts will help make substantial improvements to the veterans' benefits claims process.

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation payments fulfill our Nation's primary obligation to make up for the economic losses and losses of quality of life that result from service connected injuries. In recent years, VA has required increasingly longer periods to process the thousands of claims it receives each year. This has resulted in a backlog of benefits claims that VA has been struggling to overcome.

This bipartisan bill is intended to improve benefits claims processing so that our veterans receive their benefits with the speed and accuracy that they deserve. It is comprised of a number of recommendations for improvement that originated in other bills. Such recommendations include: better utilization of information technology, a quality and training assessment program for the certification of each VA claims processor, and a study of a new rating schedule to help ensure that the VA rating schedule, which consists of a complex set of regulations used to determine the appropriate level of compensation for veterans' disabilities, adequately compensates veterans for both loss of earnings and loss of quality of life.

Our veterans, who have sacrificed so much for the freedoms we cherish, must be assured that the compensation they receive for disabilities is based on information that is both credible and fair.

By supporting H.R. 5892, we will initiate steps to ensure that VA benefits and services are of unsurpassed value to veterans.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. FILNER. I would 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. 5892, 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. LAMBORN. 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.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL CAMPUS SAFETY AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1288) supporting the goals and ideals of National Campus Safety Awareness Month, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1288

Whereas college and university campuses are not immune from the crime problems that face the rest of society in the United States;

Whereas a total of 37 homicides, 8,112 forcible-sex offenses, 8,923 aggravated assaults, and 3,071 cases of arson were reported on college and university campuses from 2004 to 2006, in accordance with the reporting requirements under the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (20 U.S.C. 1092(f); Public Law 89-329);

Whereas criminal experts estimate that between 1/3 and 1/4 of female students become the victim of a completed or attempted rape, usually by someone they know, during their college careers, but fewer than 5 percent report the assault to law enforcement;

Whereas each year, 13 percent of female students enrolled in an undergraduate program at a college or university will be victims of stalking;

Whereas 1,700 college and university students between the ages of 18 and 24 die each year from unintentional alcohol-related injuries, including motor vehicle accidents;

Whereas Security On Campus, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as "SOC"), a national nonprofit group dedicated to promoting safety and security on college and university campuses, has designated September as National Campus Safety Awareness Month;

Whereas each September since 2005, SOC has partnered with colleges and universities across the United States to offer National Campus Safety Awareness Month educational programming on sexual assault, alcohol and other drug abuse, hazing, stalking, and other critical campus safety issues; and

Whereas National Campus Safety Awareness Month provides an opportunity for entire campus communities to become engaged in efforts to improve campus safety: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Campus Safety Awareness Month; and

(2) encourages colleges and universities throughout the United States to provide campus safety and other crime awareness and prevention programs to all students throughout the year.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HARE) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I request 5 legislative days in which Members may revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H. Res. 1288 into the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise today in support of House Resolution 1288, which recognizes September as the National Campus Safety Awareness Month. I urge colleges and universities from across the country to do what they can to prevent violence, crime and abuse on their campuses.

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The campus safety movement started in the late 1980s, soon after the tragic death of a student at Lehigh University. On April 5, 1986, Jeanne Clery, a freshman at Lehigh, was beaten, raped and murdered in her dormitory room. The offender was another Lehigh student who tried to rob Jeanne as she slept in the room. The two did not know each other.

Clery's case brought college campus safety to the forefront when it exposed flaws in the reporting of crime information related to violence on the campus. At that time, violent and non-violent incidents were reported to campus authorities, but administrators did not have to disclose the information.

In the aftermath of Ms. Clery's murder, her parents, Connie and Howard Clery, founded Security on Campus, Inc. to end violence on all college campuses. It is a unique, nonprofit grass roots organization dedicated to safe campuses for college and university students.

Security on Campus, Inc. partners with a number of colleges to offer educational programs on sexual assault, alcohol and drugs. Programs like Security on Campus, Inc. have done a lot to educate students about campus safety. They have partnered with over 150 colleges and universities from 42 States across this Nation.

More than 37 homicides and 8,112 forcible sex offenses were reported on college and university campuses from the year 2004 through 2006. Many of the violence and rape cases take place within the first few weeks of school.

As we commemorate National Campus Safety Awareness Month in September, let us focus our efforts on educating our students about campus safety. Students need to be reminded every year about practical precautions to increase their safety. Anyone can become a victim of a campus crime, and it is imperative that students are taught how to avoid dangerous situations.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I express my support for National Campus Safety Awareness Month, and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 1288, a resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Campus Safety Month.

I would like to thank my colleague, Congressman SESTAK, for introducing

this important resolution, recognizing the importance of safety on college campuses, and the efforts of outside organizations to dedicate September to promoting greater awareness of campus safety issues.

Over the past few years, we have seen how important it is to pay attention to our students' safety on campus. It is unfortunate that sometimes it takes tragic events like those occurring at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois for us to remember that crimes take place on college campuses all over the country. It is important that Congress continue to encourage institutions to update their campus security plans and ensure that they have plans in place to deal with all types of emergencies.

I'm pleased to support this resolution, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do the same.

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

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield 3 minutes to the author of this very important resolution that we're considering, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SESTAK).

Mr. SESTAK. Mr. Speaker, this August and September students will be returning back to their colleges and universities. It's a great time. And yet we're reminded by the comments on either side of the aisle that they're not going to be immune from the unique challenges that face us in the realities of our own homes elsewhere in the cities and suburbs of America. The tragic shootings at Virginia Tech, which ended in the death of 32 people, or the shootings at Northern Illinois University, where 24 people were shot and six died, emphasizes the importance of this issue of campus safety.

As my colleague mentioned, the Department of Education noted that between 2004 and 2006 there were not only 8,000 forcible sex offenses, 9,000 aggravated assaults, 3,000 cases of arson, but also 37 homicides on the colleges and universities of what we like to think are our ivory towers.

We also know that between one-fifth and one-fourth of female students will become the victim of a completed or an attempted rape—usually by someone they know—during their undergraduate careers, and yet less than 5 percent of the cases are ever reported.

The National Advisory Council on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism notes that each year there are over 1,700 college students between the ages of 18 and 24 who will die from unintentional alcohol-related injuries, including motor vehicle accidents. That's why this resolution is so important, originally introduced by a colleague on the other side of this aisle in 2005, and the idea of a national nonprofit organization in my district, Security on Campus—King of Prussia, Pennsylvania is their home base—founded by the parents of which you noted, my colleague, by the parents of a 19-year-old college freshman, Jeanne Clery, who was raped and killed in her bed in college.

In 2007, 150 colleges came together from 42 States and the city of Washington, D.C. to participate in programs on campus security; this was up from 50 the year before. This year, we expect over 350 colleges to come together. This is not the step, but it is a step towards eliminating an issue that we all have cared about, that of our children and their security, particularly when they are there to have education security.

I urge all my colleagues to show their concern for the safety of the more than 15 million students we have in this great Nation of ours. And I encourage my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN).

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution. And I thank the author and all of those who have brought this resolution to the floor here today.

I rise only briefly to say that one of my constituents, Mr. Daniel Carter, who heads up an organization called Security on Campus, has been absolutely probably the leading person in this Nation in advocating more action and tougher action against crimes that are committed on campus.

In my district of Knoxville, Tennessee, we have the 26,000 student University of Tennessee, and several other colleges that are also located in my district, so this is an issue of great concern to me. And I think this resolution will assist in calling attention to what has become a very, very serious problem in this Nation. Unfortunately, it was highlighted, as previous speakers have said, about the terrible tragedies that occurred at Northern Illinois and Virginia Tech. And so I urge strong support of this resolution.

Mr. HARE. I continue to reserve, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" for this resolution.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the goals and ideals of National Campus Safety Awareness Month: As a cosponsor of this thoughtful resolution, I would like to commend my colleague from the House Armed Services Committee—Admiral Sestak of Pennsylvania—for his leadership on this important issue.

National Campus Safety Awareness Month—first established in September 2005—works to both heighten awareness and to improve the overall safety on our college and university campuses. H. Res. 1288 supports the goals of this initiative and encourages all institutions of higher learning to participate in this very worthy endeavor.

Mr. Speaker, despite the work that has been accomplished to increase campus safety at colleges and universities across the country, college students are still very susceptible to criminal acts. Between 2004 and 2006 alone, colleges and universities reported 37 homicides, 8,114 forcible-sex offenses, 8,923 aggravated assaults, and 3,071 cases of arson.

I applaud the work being done by organizations like Security On Campus (SOC) that are dedicated to using educational programming to teach students how to handle the potential dangers of their surroundings.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H. Res. 1288.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 1288, supporting the goals and ideals of National Campus Safety Awareness Month.

Each year since 2005 the national non-profit organization Security On Campus, Inc. has designated September as National Campus Safety Awareness Month.

Security On Campus partners with colleges and universities across the country each year to offer important campus safety programming during National Campus Safety Awareness Month in September.

I am pleased to have worked with Security on Campus on a provision in the Higher Education bill dealing with timely safety notifications on college campuses.

This year 350 campuses will formally partner with Security on Campus to offer campus safety activities as a part of National Campus Safety Awareness Month.

This programming covers critical issues including sexual assault, high risk drinking, and hazing, which are among the most serious safety issues facing our Nation's campuses.

September, at the beginning of the new school-year, is an ideal time to reach out to new and returning students, many of whom are on their own for the first time.

I applaud Security on Campus as a leading voice on behalf of students and parents for safer college and university campuses, and their partners for offering this life-saving program.

As a proud cosponsor of H. Res. 1288, I would also like to thank Congressman SESTAK for introducing the resolution.

I encourage my colleagues to support this measure.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time and ask my colleagues to vote "yes" on this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HARE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1288, 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. KELLER of Florida. 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.

CONGRATULATING HEISMAN TROPHY WINNER TIM TEBOW

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the reso-

lution (H. Res. 901) congratulating University of Florida Quarterback Timothy "Tim" Tebow for winning the Heisman Trophy and honoring both his athletic and academic achievements.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 901

Whereas Tim Tebow was born on August 14, 1987, to Bob and Pam Tebow;

Whereas Tim Tebow's mother and father have instilled in him the importance of giving and serving others;

Whereas Tim Tebow has exhibited exemplary character, kindness, and compassion rooted in his deep and abiding faith in God;

Whereas Tim Tebow has displayed a willingness to help those less fortunate through his missionary work in the Philippines;

Whereas Tim Tebow has been an inspiration off the football field by regularly visiting orphanages in the Philippines and hospitals in the United States;

Whereas Tim Tebow has maintained a 3.77 grade point average at the University of Florida;

Whereas Tim Tebow became only the fourth sophomore in the history of the University of Florida to earn first-team Academic All-American honors;

Whereas Tim Tebow played an integral role in the University of Florida's National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) national championship football team in 2006;

Whereas Tim Tebow threw for 29 touchdowns and ran for 22 touchdowns in the 2007 season;

Whereas Tim Tebow became the first player in major college football history to run for at least 20 touchdowns and pass for at least 20 touchdowns in the same season;

Whereas Tim Tebow's total of 51 touchdowns was a Southeastern Conference record;

Whereas Tim Tebow's 22 rushing touchdowns was also a new conference record as well as a national collegiate record for quarterbacks;

Whereas Tim Tebow completed more than 68 percent of his passing attempts for a total of 3,132 yards this season;

Whereas Tim Tebow guided Florida to a 9-3 record as they led the Southeastern Conference in scoring and total yardage; and

Whereas on December 8, 2007, Tim Tebow became the first and only sophomore ever to win the Heisman Trophy, college football's most coveted and prestigious award: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) commends Tim Tebow for his academic and athletic accomplishments;

(2) recognizes Tim Tebow's character and compassion toward his fellow human beings;

(3) congratulates Tim Tebow for his historic winning of the 2007 Heisman Trophy; and

(4) directs the Clerk of the House of Representatives to transmit a copy of this resolution to University of Florida President J. Bernard Machen and Head Football Coach Urban Meyer for appropriate display.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HARE) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members

may revise and extend and insert extraneous material on House Resolution 901 into the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate University of Florida quarterback Timothy "Tim" Tebow for winning the greatest recognition in college football, the Heisman Trophy, and to honor both his athletic and academic achievements.

Tim Tebow received the Heisman Trophy on December 8, 2007 and became the first sophomore to ever win the Heisman.

This award recognizes Tim Tebow's college football accomplishments and record-breaking season as he became the first player in college football history to run for at least 20 touchdowns and pass for at least 20 touchdowns in the same season. Tim set a new Southeastern Conference record with 51 total touchdowns in a single season. Rushing for 22 of those touchdowns, he set an all-time new national collegiate record for quarterbacks as well.

Although his rushing abilities inspired spectators and left his opponents confounded, his strong arm also contributed to a stellar athletic performance. Tim completed more than 68 percent of his passing attempts for a total of 3,132 yards during the 2007 season. He led the University of the Florida to a 9-3 record and helped the Gators lead the conference in scoring and total yardage.

Beyond the field, Tim Tebow has proven himself an astute student in the classroom. He has maintained a 3.77 grade point average while he has been at the University of Florida, and is only the fourth sophomore from the University of Florida to become a member of the Academic All-American First Team.

Tebow has exhibited exemplary character by carrying a torch of leadership off the football field to help those less fortunate. Tim has transcended simply being a football inspiration to his teammates and fans. He is also a philanthropic inspiration, regularly visiting orphanages and hospitals in the Philippines and the United States.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I congratulate the University of the Florida quarterback, Tim Tebow, for an outstanding two years of athletic and academic performance. I urge all my colleagues to pass this important resolution.

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

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield as much time as he may consume to the Congressman from Florida (Mr. CRENSHAW), who is the Congressman from the hometown of Tim Tebow, the author of this resolution, and a successful college athlete himself, I might add.