

honor those who dedicate themselves to their support. That's why I introduced this important resolution to honor these amazing groups. They did not ask for any recognition for their service, but we can all agree that they deserve to be honored for all they do for our military families and for our country.

I ask for your support of this critical resolution honoring our military support groups.

□ 1515

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield such time as he might care to consume to my good friend from Georgia (Mr. PRICE).

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank my friend from Oklahoma for his leadership on this and so many issues and for yielding me time.

This is an important issue, an important bill. So many of us have worked with groups within our districts all across this Nation who have had family members volunteer, serve, defend our liberty and freedom around the world, many of them on multiple tours of duty. So helping the families and recognizing their sacrifices is extremely important. They fight to defend our liberty, they fight to defend our freedom, they fight to defend our way of life, and yes, they fight to defend our ability to stand on this floor and debate and deliberate the major issues of the day.

Which is why it is with some significant regret that I discuss the issue that is the most important issue facing Americans today at home, and that is the issue of the economy and increasing gas prices and energy policy, and sadly say to my colleagues that the freedom and the liberty and the processes that our military men and women risk their lives to protect are sadly not being honored here on the floor of the House.

We heard with great fanfare last week the Speaker and the Democrat leadership announce to the Nation that they had reached a compromise on energy policy, an issue that we have been, on my side of the aisle, demanding an appropriate deliberative process and a fair and open debate for these many months.

But the Speaker announced they had reached a compromise. The problem, Mr. Speaker, as you well know is the compromise within their own minds, within their own caucus, which is why it saddens me to recognize that the men and women who are fighting to defend our freedom and our liberty and fighting for the ability of our democracy to long survive, and yet we have a process of democracy that's been so distorted it would not be recognized certainly by our Founding Fathers and likely not by any civics class across this Nation.

Because the way in which this energy bill supposedly—I don't know who's seen it—supposedly will be brought to

the floor in less than 24 hours is through a closed process, through a secret process behind closed doors; not an open deliberative process, not a democratic process. Dare I say, Mr. Speaker, not an American process.

This is an important bill to recognize the sacrifices of American families all across this Nation whose loved ones stand today and have continued to stand to fight for liberty and freedom. But it saddens me greatly, Mr. Speaker, to not have that process and that fight and that valor honored here on the floor of the House of Representatives in a way that recognizes the history of our Nation, the appropriateness of the deliberative process, the imperative of democracy, the recognition that each and every one of us represents the same number of Americans.

So I support this bill, but I am so saddened and distressed by what appears to be a recurrent theme among this current leadership, and that is not to recognize the imperative of democracy and debate and deliberation in this, the greatest House, the people's House.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Expressions of approval or disapproval from the gallery are not allowed.

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

Mr. Speaker, I represent Guam, a small little island in the Pacific where we have today more active National Guardsmen reservists serving in Afghanistan and Iraq per capita than any other State in the Union.

Just last month I led a codel to Pakistan, Kuwait, Afghanistan, and Iraq and found 181 National Guardsmen and reservists from Guam deployed in Afghanistan serving in the most dangerous provinces in that country.

I want to speak to this bill because on Guam, because of the numerous soldiers deployed all over the world today, the support group is exceptional, made up of family and friends. I have visited their headquarters, and it's made up of housewives, families, and friends all supporting our soldiers. And I want to go on record to say that I applaud our soldiers and families on Guam for their dedicated support and loyalty, and I go on record as supporting this bill.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I have no further requests for time, and I am prepared to close after my colleague has yielded back his time.

I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I will try to be brief.

I want to, again, commend my good friend from Guam and say in the opportunities we've had to travel abroad I notice how fervently she seeks out servicemen and women from her country and with what great warmth and gratitude she's always received. And it's a reminder of what an exceptional place she represents and what exceptional people have chosen her from amongst themselves to defend them here.

I want to also express my personal appreciation for the types of groups, again, that were singled out in this resolution by our good friend, Ms. SUTTON. Frankly, we all could sit here and name many, many groups in our respective districts that put American men and women in uniform ahead of everything else. I want to mention just one, if I might, Mr. Speaker.

In my home State of Lawton, Oklahoma, is where Fort Sill is located. It's the home base of the field artillery. And Fort Sill has a very unique organization called literally the Armed Services YMCA of Lawton/Fort Sill. It, for decades, has performed support services for family. Every year there is a huge breakfast and, frankly, a community drive to solicit private dollars to support its efforts to help men and women in uniform and service families.

And I've heard repeatedly, as I go down to these, instances where families would show up from deployment desperately needing things; you know, perhaps young families not able to furnish the apartments they were in, needing support. That support's always given generously by fellow soldiers, but more importantly, even by the men and women of Lawton, Oklahoma.

Again, I commend my colleagues for bringing this resolution. I urge its support.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I want to go on record to thank the co-manager of the bill today, Mr. COLE, a good friend of mine whom I've traveled with on numerous occasions, and I truly appreciate the kind words that he has noted of Guam and, of course, his own State.

And as he said, each Member going on these congressional delegation trips is always meeting with their troops, and this is one of the great pleasures, shall we say, of the trip, not only to investigate and see how we are doing and how our troops are treated, but to meet with troops from our district.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my gratitude to all the support groups, families, and friends of our men and women in the armed forces. By supporting those who support them, we honor the sacrifice and courage of our women who have served and are currently serving in our Armed Forces.

Since September 2001, more than 1,700,000 members of the Armed Forces have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, and nearly 611,000 have been deployed more than once. More than 782,000 members of our Armed Forces deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan are parents. Sadly, nearly 35,000 troops have been separated from their children for 4 or more deployments.

Many of our men and women in the armed forces have given the ultimate sacrifice to secure the freedoms of others. As of May 3, 2008 over 4,500 died and over 32,000 wounded while deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan).

The members of our Armed Forces and their families deserve all the medical, financial,

education, and moral support that our Nation can provide. Our military support groups and organizations play a vital role in providing services to members of our Armed Forces and their families, including financial assistance, employment assistance, tax return preparation, counseling, prayer groups, and sending care packages.

The resolution we considered today provides an opportunity for each of us, regardless of political views, religion, ethnicity, gender, or background to come together, and to recognize and honor our nation's heroes and those that support them and their families.

Though we may be divided by our positions on the war in Iraq, we stand together to support our veterans. Our nation has a proud legacy of appreciation and commitment to the men and women who have worn the uniform in defense of this country. We must be united in seeing that every soldier, sailor, airman, and marine is welcomed back with all the care and compassion this grateful nation can bestow.

All too many of our veterans are left without the help and support they need to transition from the horrors they bravely face on the front lines of battle to successful civilian life. According to the Veterans of all ages were homeless.

The V.A. also reports 400 veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan alone have already become homeless, and this figure only takes into account those who have sought services from V.A.-sponsored programs. Experts have predicted that the trauma resulting from the extreme horrors of these modern wars could lead to a surge in homeless veterans in the coming years.

I chose to celebrate one of our heroic daughters of Texas, Specialist Monica L. Brown of the United States Army with House Concurrent Resolution 320 for her efforts earlier this year.

Spec. Brown was the first woman in Afghanistan and only the second female soldier since World War II to receive the Silver Star, the nation's third-highest medal for valor. This soldier from Lake Jackson, Texas was only 10-years-old, when on April 25, 2007, Specialist Brown as part of a four-vehicle convoy patrolling near Jani Kheil in the eastern province of Paktia that was attacked. She saw her fellow soldiers injured, she grabbed her aid bag and started running toward the burning vehicle as insurgents opened fire. All five wounded soldiers from her platoon scrambled out. Under this commotion, she assessed her patients and moved them to a safer location because they were still receiving incoming fire.

The Pentagon's official policy is to prohibit women from serving in front-line combat roles in the infantry, armor or artillery, but the nature of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, with no real front lines, has seen women soldiers take part in close-quarters combat more than previous conflicts.

According to the army four Army nurses in World War II were the first women to receive the Silver Star, though three nurses serving in World War I were awarded the medal posthumously in 2007. Sgt. Leigh Ann Hester, of Nashville, Tenn., was the first to receive the Silver Star in 2005 along with two fellow male soldiers for her gallantry during an insurgent ambush on a convoy in Iraq.

Though I have opposed the war in Iraq from its inception, I remain absolutely committed to

ensuring that we recognize, celebrate, and honor the service of our sons and daughters in and returning from, Iraq and Afghanistan.

I am proud to support H. Res. 1200 by my colleague, Congresswoman SUTTON. I firmly believe that we should celebrate and support our armed forces and their families, and I remain committed, as a Member of Congress, to both meeting the needs of veterans of previous wars, and to provide a fitting welcome home to those who are now serving. Current serving military personnel and veterans have kept their promise to serve our nation; they have willingly risked their lives to protect the country we all love. We must now ensure that we keep our promises to them.

Currently, there are over 25 million veterans in the United States. There are more than 1,633,000 veterans living in Texas and more than 32,000 veterans living in my Congressional district alone. I hope we will all take the time to show appreciation to those who have answered the call to duty. As Winston Churchill famously state, "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting our troops, their families, and those groups that are working to support them.

Ms. BORDALLO. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1200, 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. COLE of Oklahoma. 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.

HONORING TOBY KEITH'S COMMITMENT TO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1255) honoring Toby Keith's commitment to members of the Armed Forces.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1255

Whereas thousands of celebrities have donated their time to entertain members of the Armed Forces both in the United States and abroad through the United Service Organizations (hereafter known as the "USO");

Whereas since the USO's founding in 1941, country music personalities have been an essential element of the USO's entertainment;

Whereas Oklahoma native Toby Keith made six USO tours around the world, per-

forming in such locations as Cuba, Germany, Belgium, Kosovo, Italy, and Africa; and entertaining more than 135,000 members of the Armed Forces in Middle East Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom;

Whereas Toby Keith has volunteered to perform at some of the most dangerous and remote locations in the Persian Gulf, which require Apache escorts and include Forward Operating Bases with total populations of not more than 50 members of the Armed Forces;

Whereas, on April 24, 2008, while performing in Kandahar, Afghanistan mortar fire disrupted his concert;

Whereas few, if any, performers have traveled to such remote and dangerous military bases with Toby Keith's frequency;

Whereas Toby Keith has acted as a valuable liaison between forward deployed troops, the USO, and the American public;

Whereas Toby Keith makes it a priority to give tickets to members of the Armed Forces here in the United States;

Whereas Toby Keith allows members of the Armed Forces to eat and drink for free in his restaurants; and

Whereas Toby Keith co-wrote and performed the hit song "American Soldier" honoring the sacrifices that America's soldiers make on a daily basis: Now, therefore, be it Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) honors Toby Keith's commitment to our country's Armed Forces overseas;

(2) encourages other entertainers to take into consideration Toby Keith's deep commitment to boosting the morale of our Nation's Armed Forces when supporting USO operations; and

(3) a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Toby Keith.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Guam.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. BORDALLO. 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 Guam?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 1255 to honor Toby Keith's commitment to strengthening the morale of our Armed Forces and working with the United Services Organizations, the USO, to accomplish this important task. I thank my colleague from Oklahoma, Mr. TOM COLE, for bringing this measure before the House.

Toby Keith has gone above and beyond his celebrity to bring members of our Armed Forces the joy and laughter of entertainment no matter where in the world they serve. From Cuba to Kosovo, Italy to Africa, and many more locations, both welcoming and dangerous, Mr. Keith has played for more than 135,000 men and women in uniform.

In April of this year, Mr. Keith performed in Kandahar, Afghanistan,