

Senator in 1979, and he served in that capacity for 18 years.

With the exception of the late Senator George Norris, Senator Exon was the only Nebraskan to win five consecutive statewide elections.

Even after retiring from the U.S. Senate in 1997, Senator Exon continued to serve his country. He was appointed to a congressionally created committee led by the former Director of Central Intelligence, John M. Deutch, to examine the threat of weapons of mass destruction. Even then, he warned of the very real threat of terrorism.

Senator Exon had a long and distinguished career in serving the State of Nebraska and the Nation. It is a fitting tribute to Senator Exon's service that this building be named after him.

I support this legislation and encourage my colleagues to do the same.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve.

Mr. BOOZMAN. If the gentlelady has no additional speakers, then I will close.

Again, I would just urge my colleagues to vote to adopt this measure.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of S. 3009 a bill to honor the civic contributions of former Senator J. James Exon.

Senator J. James Exon was born in South Dakota in 1921. He attended public schools, and graduated from the University of Omaha. Following graduation, he served in the United States Army Signal Corp from 1942–1945.

Senator Exon's political career began as a member of the Nebraska Democratic State Central Committee. He was also a member of the Democratic National Committee and Chaired the Nebraska Democratic Party from 1968 to 1970. He then served two terms as Governor of Nebraska and, in 1978, was elected to the U.S. Senate. He served three terms in the United States Senate before retiring in 1996. Following his retirement from the Senate, Senator Exon served on the Deutch Commission, which was created by Congress to study the threat of weapons of mass destruction.

On June 10, 2005, Senator Exon passed away.

This is a fitting tribute to Senator Exon's long career in public service, and urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the bill.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 3009.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### COMMEMORATING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OKEECHOBEE HURRICANE OF SEPTEMBER 1928

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules

and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1376) commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Okeechobee Hurricane of September 1928 and its associated tragic loss of life, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

#### H. RES. 1376

*Whereas the Okeechobee Hurricane, also known as Hurricane San Felipe Segundo, formed in the Atlantic Ocean, traveled through the Caribbean Sea, and up the eastern coast of the United States between September 10 and September 20, 1928;*

*Whereas on September 16, 1928, the Okeechobee Hurricane made landfall in the continental United States at Palm Beach County, Florida, and proceeded north over Lake Okeechobee, after which it decreased steadily in intensity before dying in Ontario, Canada;*

*Whereas the Okeechobee Hurricane attained the highest classification of Category 5 for tropical cyclone intensity on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale, with winds exceeding 160 miles per hour;*

*Whereas the Okeechobee Hurricane is officially recognized by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as the second deadliest hurricane on record in United States history, exacting the tragic loss of approximately 3,000 lives in the United States and its territories;*

*Whereas approximately 75 percent of fatalities from the Okeechobee Hurricane in the United States were migrant farm workers, the vast majority of which were African-American;*

*Whereas the extensive impact of the Okeechobee Hurricane on African-American migrant workers in southern and central Florida was memorialized in the famous 1937 literary work of Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*;*

*Whereas the Okeechobee Hurricane exacted horrendous damage valued at over \$16,000,000,000, adjusted for inflation, to the infrastructure and towns of western Palm Beach County alone;*

*Whereas many of those killed by the Okeechobee Hurricane in southern Florida were buried in segregated mass graves, such as the more than 670 African-American victims in a mass grave in West Palm Beach;*

*Whereas the Nation and the State of Florida have taken steps to respond to the Okeechobee Hurricane and other storm events with the construction of storm damage reduction projects to mitigate the loss of life and property;*

*Whereas the Herbert Hoover Dike's system surrounding Lake Okeechobee consists of 143 miles of levee with 19 culverts, hurricane gates, and other water control structures that provide flood and storm damage reduction and other water control benefits;*

*Whereas on November 2, 2007, the Army Corps of Engineers Dam Safety Action Classification External Peer Review Panel designated the Herbert Hoover Dike with Class I designation of "urgent and compelling," the highest risk category;*

*Whereas a breach of the Herbert Hoover Dike or similarly designated structures throughout the Nation could potentially cause catastrophic loss of life and poses grave economic and environmental consequences to the surrounding communities; and*

*Whereas economically disadvantaged and migrant communities are at increased risk for extensive damage and loss of life associated with natural disasters: Now, therefore, be it*

*Resolved,*

*That the House of Representatives—*

*(1) memorializes the tragic loss of approximately 3,000 lives in the United States and its territories due to the Okeechobee Hurricane of 1928;*

*(2) recognizes the enduring importance of hurricane preparedness measures, enhanced evacuation, emergency plans, and disaster response training especially in economically disadvantaged communities to prevent a disproportionate impact of natural disasters and disparities in disaster response;*

*(3) recognizes the role of relevant Federal agencies, research institutes, universities, and disaster response organizations in providing intensity forecasting, long-range projections of hurricane activity, emergency management, and hurricane and storm damage reduction to better prepare for, respond to, and mitigate the extensive loss of life and devastating impacts of hurricanes and storms;*

*(4) fully supports initiatives to enhance our understanding of storm impacts on physical structures, including water management systems and other infrastructure that may be vulnerable to the most intense of storms;*

*(5) urges the State of Florida and local governments to—*

*(A) commemorate and memorialize the 80th anniversary of the Okeechobee Hurricane of 1928 and its associated tragic loss of approximately 3,000 lives in the United States and its territories; and*

*(B) appropriately recognize mass graves of the victims of the Okeechobee Hurricane;*

*(6) urges the Federal government, and State and local governments, to—*

*(A) take appropriate actions to encourage hurricane and disaster preparedness, education, response, and mitigation; and*

*(B) support programs and initiatives that promote disaster preparedness, education, response, and mitigation especially in economically disadvantaged and migrant communities;*

*(7) commends the Army Corps of Engineers for its ongoing rehabilitation of the Herbert Hoover Dike and encourages continued collaboration among Federal, State, and local governments toward expeditious completion of the rehabilitation effort; and*

*(8) recommit itself to hurricane preparedness, safety education, response, and mitigation for all communities in the 110th Congress.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Maryland.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H. Res. 1376.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS).

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I thank my good friend and new Member, in one sense of the word, from Maryland for yielding time to me.

I also want to thank the chairwoman and ranking Republican of the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management, Representative ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON and SAM GRAVES. And I thank Chairman OBERSTAR for his continuing leadership as well.

Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to have introduced this resolution with many

of my colleagues from Florida. All of them, as well as the majority leader and his floor staff, were so helpful in getting this resolution to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution that commemorates last week's 80th anniversary of the Okeechobee hurricane of 1928. Numerous communities in the congressional district that I am privileged to serve last week remembered the destruction of the Okeechobee hurricane, also known as Hurricane San Felipe Segundo. The storm ravaged Florida, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, the Bahamas, and numerous islands of the Caribbean.

The resolution also pays tribute appropriately to the over 4,000 lives lost from this tragic storm. More than 3,000 were lost in the United States alone, the second largest death toll ever recorded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Floridians living near Lake Okeechobee in communities that I am now privileged to represent experienced a devastating loss of life when the hurricane led to extensive breaches of the levees surrounding the lake.

Of the more than 3,000 casualties in the continental United States, more than 75 percent were migrant workers near Lake Okeechobee who were overwhelmingly African American.

The lack of capacity to respond to the storm and racial overtones of the era led to extensive disparities in the treatment of victims of the hurricane. Many African Americans were buried in poorly or unmarked mass graves, including one site in West Palm Beach where over 670 unfortunate souls were laid to rest.

Similar graves for white victims of the tragedy were visibly memorialized, whereas many African American graves were forgotten and still not known and some not recognized until many years later.

Mr. Speaker, neglecting these darker moments of our history can overlook important lessons, as we saw with the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina, Gustav, and most recently, Ike. Beyond just recognizing the victims of the Okeechobee hurricane, their loss is a reminder of what can happen when there are injustices in disaster response and mitigation.

The potential for devastation due to failing infrastructure following disasters exists in many places throughout our Nation. That is why this resolution also places emphasis on hurricane preparedness and education.

It also commends the Army Corps of Engineers for the work that they are doing today to repair the Herbert Hoover Dike. The dike, which was built in the 1930s to protect the Lake Okeechobee communities that were flooded and destroyed by the Okeechobee hurricane, is in dire need of repairs. To date, Congress has appropriated well over \$100 million to repair the dike. Without continued help, these commu-

nities will be vulnerable to devastation from future storms.

I wish to add a footnote. I came here 15 years ago. And all of my colleagues from Louisiana on both sides of the aisle in the Senate and in the House were continuously arguing then about the levees in New Orleans, and I just shudder to think about the fact that we were tardy in responding to them.

The experience of the Okeechobee hurricane still touches the lives of so many of my constituents and people throughout Florida and the Caribbean.

One of them I wish to personally memorialize, Dave Larramore, who we referred to as Brother Larramore. One of his favorite expressions was "ain'tchaknow."

Brother Larramore was from the Bahamas and he was in Okeechobee when that storm occurred in 1928. He lost eight members of his family. He was holding on to his wife who was holding his child, and she dropped the child, and he grabbed the baby; and they were the only ones that came out of that storm.

He told that story often and stories of others. I take this opportunity to remember him with the kindness that this body offers to our people when they pass, no matter how long ago that it was.

The House's consideration of this resolution today is both appropriate and timely. I ask for my colleagues' support.

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Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, I submit my statement for the RECORD.

I rise today to support H. Res. 1376 as amended, to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Okeechobee Hurricane of 1928.

H. Res. 1376 as amended memorializes the loss of more than 3,000 lives in the United States and in the Caribbean as a result of Okeechobee Hurricane, also known as Hurricane San Felipe Segundo of 1928. This devastating storm formed in the Atlantic Ocean, traveled through the Caribbean Sea, and made landfall in Palm Beach County, Florida, on September 16, 1928.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, this was the second deadliest hurricane on record in United States history, exacting the loss of over 3,000 lives in the United States and its territories. Approximately 75 percent of the fatalities were African American. The extensive impact of this hurricane on African-American migrant workers in southern and central Florida was memorialized in the famous 1937 literary work of Zora Neale Hurston, "Their Eyes Were Watching God".

This resolution also recognizes the importance of hurricane preparedness measures, enhanced evacuation and emergency plans, and disaster response training especially in economically disadvantaged communities to prevent a disproportionate impact of natural disasters and disparities in disaster response. This year's hurricanes, including Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, continue to reinforce the importance of these activities.

The resolution also recognizes the role of relevant Federal agencies, research institutes,

universities, and disaster response organizations in providing intensity forecasting, long-range projections of hurricane activity, emergency management, and hurricane and storm damage reduction to better prepare for, respond to, and mitigate the extensive loss of life and devastating impacts of hurricanes and storms.

As a result of this and later hurricanes in the 1940s and 1950s, a series of larger dikes was built around the lake. The Herbert Hoover Dike was the culmination of large dike construction around Lake Okeechobee and was completed in the 1960s and consists of 143 miles of levees. Recent reviews of the Herbert Hoover Dike have indicated that the dike is in a deteriorating condition. The Army Corps of Engineers is presently undertaking a comprehensive rehabilitation of the dike to provide protection for citizens living in the area of Lake Okeechobee.

I urge my colleagues to join me in agreeing to the resolution.

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

I want to thank Mr. HASTINGS, the gentleman from Florida, and his Florida colleagues for bringing this resolution forward.

On September 16, 1928, one of the worst storms in Florida's history made landfall. While no reliable wind readings are available and the Saffire-Simpson hurricane scale had not been developed, there were reports of minimum pressures of 27.43 inches, making this the fourth strongest hurricane of record to hit the United States.

With wind speeds being recorded of up to 160 miles per hour, significant damages affected Caribbean nations, the United States, and its territories. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, this hurricane would have been a strong category four storm when it struck the United States coast.

The damage to property was immense, estimated at \$50 million in Puerto Rico and \$25 million in Florida, equating to almost \$35 billion when adjusted to today's dollars, making it the eighth most damaging hurricane in the Nation's history.

More importantly, this hurricane caused heavy casualties and catastrophic destruction along its path from the Leeward Islands to Florida. The worst tragedy occurred at inland Lake Okeechobee in Florida, where the hurricane caused a lake surge of six to nine feet that inundated the surrounding area. In some cases, the flood waters exceeded 12 feet, trees were uprooted, crops destroyed, homes torn from their foundations, and entire families drowned.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Hurricane Center, up to 3,000 died in the United States and its territories. Small towns south of the lake were wiped from the Earth in this hurricane. Only the storm at Galveston, Texas, in 1900 caused greater loss of life.

While hurricanes still assault America's coastline, the Nation is better

prepared today to respond to these types of events. Storm damage reduction projects, warning systems, and mitigation efforts have helped to reduce the catastrophic loss of life as was witnessed in 1928.

As we commemorate this tragic event of 80 years ago, let us also recognize that today's investments in hurricane and flood risk reduction projects save both lives and property.

There are many ways to reduce the risk of storm damage in low-lying coastal areas, some are structural, such as levees and flood gates; some are nonstructural, such as zoning, response planning, and insurance. All levels of government must use their abilities and their budgets to reduce hurricane and flood damage in the Nation.

I urge all Members to support the resolution. And again, I want to thank the gentleman from Florida for bringing this forward. Certainly, we need to remember events like this and prevent their occurrence in the future.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H. Res. 1376, to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Okeechobee Hurricane of 1928.

H. Res. 1376 memorializes the loss of more than 3,000 lives in the United States and its territories as a result of Hurricane Okeechobee in 1928. Furthermore, the resolution recognizes the importance of hurricane preparedness, mitigation, enhanced evacuation measures, emergency plans, and disaster response training for helping to prevent the tragic loss of life as a result of natural disasters. This resolution recognizes the important roles that the Federal Government, States, and local governments all play in planning, collaborating, preparing for, and mitigating loss in the event of a natural disaster.

Hurricane Okeechobee, also known as Hurricane San Felipe Segundo, had winds exceeding 160 miles per hours. This was the first recorded hurricane to achieve winds at levels which equate to a Category 5 on the modern Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale. The hurricane made its way through the Caribbean Sea, landing in Palm Beach County, Florida, and then making its way up the East Coast from September 10–20, 1928, and then travelled all the way to Ontario, Canada. The storm surge on Lake Okeechobee overwhelmed the low dike around the lake, flooding hundred of acres and killing thousands of people.

As a result of the Okeechobee Hurricane and later hurricanes in the 1940s and 1950s, a series of larger dikes was built around the lake. The Herbert Hoover Dike was the culmination of large dike construction around Lake Okeechobee and was completed in the 1960s. Recent reviews of the Herbert Hoover Dike have indicated the dike is in a deteriorating condition. The Army Corps of Engineers is presently undertaking a comprehensive rehabilitation of the Dike to provide protection for citizens living in the area of Lake Okeechobee.

I urge my colleagues to join me in agreeing to the resolution.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1376, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH AND OTHER CARE IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2008

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 2162) to improve the treatment and services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs to veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and substance use disorders, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 2162

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

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Veterans’ Mental Health and Other Care Improvements Act of 2008”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.  
Sec. 2. References to title 38, United States Code.

#### TITLE I—SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Sec. 101. Tribute to Justin Bailey.  
Sec. 102. Findings on substance use disorders and mental health.  
Sec. 103. Expansion of substance use disorder treatment services provided by Department of Veterans Affairs.  
Sec. 104. Care for veterans with mental health and substance use disorders.  
Sec. 105. Pilot program for Internet-based substance use disorder treatment for veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.  
Sec. 106. Report on residential mental health care facilities of the Veterans Health Administration.  
Sec. 107. Pilot program on peer outreach and support for veterans and use of community mental health centers and Indian Health Service facilities.

#### TITLE II—MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH

Sec. 201. Research program on comorbid post-traumatic stress disorder and substance use disorders.  
Sec. 202. Extension of authorization for Special Committee on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

#### TITLE III—ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILIES OF VETERANS

Sec. 301. Clarification of authority of Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide mental health services to families of veterans.

Sec. 302. Pilot program on provision of readjustment and transition assistance to veterans and their families in cooperation with Vet Centers.

#### TITLE IV—HEALTH CARE MATTERS

Sec. 401. Veterans beneficiary travel program.  
Sec. 402. Mandatory reimbursement of veterans receiving emergency treatment in non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities until transfer to Department facilities.  
Sec. 403. Pilot program of enhanced contract care authority for health care needs of veterans in highly rural areas.  
Sec. 404. Epilepsy centers of excellence.  
Sec. 405. Establishment of qualifications for peer specialist appointees.  
Sec. 406. Establishment of consolidated patient accounting centers.  
Sec. 407. Repeal of limitation on authority to conduct widespread HIV testing program.  
Sec. 408. Provision of comprehensive health care by Secretary of Veterans Affairs to children of Vietnam veterans born with Spina Bifida.  
Sec. 409. Exemption from copayment requirement for veterans receiving hospice care.

#### TITLE V—PAIN CARE

Sec. 501. Comprehensive policy on pain management.

#### TITLE VI—HOMELESS VETERANS MATTERS

Sec. 601. Increased authorization of appropriations for comprehensive service programs.  
Sec. 602. Expansion and extension of authority for program of referral and counseling services for at-risk veterans transitioning from certain institutions.  
Sec. 603. Permanent authority for domiciliary services for homeless veterans and enhancement of capacity of domiciliary care programs for female veterans.  
Sec. 604. Financial assistance for supportive services for very low-income veteran families in permanent housing.

#### TITLE VII—AUTHORIZATION OF MEDICAL FACILITY PROJECTS AND MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY LEASES

Sec. 701. Authorization for fiscal year 2009 major medical facility projects.  
Sec. 702. Modification of authorization amounts for certain major medical facility construction projects previously authorized.  
Sec. 703. Authorization of fiscal year 2009 major medical facility leases.  
Sec. 704. Authorization of appropriations.  
Sec. 705. Increase in threshold for major medical facility leases requiring Congressional approval.  
Sec. 706. Conveyance of certain non-Federal land by City of Aurora, Colorado, to Secretary of Veterans Affairs for construction of veterans medical facility.  
Sec. 707. Report on facilities administration.  
Sec. 708. Annual report on outpatient clinics.  
Sec. 709. Name of Department of Veterans Affairs spinal cord injury center, Tampa, Florida.