

Today we take up the Senior Professional Performance Act of 2008. It's a commonsense reform, and I'm pleased to support it, and so are other members of the committee.

The purpose of this bill is to align the pay system for certain Federal employees with that of the Senior Executive Servicemembers—those who provide the executive management of the Federal Government.

The employees covered by this bill—senior professionals classified as scientific and professional personnel (ST) and senior-level personnel (SL)—are recognized as providing essential specialized skills needed to address the Federal Government's imminent challenges.

The ST employee is a specially qualified, non-executive who conducts research and development functions in the physical, biological, medical, or engineering sciences, or a closely related field.

The SL employee is a high-level non-executive who is not involved in fundamental research and development—like a high-level special assistant or a senior attorney in a highly specialized field. The Senior Executives Association, whose members include SL and ST employees, have asked for this pay comparability, as has the Office of Personnel Management.

I intend to support this legislation. I believe other Members on our committee do as well, and we urge our colleagues to do so as well.

I reserve my time.

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, does the gentleman from Connecticut have additional speakers?

Mr. SHAYS. Madam Speaker, I don't have any additional speakers.

I would just like to say this is an essential bill to make sure that we are getting the kind of employees in our government who can do the kinds of jobs that we need to do. They need to be properly reimbursed, and I thank the gentleman.

I yield back.

Mr. TOWNS. Let me just say that to the critics, this might not be a total solution, but I say to you that it is a giant step in the right direction. I'm happy that my colleague from Connecticut, who also agrees with this, and others who have worked very hard to bring us to where we are today, I would like to salute our staff who worked very hard as well, and to say that, yes, it might not be a total solution, but it is a step in the right direction, a giant step, and that we should move as quickly as possible to make certain that this becomes law by passing it out of this House today.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 1046.

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. SHAYS. Madam 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.

#### BULLETPROOF VEST PARTNERSHIP GRANT ACT OF 2008

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6045) to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to extend the authorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program through fiscal year 2012.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6045

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

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act of 2008".

#### SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR BULLETPROOF VEST PARTNERSHIP GRANT PROGRAM.

Section 1001(a)(23) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3793(a)(23)) is amended by striking "2009" and inserting "2012".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) and the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

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

Members of the House, I rise to commend the gentleman from Indiana, PETER VISCLOSKEY, for helping us provide more bulletproof vests to policemen. It's kind of amazing that we need to pass a law to get more bulletproof vests for policemen.

More than 800,000 police officers put their lives at risk daily to protect our community. Many of them are protected by bullet-resistant armor, but an alarming number of officers are not afforded this protection because of local budget constraints. So this bill created by the gentleman from Indiana tries to take care of this problem.

The Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program was established back in

1998 to assist State and local law enforcement agencies in securing protective equipment necessary to safeguard the lives of officers. And the program administered by the Department of Justice provides up to half of the matching grants—50 percent of the matching grants for the purchase of protective vests. Since then, the program has enabled thousands of jurisdictions across our Nation to purchase more than 1.5 million such vests.

It's estimated 3,000 law enforcement officers have survived shootings in part due to their bulletproof vest. In recognition of its vital role in the protection of these officers, the Bulletproof Vest Program has been extended, and it's set to expire at the end of fiscal year 2009 unless we extend it again.

Here we reauthorize the program for an additional 3 years so that to help more of our law enforcement officers, and I doubt if there's a Member in this House that isn't in full support of this measure.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

On Tuesday, the life of an Alexandria, Virginia, police officer was spared because he was wearing a bulletproof vest when he was shot in the chest. The officer was shot during a traffic stop on Interstate 395 just outside of Washington, DC, by a man who later took his own life. Fortunately, the officer is expected to make a full recovery.

There are more than 900,000 State and local law enforcement officers who risk their lives every day to keep our community safe, yet we often lose sight of how quickly something as routine as a traffic stop can turn deadly for a police officer. Each year approximately 16,000 State and local officers are injured in the line of duty. In 2007, for instance, 55 police officers were killed by firearms in the line of duty.

Thankfully, many police officers and sheriff's deputies are saved each year by bulletproof vests. The Bulletproof Vest Partnership was created by the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act of 1998 as a Department of Justice program to provide funding for bulletproof vests and other body armor to State and local law enforcement.

□ 1115

Since 1999, 40,000 State and local governments have participated in the Bulletproof Vest Program. The program, administered by the Office of Justice Programs, has awarded Federal grants to support the purchase of an estimated 1.5 million vests, including over 800 vests to law enforcement agencies in my home State of Utah, making my police and many police around the country safer.

H.R. 6045 reauthorizes the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program through fiscal year 2012. This legislation enjoys broad bipartisan support and endorsements from a number of law enforcement organizations, including the Fraternal Order of Police.

It is important that we reauthorize this simple and effective program to protect our men and women in law enforcement. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. VISCLOSKY) as much time as he may consume.

Mr. VISCLOSKY. I appreciate the chairman yielding very much.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 6045, the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act of 2008. I am a very proud sponsor of this legislation.

At the outset, I want to express my heartfelt gratification and thanks to my friend, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LOBIONDO) for his lead in cosponsorship of H.R. 6045. Mr. LOBIONDO and I have been partners in this endeavor since 1997.

I would also like to thank the Committee on the Judiciary chairman, Mr. CONYERS, as well as Mr. CANNON, Ranking Member LAMAR SMITH, chairman of the subcommittee BOBBY SCOTT, and subcommittee Ranking Member LOUIE GOHMERT for their strong support and efforts on behalf of this important legislation.

Finally, I would like to thank the 170 bipartisan cosponsors of this measure and the law enforcement organizations that have expressed their strong support.

If I could take a step back, the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act was introduced in November 1997 after meeting with Northwest Indiana chiefs of police and hearing that many gang members and drug dealers had the protection of bulletproof vests, while many police officers did not. I was even more troubled to learn the reason why so many officers do not have access to bulletproof vests. It was because they are prohibitively expensive. A good vest can cost in excess of \$500. Many small departments, as well as larger ones, simply cannot afford to purchase vests for all of their officers, a fact that sometimes forces officers to purchase their own.

Our original legislation was signed into law by President Clinton in June of 1998, and as you know, the purpose of the act is to protect the lives of law enforcement officers by helping State and local government equip them with bulletproof vests. Bulletproof vests and body armor have saved thousands of lives since the introduction of the modern material; however, they cannot protect the lives of those who do not have access to them.

The Fraternal Order of Police have stated that "body armor is one of the most important pieces of equipment an officer can have and often mean the difference between life and death."

The grant program has directly benefited every State and territory of the United States, and this critical program provides State and local and tribal law enforcement officers with need-

ed protection by aiding the purchase of protective equipment.

In closing, I again want to thank my good friend Mr. LOBIONDO for his strong leadership and work on this measure over the years and the police officers who risk their lives for us every day, all of us. They are the mothers and fathers, and they are the sons and daughters. It is our obligation to the officers and their families to give them access to the equipment that will safeguard their life.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues for their strong support of this measure.

Mr. CANNON. Madam Speaker, I yield for so much time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LOBIONDO).

Mr. LOBIONDO. Madam Speaker, to my colleague Mr. CANNON, thank you very much.

I would also like to particularly thank Mr. VISCLOSKY. In 1997 when we first started talking about this, there was a dramatic and very sad incident that took place in my district, the Second Congressional District of New Jersey, and I believe that Mr. VISCLOSKY had a similar situation in his district.

Through the 1990s, a variety of groups had been sort of cobbling together the ability to buy vests for officers by selling doughnuts and for cake sales and a number of different ways because they understood the need, but there wasn't a resource to be able to do this. Unfortunately, in 1996, at a State prison in my district, Officer Fred Baker, a corrections officer who was on duty, who was not wearing a vest, was stabbed in the back by an inmate and that stab was fatal.

We can only speculate what the fate would have been of Officer Baker if he had a vest on. I happen to believe that he would be alive today. And when I got back from that break at home, I got together with Mr. VISCLOSKY, and we embarked upon this road to convince our colleagues of the importance of this program.

You've heard the statistics, 40,000 jurisdictions, 1.5 million vests, and people ask, Well, why is it important to keep doing this? Once you've done a vest, why isn't that enough? Well, they have a shelf life. When you put a vest to an officer, it doesn't last forever. The technology increases and they wear out.

This is a critically important program. At a time when all of America wonders whether what's happening in Washington really works on Main Street and in the real world, this is a program that we can point to with absolute certainty that has conclusive, positive benefit. It saves the lives of our police officers.

This is something that works. This is something that Main Street understands. This is something that law enforcement understands, and this is one of those programs where we can do the right thing and continue it.

When an officer is sworn in and receives their badge and their gun, they

should be receiving a vest. All across America people get up every morning and don't expect to have a problem, but if that problem occurs and they need that thin blue line, they expect our law enforcement to respond as quickly as they can, and part of that response for law enforcement ought to be the protection that a vest provides. It's the least that we can do.

I strongly support this bill. I thank Mr. VISCLOSKY, I thank Mr. CONYERS, I thank Mr. SMITH of Texas, and all those who are responsible for having this move to the floor today.

Mr. CONYERS. We yield back our time.

Mr. CANNON of Utah. Madam Speaker, I wanted to just thank Mr. VISCLOSKY and also Mr. LOBIONDO who suffered tragic losses and resulted in very important protection for my police and police around the country.

Ms. LORETTA T. SANCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6045, the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act of 2008.

Bulletproof vests and body armor have saved thousands of law enforcement officers since the introduction and improvement of bulletproof material.

The Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program provides our brave law enforcement officers with the vital equipment they need to save lives in the line of fire.

This grant program was created in 1999 by the Department of Justice to provide protection to state, local and tribal law enforcement officers by assisting officers in purchasing the protective equipment they need.

Since its inception, the grant program has purchased more than 1.5 million bulletproof vests for over 40,000 jurisdictions in the United States. In 2007 alone, the program provided \$28.6 million to state and local law enforcement agencies across America and purchased over 180,000 new bulletproof vests.

In my district, this grant program has awarded more than \$45,000 to law enforcement officials in the cities of Anaheim and Santa Ana. As a result, these cities were able to purchase more than 400 vests for their officers.

I am pleased that the House of Representatives is acting to reauthorize the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program for another three years.

Brave law enforcement officers risk their lives on a daily basis to protect our communities, and this grant program ensures that their communities can help protect them.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6045.

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. CANNON. Madam 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.

### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 34 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

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### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDEN) at 12 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m.

### EXPRESSING SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD GRANT A POSTHUMOUS PARDON TO JOHN ARTHUR "JACK" JOHNSON

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 214) expressing the sense of Congress that the President should grant a posthumous pardon to John Arthur "Jack" Johnson for the 1913 racially motivated conviction of Johnson, which diminished his athletic, cultural, and historic significance, and tarnished his reputation.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

#### H. CON. RES. 214

Whereas John Arthur "Jack" Johnson was a flamboyant, defiant, and controversial figure in American history who challenged racial biases;

Whereas Jack Johnson was born in Galveston, Texas, in 1878 to parents who were former slaves;

Whereas Jack Johnson was a professional boxer who traveled throughout the United States and the world, fighting both Black and White heavyweight boxers;

Whereas in 1908, after being denied the opportunity to fight two White boxing champions on purely racial grounds, Jack Johnson was granted an opportunity by an Australian promoter to fight Tommy Burns, the reigning world heavyweight champion;

Whereas Jack Johnson defeated Burns to become the first African American to hold the title of world heavyweight champion;

Whereas the victory of Jack Johnson over Burns prompted the search for a White boxer who could beat him, a recruitment effort dubbed the search for the "Great White Hope";

Whereas in Reno, Nevada, in 1910, in what was referred to by many as the "Battle of the Century", a White former heavyweight champion named James "Jim" Jeffries came back from retirement to fight, and lose to, Jack Johnson;

Whereas the defeat of Jeffries by Jack Johnson sparked rioting and aggression toward African Americans and led to racially

motivated murders of African Americans nationwide;

Whereas the resentment felt toward Jack Johnson by many Whites was compounded by his relationships with White women;

Whereas between 1901 and 1910, 754 African Americans were lynched, some simply for being "too familiar" with White women;

Whereas in 1910, Congress passed the White-slave traffic Act (commonly known as the "Mann Act"), which outlawed the transportation of women in interstate or foreign commerce "for the purpose of prostitution or debauchery, or for any other immoral purpose";

Whereas in October 1912, Jack Johnson became involved with a White woman, Lucille Cameron, whose mother disapproved of the relationship, claimed that Johnson had abducted her daughter, and sought action from the Department of Justice;

Whereas Jack Johnson was arrested by United States marshals on October 18, 1912, for transporting Lucille Cameron across State lines for an "immoral purpose" in violation of the Mann Act, but Cameron refused to cooperate with authorities, the charges were dropped, and Cameron later married the champion;

Whereas Federal authorities continued to pursue Jack Johnson and summoned Belle Schreiber, a White woman, to testify that Johnson had transported her across State lines for the purposes of "prostitution and debauchery";

Whereas in 1913, Jack Johnson was convicted of violating the Mann Act and was sentenced to 1 year and 1 day in Federal prison, but fled the country to Canada and then to various European and South American countries;

Whereas Jack Johnson lost the heavyweight championship title to Jess Willard in Cuba in 1915;

Whereas Jack Johnson returned to the United States in July 1920, surrendered to the authorities, and served nearly 1 year in the United States Penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas;

Whereas Jack Johnson fought boxing matches after his release from prison, but never regained the heavyweight championship title;

Whereas Jack Johnson supported this Nation during World War II by encouraging citizens to buy war bonds and by participating in exhibition boxing matches to promote the sale of war bonds;

Whereas Jack Johnson died in an automobile accident in 1946; and

Whereas in 1954, Jack Johnson was inducted into the Boxing Hall of Fame; Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that—*

(1) John Arthur "Jack" Johnson paved the way for African American athletes to participate and succeed in racially integrated professional sports in the United States;

(2) Jack Johnson was wronged by a racially motivated conviction prompted by his success in the boxing ring and his relationships with White women;

(3) the criminal conviction of Jack Johnson unjustly ruined his career and destroyed his reputation; and

(4) the President should grant a posthumous pardon to Jack Johnson to expunge from the annals of American criminal justice a racially motivated abuse of the prosecutorial authority of the Federal Government, and to recognize Jack Johnson's athletic and cultural contributions to society.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ZOE LOFGREN) and the

gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of this resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the President should grant a posthumous pardon to John Arthur "Jack" Johnson for the 1913 racially motivated conviction of Mr. Johnson, which diminished his athletic, cultural and historic significance and tarnished his reputation.

More importantly, Mr. Speaker, adoption of this resolution and granting of this posthumous pardon by the President would remove a nearly century-old stain from the reputation of this Nation. Although the harm inflicted on Mr. Johnson can never be undone, it is nevertheless important that we set the record straight and acknowledge that he was wrongfully convicted in a disgraceful climate of racial hatred.

John Arthur "Jack" Johnson was a flamboyant, defiant and controversial figure in American history who challenged racial biases. The son of former slaves, Jack Johnson was a professional boxer who traveled throughout the United States and the world, fighting both black and white heavyweight boxers. He was without question one of the greatest boxers this Nation has ever produced.

The resentment felt towards Mr. Johnson by many whites was not limited to his successes in the ring. It was compounded by his relationship with white women, an issue which aroused not just anger, but brutal violence. Between 1901 and 1910, 754 African Americans were lynched, some simply for being perceived as "too familiar" with white women.

In 1912, Jack Johnson was arrested by United States marshals and charged with transporting his future wife, Lucille Cameron, across State lines for an "immoral purpose" in violation of the Mann Act. Ms. Cameron refused to cooperate with the authorities, the charges were dropped, and she later married the champion.

Federal authorities continued to pursue Jack Johnson and subsequently sought to prosecute him based on charges of "prostitution and debauchery." This time they were able to obtain a conviction, and Mr. Johnson was forced to flee the country.

He returned to the United States in July 1920, surrendered to the authorities, and served nearly 1 year in the