

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 445, 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.

HONORING THE 81ST BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM OF THE WASHINGTON ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 627) honoring the citizen-soldiers of the National Guard of the State of Washington, including the 81st Brigade Combat Team (Heavy) of the Washington Army National Guard, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 627

Whereas the members of the Army National Guard and Air National Guard of the State of Washington reside throughout the State and come from various communities, backgrounds, and professions;

Whereas units and members of the Washington National Guard have been deployed, and are continuously being deployed, in support of United States military operations at home and overseas in Iraq, Afghanistan, and dozens of other countries;

Whereas one such unit, the 81st Brigade Combat Team (Heavy) of the Washington Army National Guard, is composed of approximately 2,478 citizen-soldiers from throughout the State of Washington, 843 soldiers from the California Army National Guard, 80 soldiers from the Texas Army National Guard, 38 soldiers from the Indiana Army National Guard, 23 soldiers from the Arkansas Army National Guard, 20 soldiers from the United States Army Reserve, 13 soldiers from the Montana Army National Guard, 2 soldiers from the Kentucky Army National Guard, 2 soldiers from the Maryland Army National Guard, and 1 soldier from each of the Alabama Army National Guard, New Mexico Army National Guard, Virgin Island Army National Guard, Wisconsin Army National Guard, Hawaii Army National Guard, New York Army National Guard, Utah Army National Guard, Minnesota Army National Guard, Massachusetts Army National Guard, Illinois Army National Guard, and Michigan Army National Guard;

Whereas the 81st Brigade Combat Team was placed on Federal active duty for a second overseas mobilization on August 18, 2008, and deployed to Iraq in October 2008;

Whereas, during the deployment of the 81st Brigade Combat Team in Iraq, the brigade was primarily engaged in convoy security, force protection, provincial reconstruction, and base operations missions; and

Whereas the 81st Brigade Combat Team returned to the United States and demobilized in August 2009, upon completion of one year

of service in support of military operations in Iraq: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its gratitude to the members of the Army National Guard and Air National Guard of the State of Washington and their families for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States;

(2) commends the members of the 81st Brigade Combat Team (Heavy) from the Washington Army National Guard, the Army Reserve, and the other State National Guards specified in the preamble on the completion of their most-recent deployment in Iraq; and

(3) recognizes the achievements of the members of the 81st Brigade Combat Team, and all other formerly and presently deployed Washington Army and Air National Guard units and members, for their exemplary service.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of Washington. 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 gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

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Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I rise today to pay tribute to the men and women of the Washington National Guard, including the members of the 81st Brigade Combat Team, who recently returned from an overseas deployment in Iraq.

I want to thank the entire Washington State delegation, who have all cosponsored this resolution in honoring this unit for their service to our State and to our country.

Throughout the Nation, hundreds of thousands of men and women in the Guard and Reserves serve our country. Over the last 8 years, we have asked more of them than anybody could have possibly imagined, and every single time, they have answered that call at great personal sacrifice. These are men and women who have lives, they have other jobs, they have families, and it is highly unpredictable when they are going to be called up and asked to serve, and yet they always respond.

It is critical to the safety and security of our country that they do this. They do it with great courage and dedication, and they honor our country by their service.

In my home State, various elements of the Washington National Guard have been deployed over that time period overseas in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also we must remember that the Guard and Reserves serve us here at home as well. We have had numerous emer-

gencies in the State of Washington during that time period on which the Guard and Reserves have helped us out. As well, we have had them deployed across the country in places like Louisiana. When Hurricane Katrina hit, they were called upon to do that. Their service continues for all of us in the State and across the country.

Most recently, the 81st Brigade Combat Team, led by Colonel Ronald Kapral and Command Sergeant Major Robert Sweeney, just completed their second 12-month deployment to Iraq. The brigade primarily engaged in convoy security, force protection, provincial reconstruction, and base operations missions around Iraq during their yearlong deployment.

They made our State proud during this service, as they have during all of their previous deployments. Again, this is done at no small sacrifice both by the individual members of our Army National Guard and also by their families, who have to deal with the disruption.

One of the most important things we can do in our State and across the country is to always support the families when the men and women are deployed, and to let them know that they are not alone in their service.

Their deployment was highly successful, honored by all who watched them serve. Tragically, one member of the team died during the course of his service. Specialist Samuel Stone, of Port Orchard, was killed on May 30, 2009. We all honor his loss and his service, and I ask that we keep him and his family in our thoughts and prayers.

The National Guard serves our State and our country in ways that most of us are unaware of, but it is absolutely critical to the security of our country. With our all-volunteer force, it simply could not function without men and women who are willing to take on this dual responsibility to continue in their civilian lives and who are also making themselves available for service whenever they are called, and they do not know when that is going to be.

As I said, it can be from the Governor in the State or across our country, or as has happened most recently, overseas deployments can come up when they are asked by our Federal Government to serve our Nation. Yet they are always ready, and they always respond, and they have served our Nation in a way that should make us all proud.

We literally could not have the national security we have in this country without their willingness to serve, and I thank the 81st Brigade Combat Team for their service on this most recent deployment, and I thank all those in the Washington National Guard who have served and who, today, stand ready to continue to serve. We honor their service. We thank them.

Again, I want to thank my colleagues in the Washington State delegation for unanimously signing onto this resolution honoring their service.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHUSTER. I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support and as a cosponsor of House Resolution 627, which does recognize the service and sacrifices of members of the 81st Brigade Combat Team, Washington Army National Guard, during the unit's recent tour of duty in Iraq.

I want to commend Representative SMITH for putting forth this legislation. The 81st Brigade came home in August, having successfully completed its second overseas rotation. While in Iraq, its men and women performed admirably in a range of missions that included convoy security, force protection, provincial reconstruction, and base operations support.

The 3,500 remarkable men and women who comprised the brigade combat team came not only from the Washington State Army National Guard but from around the country, which is so typical of our Guard units today. That so many citizen soldiers came from so many different locations and different walks of life and operated so successfully is a tribute not only to the patriotism and to the commitment of those men and women but also to their professionalism, adaptability and leadership.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution that expresses the House's gratitude to the 81st Brigade Combat Team for their service to our Nation. It commends them upon the completion of their most recent deployment, and it recognizes their achievements.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD).

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and, most importantly, in strong support of the men and women of the 81st Brigade and of our entire National Guard, not only in Washington State but across the Nation.

These brave men and women have served our country multiple times, as my colleagues have said, not just in times of war but in times of peace. We have had catastrophic flooding in my district a number of times, and the National Guard has always been there to respond to that call. It has been my great privilege to join our National Guard during their training in Yakima, during deployment ceremonies here Stateside, at Camp McCoy, then again in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and back home.

I will tell you, as we all know, they make us proud every single day. They are truly the finest that America has to offer, and it is their example of courage, professionalism, integrity, and compassion more than anything else, in addition to their combat and civilian skills, which help them successfully complete their mission at home.

I want to particularly congratulate General Timothy Lowenberg, who has

been an outstanding leader of the Guard, again during both war and peacetime; Colonel Sabatini, whom I met with this last week on a homecoming visit with the troops; and Daniel Kern, who served in Afghanistan while many of the other Guardsmen were in Iraq.

Particularly, I want to thank the families. As Congressman SMITH mentioned, the families serve as well. While their loved ones are overseas and are in harm's way, it is the families back home—the moms and dads, the brothers and sisters, and the children—who keep the home fires burning, and we must not forget them.

In knowing the fact that our unit is back home, we must keep in our hearts all those who are still deployed and who have been deployed.

I also want to mention the employers. Employer support of the Guard and Reserves is an incredibly important organization. They make sure that, when our men and women are deployed overseas, they have a chance to come home and resume their employment. Also, there are the educators who are helping people. There are our community colleges and universities and our vocational and technical education schools, which are helping retrain our soldiers when they come home.

Most importantly, I think it's essential that we acknowledge that Iraq is a better place because of the service of these men and women. Afghanistan is a better place. Our country is a better place, and we are grateful, and we cannot express in words our profound respect and gratitude.

I thank the gentleman for introducing the resolution.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume just to offer closing remarks.

I want to thank Congressman BAIRD for his very well-expressed remarks and Congressman SHUSTER for his support as well. I urge us to support this resolution honoring the 81st Brigade Combat Team for their service in Iraq. I think we also need to remember, as we go forward in a number of policy areas, the support that we need to show for the Guard and Reserves and for their families, whether we're talking about dealing with their retirement issues, with the GI Bill, as Congressman BAIRD mentioned, with the ability to retrain and to give more service to the men and women who serve in the Guard and Reserves—anything we can do to support them and make it easier and more possible for them to continue to serve and, as Brian mentioned, to make sure that their employers continue to employ them and to work with them.

We need to do this in this House as we work not just on these resolutions but on the legislation that offers the support that is so critical to the men and women who serve in the Guard and Reserves and to their families.

With that, I urge passage.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my strong support for H. Res. 627, legis-

lation I co-sponsored honoring the citizen soldiers of the National Guard of the State of Washington, including the 81st Brigade Combat Team of the Washington Army National Guard.

The National Guard plays a vital role in the defense of our communities and country. When we need them, they are always there, whether it be responding to a natural disaster at home or deploying to a combat zone overseas. The men and women of the Washington National Guard are our friends and neighbors, and their dedication and patriotism make us all very proud every time they put on the uniform.

More than 11,000 Washington State citizen soldiers have answered the call to duty since 9/11, including the 81st Brigade Combat Team that recently returned home from a mission in Iraq. Tragically, Specialist Samuel Stone, of Port Orchard, Washington, was killed during the deployment.

Outside my office in the Longworth House Office Building I have placed pictures of all the soldiers from the State of Washington who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan. Every day, visitors coming to or passing by the 7th Congressional District Office stop and look at the faces of the fallen. In so doing, we honor those who have died in service to their country and consider the consequences of sending soldiers off to war.

We are proud of the men and women of the Washington National Guard who willingly place themselves in harm's way to protect our lives, property and country. They deserve public recognition and our heartfelt thanks. I think of H. Res. 627 as a medal awarded to every citizen soldier for service above and beyond the call of duty. Thank you on behalf of a grateful State and Nation.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 627, a resolution honoring Washington's National Guard, and specifically the members of the 81st Brigade Combat Team. The brave men and women of the Army National Guard who make up the members of the 81st Brigade recently returned to Washington after a one-year deployment to Iraq where they served with honor, valor and distinction.

The 81st Heavy Brigade Combat Team is headquartered in Seattle, and is comprised of units from all over our state filling its ranks. Deploying to Iraq in August of 2008, this Brigade spent the next year in support of the mission of Operation Iraqi Freedom and our efforts to protect America and promote freedom and security in the Middle East. During their time in Iraq, the members of the Brigade were most frequently tasked with convoy security, force protection, provincial reconstruction and base operations.

Many members of the 81st Brigade live in Central Washington, with units headquartered in Pasco, Yakima and Moses Lake within my district. These soldiers are also members of our local communities. They are husbands and wives, small business owners, lawyers, and farmers. Not only do they fight to protect our freedoms overseas, but they also work every day for a brighter future back home.

The deployment of combat troops does not just affect those serving in Iraq, however. I must also recognize the support and sacrifice of the families of these brave soldiers. The patient and steadfast support of all the wives, husbands, mothers, fathers and children should be applauded; I send my thanks to each and every one of them today.

Our community and the entire nation are proud of these brave men and women, and we are glad to see them home safely. Soldier-citizens who voluntarily make such a tremendous sacrifice are what have kept our nation safe, free and strong for over 200 years. The work performed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom is important—requiring personal commitment and sacrifice. Your service to our country will not be forgotten.

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the return home of the 81st Brigade.

In August 2008, it was a cloudy day in Eastern Washington when our community said goodbye to the men and women serving in the 81st Brigade. These citizen soldiers volunteered to serve a year in Iraq. The day they departed, we all had tears in our eyes. However, I also saw in every mother, father, wife, husband, and friend how proud they were of their soldier. I am grateful for the uncommon commitment as a "citizen soldier" leaving not only family and friends, but putting your job and perhaps educational goals on hold.

I also want to applaud the families of the 81st Brigade. More often than not, as soon as a servicemember deploys, the spouse is faced with an unforeseen obstacle like their brand new car needing to go back to the shop or the refrigerator deciding not to work. The families of the 81st Brigade have much catching up to do. They will have a Thanksgiving to celebrate, Christmas presents to open, birthday candles to blow out, Easter eggs to hunt and many, many kisses and hugs to share.

The operations we face in Iraq and Afghanistan have now lasted longer than World War II. In the last five years our nation has tasked every branch of the military and every component; active duty, National Guard and Reserve. Each has responded admirably and consistently. Our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines are a vital part of that critical response in keeping America safe. We could not protect our nation if it were not for what each of them bring to the fight.

Mr. Speaker, the 81st Brigade recently returned on a sunny day back to Washington State. I am proud to welcome them home and congratulate them on a job well done.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 627, 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.

MOURNING THE LOSS OF LIFE ON AMERICAN SAMOA AND SAMOA AFTER THE EARTHQUAKES AND TSUNAMIS ON SEPTEMBER 29, 2009

Mr. FALEOMAVEGA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 816) mourning the loss of life caused by the earthquakes and tsunamis that occurred on September 29, 2009, in American Samoa and Samoa, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 816

Whereas, on September 29, 2009, at 1748 UTC, a powerful earthquake struck below the ocean about 140 miles southwest of Pago Pago, American Samoa, and 125 miles south of Samoa, centered only 11 miles below the seabed;

Whereas the earthquake registered 8.3 on the Richter scale and is recognized as the world's largest earthquake of 2009;

Whereas a second earthquake with a magnitude of 5.6 occurred at 1808 UTC in the vicinity of the first one;

Whereas the first undersea earthquake created a massive tsunami that crashed into American Samoa, Samoa, and neighboring Tonga, sweeping cars and people out to sea as survivors fled to high ground;

Whereas the tsunami, with towering waves that reached up to 20 feet in height and penetrated one mile inland, caused death and destruction on a nearly unprecedented scale;

Whereas the death toll, as of October 7, 2009, is estimated at 32 in American Samoa and 135 in the Independent State of Samoa;

Whereas many individuals and families affected in this region are now lacking basic survival necessities and there remains the risk of numerous additional deaths due to shortages of clean water, adequate shelter, food, sanitation, and basic healthcare;

Whereas the human cost of this disaster transcends mere statistics and has resulted in deeply personal tragedies for numerous families and communities in the region and throughout the world;

Whereas children in the United States Territory of American Samoa running for home unknowingly ran in the direction of the tsunami;

Whereas the villages of Fagamalo, Poloa, Amanave, Fai'ololo, Nua, Se'etaga, Afao, Asili, Amaluia, Leone, Fagasa, Fagatogo, Pago Pago, Aua, Afono, Vatia, Masefau, Faga'itua, Pagai, Utusia, Alofau, Auto, Alao, and Tula in American Samoa were devastated by the disaster;

Whereas in response to this disaster and call for assistance, the people of the United States have responded with a generous and heartfelt outpouring of aid;

Whereas a team of more than 300 responders from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the American Red Cross, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and other Federal agencies is on the ground in American Samoa coordinating relief and recovery operations;

Whereas the United States Navy (USN), the United States Coast Guard (USCG), the Hawaii Air National Guard, and the U.S. Army Reserve American Samoa, under the leadership of Admiral Timothy J. Keating, Commander, U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM), and Command Sergeant Major (CSM) Iuniasolua T. Savusa, Senior Enlisted Leader, PACOM, with the support of Major General Robert G.F. Lee, the Adjutant General, State of Hawaii, provided critical transport of the life-saving and life-sustaining supplies and equipment to meet the immediate needs of the survivors, including more than 26,000 meals, 14,000 liters of water, 1,800 blankets, 800 tents, more than 800 cots, and 9 pallets of medical supplies and medical equipment in support of American Samoa's mass care operations;

Whereas foreign governments, including Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea, Palau, Thailand, Samoa, Fiji, Grenada, Hungary, Uzbekistan, Republic of China (Taiwan), Indonesia,

Nauru, Australia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Japan, Pacific Islands Forum members, and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) sent messages of support and offers of aid to the people of American Samoa;

Whereas organizations including the Li Ka Shing Foundation, the Hanwha Group, Save the Children, the American Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, Latter-day Saint Charities, Catholic Charities, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, StarKist, Bumble Bee, the National Football League (NFL), and many others are providing assistance;

Whereas the Samoan community in areas such as California, Utah, Washington, and Hawaii have been instrumental in helping their "aiga" abroad;

Whereas President Barack H. Obama telephoned the Governor of American Samoa and American Samoa's Delegate to the United States House of Representatives to personally extend his and the First Lady's condolences to the families and loved ones of those who lost their lives in the earthquake and tsunami in American Samoa and the region, and to assure the Governor and the Delegate that he would speed the deployment of resources and provide the tools necessary for a full, swift, and aggressive response;

Whereas Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton also telephoned American Samoa's Delegate in his capacity as Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs' Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment to convey her sympathy and offer her full support which subsequently included the authorization to airlift emergency supplies to Samoa;

Whereas Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi issued a press statement on behalf of the entire Congress promising to quickly address the needs of American Samoa and the Americans who live there; and

Whereas Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, House Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer, Chairman John F. Kerry of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Chairman Howard L. Berman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Chairman Nick J. Rahall, II, of the House Committee on Natural Resources, as well as many other Members of Congress also offered expressions of support in the aftermath of the devastating tsunami: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) mourns the loss of life caused by the earthquakes and tsunamis that occurred on September 29, 2009, in American Samoa, Samoa, and Tonga;

(2) offers its deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the many earthquake and tsunami victims, and to Head of State His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese and Prime Minister Tuilaepa Lupeolai Sialele Malielegaoi of Samoa, as well as to His Majesty King George Tupou V and Prime Minister Feleti Vaka'uta Sevele of Tonga;

(3) pledges its full support to the people of American Samoa and the villages of Fagamalo, Poloa, Amanave, Fai'ololo, Nua, Se'etaga, Afao, Asili, Amaluia, Leone, Fagasa, Fagatogo, Pago Pago, Aua, Afono, Vatia, Masefau, Faga'itua, Pagai, Utusia, Alofau, Auto, Alao, and Tula as they begin the long and difficult process of rebuilding their homes and lives;

(4) recognizes the humanitarian response that is currently underway and commends the efforts of all persons and relief organizations who continue to alleviate the suffering by providing financial and material support;

(5) urges continued attention by donors and relief agencies to the needs of vulnerable