

veterans our region. However, they are in desperate need of a new, modern facility that will facilitate the quality of care our deserving veterans require.

In February 2008, I asked Secretary James Peake to allocate these funds before 2010, rather than the 2012 original plan. Last fall, the VA approved \$71.4 million to design and construct a new multiple-specialty outpatient facility at the Walla Walla VAMC. However, authorization was still needed for the project. This bill gives construction the necessary green light.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting the veterans who are served by the Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VA Medical Center.

Mr. MINNICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to lend my strong support to Senate bill 509. This bipartisan legislation will authorize the construction of a new outpatient clinic at the VA Medical Center in Walla Walla, Washington. The Walla Walla VA hospital provides vital medical care to thousands of veterans from Idaho and a new state-of-the-art facility will allow the hospital to provide expanded services to the members of our armed forces.

As more of our troops continue to return home from their deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is crucial that they receive the timely and effective care they deserve. And with Veterans Day just around the corner, this is an excellent opportunity to honor those who have sacrificed so much for our country. I urge my colleagues to join me in passing this important legislation.

I thank Chairman FILNER and Ranking Member BUYER for their strong leadership and continued commitment to improving the lives of veterans.

Mr. WALZ. With that, Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 509.

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. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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.

MAX J. BEILKE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OUTPATIENT CENTER

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3157) to name the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Alexandria, Minnesota, as the "Max J. Beilke Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3157

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

SECTION 1. NAME OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OUTPATIENT CLINIC, ALEXANDRIA, MINNESOTA.

The Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Alexandria, Minnesota, expected to open in September 2009, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the "Max J. Beilke Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic". Any reference to such outpatient clinic in any law, regulation, map, document, record, or other paper of the United States shall be considered to be a reference to the Max J. Beilke Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my support of H.R. 3157, a bill to name a VA outpatient clinic in Alexandria, Minnesota, in memory of Master Sergeant Max J. Beilke.

Master Sergeant Beilke served in the United States Army for 22 years, and he retired from service in 1974. On September 11, 2001, Max Beilke was at the Pentagon. Mr. Beilke was killed in the terrorist attack on the Pentagon on that day. After a lifetime of military service, Sergeant Beilke was laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery. He was awarded the Defense of Freedom Medal and the Meritorious Civilian Service Award.

While in the Army, Mr. Beilke played a vital role in evacuating U.S. troops from Saigon and is officially listed as the last U.S. combat soldier to leave Vietnam on March 29, 1973, at the end of the Vietnam War.

Max Beilke served overseas in Germany, Korea and Vietnam and was an ROTC instructor at St. Thomas Military Academy in St. Paul, Minnesota. While in the service, Sergeant Beilke earned a bachelor of arts degree in business administration by attending night school at the University of Maryland. He later earned a master's of arts degree in personnel management in 1977 from Central Michigan University.

Sergeant Beilke retired from active duty in 1974, but remained dedicated to the service of our soldiers, to the veterans and to their families. The driving force of Mr. Beilke's life was caring for soldiers and their needs. He was instrumental in getting Congress to pass the TRICARE for Life program for military retirees. For this, he was named a TRICARE hero. From 1984 until September 11, 2001, Mr. Beilke served as deputy chief of the Army Retirement Services, and was an active member of the Army Chief of Staff Retiree Council.

Master Sergeant Max Beilke left behind his wife, two daughters, and three grandsons. Master Sergeant Beilke was a true friend to thousands of Army retirees and was of one of Alexandria, Minnesota's and this country's most distinguished heroes.

In recognition of his commendable service to our soldiers and veterans alike, H.R. 3157 is supported by State and local dignitaries from the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, the United Veterans Legislative Council of Minnesota, and the Department of the Army.

H.R. 3157 would name the new Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic in Alexandria, Minnesota, as the Max J. Beilke Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic. Naming a VA facility for Master Sergeant Beilke, a hero and a strong advocate of veterans, is the proper and honorable thing to do.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3157, a bill to name the Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic in Alexandria, Minnesota, as the Max J. Beilke Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic.

I also want to thank the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON) for bringing this very important legislation forward.

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Master Sergeant Max J. Beilke, United States Army, served 22 years' active duty and was stationed overseas in Germany, Korea, and Vietnam. Master Sergeant Beilke was officially listed as the last U.S. combat soldier to leave Vietnam on March 29, 1973.

Following his retirement from active duty in 1974, Master Sergeant Beilke continued his commitment to U.S. servicemembers and veterans by working with Congress to pass the TRICARE For Life program for military retirees. For his services, Master Sergeant Beilke was named a TRICARE Hero and continued his efforts by working on legislation to create a veterans survivors benefit program.

It was while working on this bill at the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, that Master Sergeant Beilke was killed in the terrorist attack that struck that day. For his dedicated services to the United States military and veteran populations, Master Sergeant Beilke was awarded the Defense of Freedom Medal from the Department of Defense and Meritorious Civilian Service Award from the Department of the Army, both posthumously.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support H.R. 3157 in recognition of the service and sacrifice made by Master Sergeant Max Beilke for his country.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support this very important bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman and my neighbor from Minnesota, Mr. PETERSON, someone who understands the needs of rural Minnesota and our rural veterans as well as anybody in this

House and in this country, and understands how important these outpatient clinics are and the incredible honor and why it's right to name this clinic for a true Minnesota hero.

Mr. PETERSON. I thank the gentleman, thank him and the gentleman from Arkansas for letting me have a couple of minutes.

I think you have already covered all or most of my speech, but we are very honored to be able to name the outpatient clinic in Alexandria after a true American hero, Mr. Max Beilke, who grew up on a small farm near Alexandria, Minnesota.

He was a 1950 graduate of Alexandria High School. He was drafted into the Army and sent to Korea in 1952. Shortly after he returned home from his tour of service in Korea, he reenlisted and made the Army his full-time career.

Max served in Korea, Germany and, lastly, Vietnam, where he, during his 8-month tour, served as operations sergeant at Camp Alpha in Saigon, where all soldiers were processed going to and coming from the United States. As was noted, he was the last combat soldier to leave Vietnam while his family watched on television.

After 21 years in the Army, Max retired in 1974 as a master sergeant. Eventually, he settled in Laurel, Maryland, where he lived with his wife, Lisa, and raised two daughters. After retiring from the Army, he earned a master's degree from Central Michigan University.

As was noted, Max was very instrumental in establishing the TRICARE system for our veterans, and it was because of that he was at the Pentagon on September 11 and met his untimely death on that day. He was laid to rest on December 11 in Arlington National Cemetery.

He had a distinguished career in the Army and as a civilian. He has the support of all Minnesotans and all our veterans organizations. He very much deserves to have this clinic named after him.

I want to commend the VA for opening this clinic. I think this is the fifth clinic that they have opened in my district. It was proposed in 2004, and we had the grand opening ceremony just last month. For too long rural veterans in my district have had to travel too far for health care, but this clinic will bring veterans' health care services closer to all the veterans who live in that area. The VA estimates that it will serve 3,500 local veterans with primary care and mental health care and will provide a variety of other services as well.

I urge the House to pass this legislation.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, again I would like to thank Mr. PETERSON, the gentleman from Minnesota, for bringing this forward. We very strongly support this bill. It's great that we honor a true American hero, not only for his service connection and how he served in the military, but how he led his life.

Again, we urge all of our colleagues to support this bill.

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3157.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I, too, urge my colleagues to unanimously support H.R. 3157. I thank the gentleman from Minnesota for highlighting this, telling one of those stories of heroism, one of those stories of selfless service and then tying it to something that's incredibly important as we move forward—rural care for our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3157.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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.

ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL VETERANS CEMETERY IN SOUTHERN COLORADO REGION

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 174) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a national cemetery for veterans in the southern Colorado region.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 174

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

SECTION 1. ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL CEMETERY IN SOUTHERN COLORADO REGION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish, in accordance with chapter 24 of title 38, United States Code, a national cemetery in El Paso County, Colorado, to serve the needs of veterans and their families in the southern Colorado region.

(b) CONSULTATION IN SELECTION OF SITE.—Before selecting the site for the national cemetery established under subsection (a), the Secretary shall consult with—

(1) appropriate officials of the State of Colorado and local officials in the southern Colorado region; and

(2) appropriate officials of the United States, including the Administrator of General Services, with respect to land belonging

to the United States in El Paso County, Colorado, that would be suitable to establish the national cemetery under subsection (a).

(c) AUTHORITY TO ACCEPT DONATION OF PARCEL OF LAND.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may accept on behalf of the United States the gift of an appropriate parcel of real property. The Secretary shall have administrative jurisdiction over such parcel of real property, and shall use such parcel to establish the national cemetery under subsection (a).

(2) INCOME TAX TREATMENT OF GIFT.—For purposes of Federal income, estate, and gift taxes, the real property accepted under paragraph (1) shall be considered as a gift to the United States.

(d) REPORT.—As soon as practicable after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the establishment of the national cemetery under subsection (a). The report shall set forth a schedule for such establishment and an estimate of the costs associated with such establishment.

(e) RELATIONSHIP TO CONSTRUCTION AND FIVE YEAR CAPITAL PLAN.—The requirement to establish a national cemetery under subsection (a) shall be added to the current list of priority projects, but should not take priority over existing projects listed on the National Cemetery Administration's construction and five-year capital plan for fiscal year 2008.

(f) SOUTHERN COLORADO REGION DEFINED.—In this Act, the term "southern Colorado region" means the geographic region consisting of the following Colorado counties:

- (1) El Paso.
- (2) Pueblo.
- (3) Teller.
- (4) Fremont.
- (5) Las Animas.
- (6) Huerfano.
- (7) Custer.
- (8) Costilla.
- (9) Alamosa.
- (10) Saguache.
- (11) Conejos.
- (12) Mineral.
- (13) Archuleta.
- (14) Hinsdale.
- (15) Gunnison.
- (16) Pitkin.
- (17) La Plata.
- (18) Montezuma.
- (19) San Juan.
- (20) Ouray.
- (21) San Miguel.
- (22) Dolores.
- (23) Montrose.
- (24) Delta.
- (25) Mesa.
- (26) Crowley.
- (27) Kiowa.
- (28) Bent.
- (29) Baca.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

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

Mr. Speaker, while I am pleased to be here today to bring H.R. 174, I think it's probably too light to say sponsored by our former colleague on the committee, Mr. SALAZAR, to the floor today. This bill will establish a national veterans cemetery in El Paso County, Colorado.