

would require the Department of Defense to permit media coverage when the remains of troops who had died in active duty arrive at military installations in the United States.

Currently, the Department of Defense does not, does not permit arrival ceremonies for or media coverage of deceased military personnel returning or departing from United States military installations. This ban on media coverage has been in place since the Persian Gulf War in 1991. However, earlier this month President Obama announced that he had ordered a review of this policy, and the Pentagon is expected to complete its review soon.

While I welcome a decision by the current administration to repeal this ban on media coverage, enacting the Fallen Hero Commemoration Act would ensure by statute that our Nation properly commemorates the service of our fallen heroes now and in the years to come.

If this legislation is enacted, the privacy of military families would be protected. Private memorial services would remain private and only credentialed media, as approved by the Department of Defense, would be permitted to cover the arrival of fallen heroes at U.S. military installations.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit for the record two letters I have received in support of the Fallen Hero Commemoration Act.

One letter is an endorsement from the American Society of News Editors, and the other is from the National Press Photographers Association.

As Mickey Osterreicher, father of a newly commissioned Air Force second lieutenant and general counsel for the National Press Photographers Association, wrote in a letter that is submitted—and I would like to read just a paragraph. “It is one thing for a family to request that we not cover a private event it is another for the military to impose a total ban.”

This legislation would not only honor those who have given their lives in defense of our Nation, but also uphold the freedoms for which they gave the ultimate sacrifice.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I hope that my colleagues here on the House floor will look seriously at H.R. 269 so that we may properly commemorate the sacrifices made by the United States servicemembers. And, Mr. Speaker, I have signed well over 8,000 letters to families and extended families who have lost loved ones in Afghanistan and Iraq.

So I want to close by asking God to please bless our men and women in uniform; ask God to please bless the families who have given a loved one in Afghanistan and Iraq; and I ask God to please, three times, God please continue to bless America; please, God, continue to bless America; please, God, continue to bless America.

NATIONAL PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS
ASSOCIATION, INC., THE SOCIETY
OF PROFESSIONAL PHOTO-
JOURNALISTS,

Durham, NC, January 12, 2009.

Hon. WALTER JONES,
*Rayburn House Office Building,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR CONGRESSMAN JONES: As general counsel for the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA) I would like to thank you for your introduction of H.R. 269, the “Fallen Hero Commemoration Act.” It is my understanding that this legislation would direct the “Secretary of Defense to grant access to accredited members of the media when the remains of members of the Armed Forces arrive at military installations in the United States.”

The NPPA represents almost 10,000 still and video photojournalists throughout the United States. As such we are very aware that the Department of Defense currently prohibits media coverage of these solemn ceremonies. Throughout our history photojournalists have documented every aspect of human endeavor from triumphs to tragedies. It is unfortunate that war often times creates the most compelling images. From Matthew Brady’s graphic photos of Civil War battlefields to Joe Rosenthal’s raising of the American Flag on Iwo Jima news photographers have risked (and all too often lost) their lives to capture these moments so that the public may be informed of these newsworthy events. A free, robust and unfettered press is as much a part of our history and culture as is the Constitution and the three branches of government.

To deny media coverage of the return of our fallen heroes is a brazen attempt by the military to deny history. While our government tries to bring liberty and democracy to all corners of the world it lately seems to have forgotten that those freedoms are no less important at home. As a former photojournalist for over thirty years and the father of a newly commissioned 2nd Lt. in the USAF training to one day fly A-10’s I can state unequivocally that my colleagues mean no disrespect to the uniform or the families when we cover these moving events. Quite the opposite is true—as photojournalists try to honestly and accurately depict these moments for all to see. It is one thing for a family to request that we not cover a private event it is another for the military to impose a total ban.

We agree that by once again permitting access to accredited members of the media at the arrival of the remains of fallen service members at U.S. military installations, this legislation would not only honor those who have given their lives in defense of our Nation but also uphold the freedoms for which they gave the ultimate sacrifice.

Please feel free to contact me should you need anything further. In the past members of NPPA have testified at hearings on a number of issues related to photojournalism and we would be more than happy to do so again should the need arise.

Very truly yours,

MICKEY H. OSTERREICHER,
General Counsel.

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
NEWSPAPER EDITORS,
Reston, VA, January 13, 2009.

Hon. WALTER JONES,
*House of Representatives, Rayburn House Office
Building, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. JONES: The American Society of Newspaper Editors thanks you for reintroducing the Fallen Hero Commemoration Act as HR 269. This legislation addresses an important issue in a manner that protects constitutional ideals that have been neglected

far too often in recent years. We hope that this early introduction will allow us to get a fast start on moving this legislation toward eventual enactment.

ASNE is a professional organization of directing editors of daily newspaper in the Americas. The purposes of the Society include assisting journalists and providing an unfettered and effective press in the service of the American people. H.R. 269 is an example of legislation that advances our organization’s goals, and we are happy to endorse this legislation and offer any support and assistance you may need in obtaining its passage.

The issue of photographing military repatriation ceremonies is clearly a controversial one. We agree that the families who must sadly endure the repatriation and burial of a loved one have a right to their privacy and that these ceremonies and those they honor demand the utmost dignity and solemnity. But banning accredited media from these events dishonors the sacrifices these valiant men and women have made for their country and the ideals they swore to uphold.

The First Amendment demands that the government refrain from abridging freedom of the press in even the most controversial of debates. The “Findings” portion of H.R. 269 demonstrates how the Department of Defense has lost sight of this fundamental freedom by bending rules regarding press coverage to serve its own purposes, allowing access when publicity serves the government’s needs while disallowing access—even if the family itself expresses a willingness or desire for media coverage—when it believes that photography or other coverage would highlight the negative aspects of war.

This bill strongly supports freedom of speech and of the press. It will replace the censorship and staged media events that disrespect the freedom our fallen soldiers defended with the editorial independence necessary in a democracy. Openness is the best way to honor those who serve our country and their families. ASNE members understand that editorial independence is worthy only if practiced responsibly and respectfully. Newspaper editors and those they oversee are people first and have shown time and again sensitivity to grieving families. This bill will not change that mindset, though we do hope you reconsider the decision to remove access to commemoration ceremonies and memorial services from the bill. Press access to these events is necessary to provide the public with the complete story about a soldier’s commitment to defend his or his country; we maintain that coverage will not detract from the solemnity of the proceedings or unduly invade the privacy of the families involved.

We again thank you for reintroducing the Fallen Hero Commemoration Act. We hope that this issue receives full consideration by the 111th Congress including, specifically, early hearings in the Committee on Armed Services, as which point the need for access to commemoration ceremonies and memorial services, in addition to repatriation ceremonies, can be discussed in full. We look forward to participating in that process.

Sincerely,

CHARLOTTE HALL, *President, ASNE,
Senior Vice President/Editor,
The Orlando Sentinel.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PAUL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PAY-TO-PLAY POLITICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, over the past several weeks, the political world has been rocked by a scandal that led to the impeachment of the Governor of Illinois. At issue was the specter of pay-to-play, more specifically the possibility that political favors were either promised or exchanged, exchanged for campaign contributions.

The vote to remove Governor Blagojevich by the Illinois Senate was unanimous. Condemnation from Capitol Hill was equally swift and unequivocal. Pay-to-play politics should have no place.

Fast forward just a few weeks.

We now know that the Department of Justice is conducting an investigation into the propriety of campaign contributions made by individuals associated with the powerhouse lobbying firm the PMA Group, individuals who have contributed nearly 3.3 million to the campaigns and political action committees of many Members in this body. Within days of the announcement of the FBI investigation, the PMA Group, which had revenues of more than 15 million just last year, imploded.

□ 2000

So what would cause those associated with the PMA Group to contribute millions of dollars to Members of Congress? Here's what the public sees; press reports that nearly nine in 10 Members who made earmark requests in the fiscal year 2008 Defense Appropriation bill for clients of the PMA Group also received campaign contributions from those associated with the PMA Group. Those earmark requests resulted in nearly \$300 million in earmark money for PMA clients.

Mr. Speaker, much has been made of the rule changes in the 110th Congress that add transparency to the process of earmarking. As one who had sought these changes for years, I was the first to applaud when these new rules were adopted. Sunlight always illuminates, but it doesn't always disinfect. We now see what scurries around our feet, but we seem unwilling to grab a broom and clean house.

Let me illustrate. Less than 6 months ago, we approved the Defense Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2009 as part of a so-called "minibus." Some 48 hours before the bill was to be considered on the House floor, we learned that it contained more than 2,000 House earmarks, none of which had been considered by the full House Appropriations Committee. The minibus was considered as an amendment to the Senate bill, and therefore not a single earmark challenge was allowed. We now know, of course, that multiple earmarks in the minibus were secured for clients of the PMA Group. In addition, several earmarks in the minibus went to

Kuchera Industries, a PMA client that is also being investigated by the Department of Justice.

So here we are today, Mr. Speaker, about to consider an omnibus appropriations bill that contains more than 8,000 earmarks. It should be noted that we received the earmark list just hours ago. Of course, it's impossible to dig through 8,000 earmarks before the bill comes to the floor on Wednesday. But this much we know: In the list of earmarks we received are several earmarks worth millions of dollars for clients of the PMA Group.

What else is in this bill? What other embarrassing details are just waiting for concerned citizens, enterprising reporters or curious Justice Department officials to discover?

A short while ago, I noticed a privileged resolution on this situation. This is not a partisan resolution because this is not a partisan issue. I would implore my colleagues not to treat it as such. The "whereas" clauses mention no party or Member. The "resolve" clauses simply ask the Ethics Committee to investigate the relationship between earmarks and campaign contributions so that we can determine if the rules that we have in the House are adequate to maintain the dignity of the House.

We see enduring examples of Members on both sides of the aisle taking their responsibility as stewards of taxpayer money very seriously. But when we are seen to be earmarking funds to campaign donors, we give unnecessary fodder to those who would question our motives.

Some may argue that the absence of a visible quid pro quo with regard to earmarks and campaign contributions absolves us from our responsibility to take action on this resolution. After all, investigations are moving ahead; shouldn't they just take their course? This is certainly an option, but consider the cost to the reputation of this body. Should Department of Justice investigations, indictments and convictions be the standard for taking action to uphold the dignity of the House?

Mr. Speaker, we owe far more to this institution than we are giving it. Let's pass this resolution and give this institution the respect and dignity it deserves.

 THE STIMULUS BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, as we left town right before the Presidents' Day recess, many of us spoke on the floor of this House about the issue of what was then the issue of the day, the issue before the House, the stimulus bill, the spending bill, the "jobs bill," as it was described, but a bill that unfortunately contained much more Federal spending than anything else.

This bill was posted on a Web site late in the night. It was not posted in a forum that was searchable by any Member of Congress. And you heard over and over again on the floor of this House a little over a week ago how no one in this House had been able to adequately peruse the bill—indeed, read the bill—before it came to a vote that Friday before last.

The bill came to us late in the night. There seemed to be a great rush about getting it done—after all, the country is in dire trouble, people are needing this legislation to be passed—and then we all took a 3-day weekend; the Speaker took off to points unknown in Italy; the President took a vacation back home. And then finally, the day after Presidents' Day, the following Tuesday, the 17th, the bill was signed into law.

We were then informed by several of the Federal agencies charged with dispensing this money and getting it out quickly into the economy to quickly have that stimulative effect that it is purported to have on the economy, well, we're told that many of those Federal agencies, it will take some time for them to promulgate the rules and set forth the rules under which this money is to be distributed amongst the Federal agencies. And it, indeed, may be the early part of the summer before some of this stimulus money actually makes it into the economy.

I noticed in my home paper, the Dallas Morning News, today a gentleman wrote in—I assume it was tongue in cheek—he said, being in his advanced stage, he felt that he might be one of those shovel-ready projects that was mentioned in the stimulus bill. I am going to assume that that was a lighthearted remark on his part. But it brings to mind a more serious nature of what we are facing.

And we've heard it so many times over the past month's time, the amount of money, \$787 billion contained in this bill—more if you factor in the cost of capital, the cost of financing this bill, then the cost goes up to \$1.1 or \$1.2 trillion. The bill has built-in funding cliffs where if you really were honest about the amount of funding it would require to continue this stimulus bill over the actual life of the bill, we're probably talking about a bill that's closer to \$3 trillion. And \$3 trillion is \$3 trillion that we don't have sitting in the Federal Treasury waiting to be dispensed. This is, in fact, money that will have to come from somewhere.

Where is it going to come from? Well, it's going to come from the United States selling public debt. And the good news is that debt is still a saleable commodity on the world market, that people are still willing to purchase our debt. The good news is that they are still willing to purchase our debt and the interest rate has not risen significantly. But those days will only last so long because consider what is just right around the corner. You heard