

world that respects the natural resources that this planet has provided and use them wisely.

I thank my colleague, Representative MICHAEL MCCAUL, of Texas, for introducing this important legislation, to ensure that we preserve our most treasured resource, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this H.R. 957.

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GORDON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 957.

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. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. 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.

NATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELORS APPRECIATION DAY

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 247) expressing support for designation of March 22, 2009, as "National Rehabilitation Counselors Appreciation Day".

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 247

Whereas rehabilitation counselors conduct assessments, provide counseling, support to families, and plan and implement rehabilitation programs for those in need;

Whereas the purpose of the professional organizations in rehabilitation is to promote the improvement of rehabilitation services available to persons with disabilities through quality education and rehabilitation research for counselors;

Whereas the various professional organizations, including the National Rehabilitation Association (NRA), Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Association (RCEA), the National Council on Rehabilitation Education (NCRE), the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association (NRCA), the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA), the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC), the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), and the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) have stood firm to advocate up-to-date education and training and the maintenance of professional standards in the field of rehabilitation counseling and education;

Whereas, on March 22, 1983, Martha Walker of Kent State University, who was President of the NCRE, testified before the Subcommittee on Select Education of the House of Representatives, and was instrumental in bringing to the attention of Congress the need for rehabilitation counselors to be qualified;

Whereas the efforts of Martha Walker led to the enactment of laws that now require rehabilitation counselors to have proper credentials in order to provide a higher level of quality service to those in need; and

Whereas March 22, 2009, would be an appropriate date to recognize "National Rehabilitation Counselors Appreciation Day": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expressing support for designation of "National Rehabilitation Counselors Appreciation Day"; and

(2) commends all of the hard work and dedication that rehabilitation counselors provide to individuals in need and the numerous efforts that the multiple professional organizations have made to assisting those who require rehabilitation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I request 5 legislative days during which Members may revise and extend and insert extraneous material on House Resolution 247 into the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 247 to designate March 22, 2009, as "National Rehabilitation Counselors Appreciation Day."

Across our great country, qualified rehabilitation counselors work to empower people with disabilities to access employment, education and community opportunities and independent living. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are approximately 141,000 rehabilitation counselors in our United States. We are extremely grateful for their commitment to providing professional service and support that is rendered to people with disabilities in a variety of settings, including State and local agencies, medical facilities, educational programs, and community businesses.

As the number of veterans with disabilities increases and people with disabilities struggle to obtain employment in these tough economic times, the need for quality rehabilitation counseling does, in fact, continue to grow. According to the National Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate of persons with a disability in February of this year was 14 percent compared to 8.7 percent for persons with no disabilities. Of even greater concern, only 23 percent of people with disabilities are currently in our labor force compared to over 70 percent of the general population. These are alarming statistics.

Qualified rehabilitation counselors are an important part of the solution as they provide services critical to improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities. We appreciate their hard work and the determination of these professionals. Various professional organizations, including the Na-

tional Rehabilitation Association, the National Council on Rehabilitation Education, and the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, advocate for up-to-date education, training and professional standards for rehabilitation counselors, and because of these national organizations' persistent efforts, the quality of rehabilitation services has dramatically improved and expanded.

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On March 22 of 1983, Martha Walker, president of the National Council on Rehabilitation Education, testified before the Subcommittee on Select Education for the House of Representatives expressing the necessity for rehabilitation counselors to be well-qualified. Ms. Walker's hard work led to the enactment of requirements to ensure that rehabilitation counselors have proper training and credentials so that people with disabilities receive quality rehabilitation service.

Let Congress designate March 22 as National Rehabilitation Counselors Day. This holiday can honor the dedicated rehabilitation counselors and professional organizations that work tirelessly to provide quality rehabilitation support.

I want to thank, particularly, Representative SKELTON for his outstanding leadership on this issue in bringing this important resolution forward. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 247, which expresses support for designating March 22, 2009, as National Rehabilitation Counselors Appreciation Day.

I am surprised by the number of individuals who do not understand what rehabilitation counselors do, and they might be well advised to read the Doonesbury comic strip where, for the past 6 months or more, there's been an ongoing discussion on how to rehabilitate veterans, and describes the work of rehabilitation counselors.

Nearly one in five Americans lives with some type of long-lasting condition or disability that requires extensive rehabilitation. Rehabilitation counselors help people deal with the personal, social and vocational effects of disabilities. They counsel individuals with disabilities resulting from birth defects, illness or disease, accidents or other causes. They evaluate the strength and limitations of individuals, provide personal and vocational counseling and arrange for medical care, vocational training and job placement. All of these are invaluable to those who need the help.

Rehabilitation counselors interview people with disabilities and their families, evaluate school and medical reports and confer with physicians, psychologists, occupational therapists, and employers to determine the capabilities and skills of the individual.

They develop rehabilitation programs by conferring with clients, which also includes training to help clients develop job skills. Rehabilitation counselors also work toward increasing the client's capacity to live independently. These professionals work with individuals, professional organizations and advocacy groups to address the social barriers that create obstacles for people with disabilities. They are instrumental in building bridges between the often-isolated world of people with disabilities and their families, communities, and school and work environments. They empower individuals to make informed choices so that they can become productive members of society.

Rehabilitation counselors are employed in private practice, by community health organizations and hospitals, and in State and Federal Government positions. There are approximately 141,000 rehabilitation counselors in the United States, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. That number is expected to grow rapidly as medical advances help people survive serious injury or illness, including veterans returning from both the Afghanistan and Iraqi wars.

Rehabilitation counselors provide a great service to the millions of Americans with disabilities. They encourage people with disabilities to participate as active citizens within their communities. These highly trained professionals help many disabled Americans cope with their life-altering situations, and today we recognize them for their hard work and dedication.

I ask for my colleagues' support of this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) who we praised in our earlier comments for bringing this awareness of the value of our rehabilitation counselors to the attention of the House, and we applaud him for his efforts, and we recognize him for 5 minutes.

Mr. SKELTON. I thank the gentleman so much for yielding.

And, Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join in supporting H. Res. 247, which would express support for recognizing March 22 as National Rehabilitation Counselors Appreciation Day. I want to thank my friend, PHIL GINGREY, the gentleman from Georgia, for joining me in offering this resolution.

On March 22 in 1983, Martha Lentz Walker of Kent State University provided testimony to Members of the U.S. House of Representatives regarding the valuable services provided by qualified rehabilitation counselors. Due in large part to events of that day, rehabilitation counselors today are required to have proper certification in order to provide a higher level of service.

Vocational rehabilitation counselors are dedicated professionals. Their good

works assist disabled Americans across the country in living independent and productive lives. An honest day's work is a source of pride, but many individuals with disabilities who want to work just don't have the training, support, or tools they need to enter the workforce. Vocational rehabilitation counselors step in to provide the necessary services that succeed in bringing thousands of disabled Americans into the workforce every day.

Today, we have injured veterans seeking to gain, retain, or regain employment. Today, we have older workers staying in the workforce longer in these difficult economic times. Today, many other individuals want nothing more than to pursue a career. Rehabilitation counselors play an important role in helping them to reach their goals, and I believe the service is worthy of our recognition and our thanks.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back my time.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, the resolution before the House is one of great worth, obviously recognizing the important role that rehabilitation counselors play in the lives of individuals with disabilities. They open doorways, they absolutely enhance the quality of life, and coax the professionalism from those who, amongst us, are in the ranks of the disabled with an awful lot of contribution to be made to society. The rehabilitation counselor is a partner in that effort.

So I ask that, again, we move forward and recognize this and support this resolution.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud cosponsor of House Resolution 247. This Resolution expresses support for the designation of March 22, 2009 as "National Rehabilitation Counselors Appreciation Day."

I am particularly pleased to be able to join my good friend, Chairman IKE SKELTON, on this important Resolution. Since my first days in the Congress, Chairman SKELTON has been a good friend and I have worked with him on a number of issues critical to our nation's defense. It is a particular honor to work with Chairman SKELTON in bringing this Resolution to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 247 recognizes the hard and important work of our nation's rehabilitation counselors who day in and day out improve the lives of those who are in need of rehabilitation either from an injury or from a permanent disability. These counselors play an integral role in helping people re-establish control over their daily lives by managing the personal, social, and vocational effects of their disabilities.

Recognizing the importance of multiple sources of support, rehabilitation counselors work both with individuals and their families to plan and implement rehabilitation programs that fit their needs. Counselors often make arrangements for medical care, job training, and job placement services with the aim of achieving the best possible quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, physical disabilities do not discriminate and can affect anyone or any family. Many of us have family members or friends who suffer from disabilities that shape their ev-

eryday life. Chairman SKELTON himself is a testament to the positive effect of rehabilitation counseling.

In fact, I was pleased to join Chairman SKELTON a few years back in Warm Springs, Georgia—which at the time was part of the 11th Congressional District. We were there because in his youth, Chairman SKELTON himself benefited from rehabilitation and therapy for his own disability. I know this Resolution has particular and personal importance for him as he remembers those doctors and counselors who were so helpful to him.

Mr. Speaker, in this life, we often face challenges that we cannot overcome alone. Accordingly, we have an obligation to recognize and celebrate those individuals who spend their lives making other lives better. I call on my colleagues to support this Resolution in gratitude for our nation's rehabilitation counselors. I yield back.

Mr. TONKO. I yield back my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 247.

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. TONKO. Mr. 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.

ACKNOWLEDGING AND COMMENDING NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 336) supporting the goals and ideals of National Library Week.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 336

Whereas the Nation's school, academic, public, and special libraries make a difference in the lives of millions of people in the United States, today, more than ever;

Whereas librarians are trained professionals, helping people of all ages and backgrounds find and interpret the information they need to live, learn, and work in a challenging economy;

Whereas libraries are part of the American Dream, places for opportunity, education, self-help, and lifelong learning;

Whereas according to a December 2008 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report, public library use increased to 1,400,000 visits nationwide during fiscal year 2006, among all types of library users, continuing a long term trend of increased library usage;

Whereas libraries play a vital role in supporting the quality of life in their communities;