

be Americans. Because, see, Americans, what has happened to us? I will eat what I want, I will drink whatever I want; by golly, the health system better be there to take care of my body, but I'm going to take care of my teeth because my smile means everything to me. I just wish the people would put the same focus they have in their teeth that they also place in their bodies. If we were to do that, how much better in wellness as a society would we be?

The contribution that dentistry has had to me, as a leader in health policy for the country, even goes back to the 1990s, when we began to examine Medicare, for example, and we noted that one-third of our Medicare expenditures was diabetes-related. Well, I spoke up and said, I come from a family of dentists, and we focus on preventive medicine. If we spent billions of dollars on the front end, we wouldn't be spending the multibillion dollars on the back end. So it's about wellness of the whole body. So I want to compliment the dentists.

Now I want to pause and talk about military dentistry, too, for a second. If we are going to compliment the ADA, it is not only in their contributions to our society, but also to military dentists. Military dentists are combat multipliers because there are so many non-battlefield casualties, individuals who are taken off the battlefield because of what happens with regard to the deterioration of their dental hygiene. It is those dentists that put them back in, and I want to truly applaud them.

Let me close with the infinite wisdom of the United States Army. I came out of The Citadel. I received my commission as a second lieutenant in the Medical Service Corps. My first assignment in the United States Army was with a dental clinic. I did everything I could, dad, to get away from dentistry, but for whatever reason, it totally consumes me, even in my life today.

Let me say congratulations to the ADA and to all the dentists and the dental assistants and the dental hygienists and the specialties for which the ADA represents. Thank you, and good job.

Mr. SIMPSON. I appreciate the gentleman's comment. I should note that I also come from a family of dentists; I just couldn't escape. I ended up going into the dental profession where he went into the law profession. We will argue for some time who made the better choice. But I appreciate everyone's support and would encourage their positive vote on this resolution.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 204, which honors one of our nation's oldest African-American medical professional organizations, the National Dental Association. For nearly 150 years, the NDA has committed itself to opening the doors to the dental profession—a profession that has traditionally been dominated by the privileged few who could afford dental training—to men and women of color.

Even more importantly, the NDA has been a voice for the under-served in our society,

often speaking out about disparities in access to dental care when others in the provider community would not. The dentists who make up the NDA, like I, believe that the right to dental care must be a fundamental human and civil right—not a privilege. In the wealthiest nation in the history of the world, there is no reason that some Americans lack access to a dentist or oral surgeon.

We all mourn the loss of Demonte Driver, a young African-American boy who died in 2007 as the result of not getting timely and medically necessary dental care because his family was uninsured. I am committed to working with the NDA and all other provider groups to ensure that our country reaches a point where stories like Demonte's will become increasingly rare and, eventually, cease to exist. We must work to ensure that young dental students who wish to practice in communities served by Medicaid have the fiscal flexibility to do so. This necessarily means addressing the \$145,000 debt the average dental student incurs during the course of his or her education.

To this end, I will soon introduce legislation that expands funding for the National Health Service Corps. The program provides for medical and dental students' reasonable educational expenses and a monthly stipend for room and board. After school, the student must apply for pre-approved positions in underserved areas. By increasing the funding levels between 2009 and 2019 by \$100 million each year, my bill will ensure that every citizen in every community has access to the doctor and dentist of their choice.

I applaud the NDA for their 150 years of excellence and compassionate advocacy and I wish them 150 more. Together, we will end dental access disparity once and for all. I encourage my colleagues to support the resolution.

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

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 204.

The question was taken.

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

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I object to the vote on the grounds 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.

BELATED THANK YOU TO THE MERCHANT MARINERS OF WORLD WAR II ACT OF 2009

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 23) to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish the Mer-

chant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund to provide benefits to certain individuals who served in the United States Merchant Marine (including the Army Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service) during World War II, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 23

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 "Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2009".

SEC. 2. PAYMENTS TO INDIVIDUALS WHO SERVED DURING WORLD WAR II IN THE UNITED STATES MERCHANT MARINE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF COMPENSATION FUND.—Subchapter II of chapter 5 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§533. Merchant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund

"(a) COMPENSATION FUND.—(1) There is in the general fund of the Treasury a fund to be known as the 'Merchant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund' (in this section referred to as the 'compensation fund').

"(2) Subject to the availability of appropriations for such purpose, amounts in the compensation fund shall be available to the Secretary without fiscal year limitation to make payments to eligible individuals in accordance with this section.

"(b) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.—(1) An eligible individual is an individual who—

"(A) during the one-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2009, submits to the Secretary an application containing such information and assurances as the Secretary may require;

"(B) has not received benefits under the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (Public Law 78-346); and

"(C) has engaged in qualified service.

"(2) For purposes of paragraph (1), a person has engaged in qualified service if, between December 7, 1941, and December 31, 1946, the person—

"(A) was a member of the United States merchant marine (including the Army Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service) serving as a crewmember of a vessel that was—

"(i) operated by the War Shipping Administration or the Office of Defense Transportation (or an agent of the Administration or Office);

"(ii) operated in waters other than inland waters, the Great Lakes, and other lakes, bays, and harbors of the United States;

"(iii) under contract or charter to, or property of, the Government of the United States; and

"(iv) serving the Armed Forces; and

"(B) while so serving, was licensed or otherwise documented for service as a crewmember of such a vessel by an officer or employee of the United States authorized to license or document the person for such service.

"(c) AMOUNT OF PAYMENTS.—The Secretary shall make a monthly payment out of the compensation fund in the amount of \$1,000 to an eligible individual. The Secretary shall make such payments to eligible individuals in the order in which the Secretary receives the applications of the eligible individuals.

"(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—(1) There are authorized to be appropriated to the compensation fund amounts as follows:

"(A) For fiscal year 2010, \$120,000,000.

"(B) For fiscal year 2011, \$108,000,000.

"(C) For fiscal year 2012, \$97,000,000.

"(D) For fiscal year 2013, \$85,000,000.

“(E) For fiscal year 2014, \$75,000,000.

“(2) Funds appropriated to carry out this section shall remain available until expended.

“(e) REPORTS.—The Secretary shall include, in documents submitted to Congress by the Secretary in support of the President’s budget for each fiscal year, detailed information on the operation of the compensation fund, including the number of applicants, the number of eligible individuals receiving benefits, the amounts paid out of the compensation fund, the administration of the compensation fund, and an estimate of the amounts necessary to fully fund the compensation fund for that fiscal year and each of the three subsequent fiscal years.

“(f) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall prescribe regulations to carry out this section.”.

(b) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall prescribe the regulations required under section 532(f) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item related to section 532 the following new item:

“533. Merchant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Madam 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. 23, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise in strong support of H. Res. 23, the Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2009, a measure, frankly, whose passage is six decades overdue.

I think today we are on the verge of doing a great deed, providing a way to finally give the heroic Merchant Mariners of World War II the belated compensation they so richly deserve. Congress has a responsibility to correct the wrongs of the past, and this is one of the grave injustices that deserve rectifying.

I thank all the cosponsors of the resolution, including some 40 Republicans. I know that many of you were trying to be added as cosponsors after the report was filed. I just would like to name for the record Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. MEEK, Ms. JENKINS and Mr. KILDEE.

□ 1515

For the remaining Members of the House who are not cosponsors of the amended version which passed unanimously out of the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, let me tell you the sad history of these forgotten heroes.

The merchant mariners of World War II traversed the dangerous U-boat-laden waters of the Atlantic and the Pacific, faced down fierce attacks from

enemy aircraft, and were instrumental in every theater of war by carrying 95 percent of all the tanks, supplies, and troops during World War II.

As a result, they suffered the highest casualty rate of any of the military branches. It is indisputable that the Allied Forces would not have been able to begin, sustain, or end World War II without their valiant and selfless service. It is also indisputable that these men now are entitled to be compensated for that service. After the war, they did not receive recognition as veterans that they deserved or the benefits of the unprecedented GI Bill of 1944, which they had earned and were promised. Eight million military families were able to take advantage of that GI Bill, entering the middle class, but the merchant mariners were not.

When the GI Bill was signed in 1944, as I said, which gave unprecedented education, housing, small business loans, and health benefits to World War II servicemen, President Roosevelt declared, after losing the fight to have the merchant mariners included in the original bill, “I trust Congress will soon provide similar opportunities to members of the Merchant Marine who have risked their lives time and time again for the welfare of their country.” Congress never did. My friends, promises made should be promises kept.

Their fight for equity continued for over 40 years when they finally attained veteran status after a lengthy court battle, Schumacher, Willner, et al. v. Secretary of the Air Force Edward C. Aldridge, Jr. By then, over 125,000 mariners had died. As the judge ruled in that case, the mariners had “every reasonable expectation that they would be treated as veterans” entitled to the benefits of the GI Bill of Rights of 1944, based on the service they performed, not happened to perform. History supports this conclusion.

I had the distinct privilege of receiving the heart-wrenching testimony, during a full committee hearing, of one of the named parties to this lawsuit, a merchant mariner named Stanley Willner. Stanley was captured, interned, beaten, starved, and tortured as a POW for 3 years. He was actually one of the unfortunate groups of Allied Forces forced to build the infamous bridge over the River Kwai. Upon release, he weighed 74 pounds, and when he returned home, even his wife did not recognize him. And neither did his country. He received just 2 weeks of medical care and little else for his service. What a miscarriage of justice.

Madam Speaker, it was only due to a sad confluence of powerful events after the war that this country did not bestow the brave men of the World War II Merchant Marine with veteran status until 1988. I think that if the mariners would be on the floor today, they would say they should not have been subject to a “process” to determine whether they were veterans.

The mariners and many others thought that they would get these ben-

efits since many thought they were enlisting for duty. They were denied this status unjustly and in violation of the assurances that they would partake in the GI Bill of 1944. Their valiant service was recognized by all the leaders of the Allied Forces from Generals MacArthur to Eisenhower.

Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD a list of quotes by President Roosevelt regarding their courageous service.

RELEVANT HISTORICAL QUOTES ON THE ROLE OF UNITED STATES MERCHANT MARINE DURING WORLD WAR II

QUOTES FROM PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

May, 1942: “The war is now five months old and we have had our answer. Two million men have been called to the colors. In far places and near, our soldiers, our sailors, our air pilots, the beleaguered men of the Merchant Marine, have shown the stuff of heroes. Everything we have asked of them they have delivered. Everything—and more.”

December 12, 1942: “It is with a feeling of great pride that I send my heartiest congratulations and best wishes to the officers and men of the new U.S. Maritime Service Training Station at Sheepshead Bay, New York. Ten thousand apprentice seamen in training at one station is a magnificent achievement, and the entire country joins me in wishing you every success and in paying tribute to you men of the Merchant Marine who are so gallantly working and fighting side by side with our Army and Navy to defend the way of life which is so dear to us all.”

1943: “The men of our American Merchant Marine have pushed through despite the perils of the submarine, the dive bomber and the surface raider. They have returned voluntarily to their jobs at sea again and again, because they realized that the life-lines to our battle fronts would be broken if they did not carry out their vital part in this global war . . . In their hands, our vital supply lines are expanding. Their skill and determination will keep open the highway to victory and unconditional surrender.”

September 19, 1944: “It seems to me particularly appropriate that Victory Fleet Day this year should honor the men and management of the American Merchant Marine. The operators in this war have written one of its most brilliant chapters. They have delivered the goods when and where needed in every theater of operations and across every ocean in the biggest, the most difficult and dangerous transportation job ever undertaken. As time goes on, there will be greater public understanding of our merchant fleet’s record during this war.”

June 22, 1944 (during signing of GI Bill): “I trust Congress will soon provide similar opportunities to members of the merchant marine who have risked their lives time and time again during war for the welfare of their country.”

QUOTES FROM DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, GENERAL OF THE ARMY

Date Unknown: “Every man in this Allied command is quick to express his admiration for the loyalty, courage, and fortitude of the officers and men of the Merchant Marine. We count upon their efficiency and their utter devotion to duty as we do our own; they have never failed us yet and in all the struggles yet to come we know that they will never be deterred by any danger, hardship, or privation. When final victory is ours there is no organization that will share its credit more deservedly than the Merchant Marine.”

May 8, 1945 (From his Tribute on V-E Day): “The truly heroic man of this war is GI Joe

and his counterpart of the Air, Navy, and Merchant Marine."

1945: "The officers and men of the merchant marine, by their devotion to duty in the face of enemy action, as well as the natural dangers of the sea, have brought us the tools to finish the job. Their contribution to final victory will be long remembered."

QUOTES FROM DOUGLAS MACARTHUR, GENERAL OF THE ARMY

Date Unknown: "I wish to commend to you the valor of the merchant seamen participating with us in the liberation of the Philippines. With us they have shared the heaviest enemy fire. On this island I have ordered them off their ships and into fox holes when their ships became untenable targets of attack. At our side they have suffered in bloodshed and in death. The caliber of efficiency and the courage they displayed in their part of the invasion of the Philippines marked their conduct throughout the entire campaign in the southwest Pacific area. They have contributed tremendously to our success. I hold no branch in higher esteem than the Merchant Marine."

October 14, 1945: "They have brought us our lifeblood and they had paid for it with some of their own. I saw them bombed off the Philippines and in New Guinea ports. When it was humanly possible, when their ships were not blown out from under them by bombs or torpedoes, they have delivered their cargoes to us who needed them so badly. In war it is performance that counts."

FLEET ADMIRAL CHESTER W. NIMITZ, U.S. NAVY, CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

War Shipping Administration Press Release PR 1839, April 23, 1944: "The Merchant Marine Service has repeatedly proved its right to be considered as an integral part of our fighting team. Its efforts have contributed in great part to our success. Well done."

There is one quote that is particularly telling of the broken promise, made by then General Dwight D. Eisenhower, delivered on May 8, 1945, during his tribute on V-E Day: "The truly heroic man of this war is GI Joe and his counterpart of the Air, Navy, and Merchant Marine."

Madam Speaker, how do you measure the loss of the GI Bill benefits that helped build the middle class of the United States, the missed opportunities and the dreams unrealized? That is what H.R. 23 will do, create a semblance of equity for the mariners of World War II. Undo this broken promise and unmitigated travesty of justice by providing this monthly benefit to the remaining 10,000 qualifying mariners.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in opposition. I rise in opposition, and I would say to the chairman, as a history professor, I know that you must embrace history and not be a revisionist of history.

I'm greatly disappointed with regard to this legislation. I'm disappointed because this is an attempt to say that he wants to resolve an inequity through discrimination so that your bias towards one specific group is so strong among the veterans community that you will discriminate against others. And I will even use your example of your friend with regard to his service

as a merchant mariner, as a prisoner of war building the bridge over the River Kwai. It means that other POWs who served with him would not be entitled to the special monthly payment, that you believe that that merchant mariner is so special that all other prisoners of war should not receive such payment.

You see, there's a reason that those of us who have worn the uniform do not do this. The only time we have provided a service pension, a service pension, are for Medal of Honor recipients. We do not provide service pensions, and that's exactly what this is. So we're paying \$1,100 to Medal of Honor recipients, and you want to pay now \$1,000 to merchant mariners. Yet there are 28 groups of whom are similarly situated, individuals of whom were contractor status during the war.

Now, we need to stop and pause and think about what we are doing here. Ever since the American Revolution, our government has utilized contractors as our combatants go to war. Whether it was in the Revolution, whether it was the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the first Gulf War, and, in fact, the present wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, we all used contractors. So after World War II, we created a process whereby these contractors then could be granted that "veteran status." So for merchant mariners, the question of their valor, even the question of their status has now been resolved.

What's before the House is now with regard to a particular group of veterans that we're going to treat them differently, that we're going to say that you have such unique status that we are going to give you a \$1,000-a-month payment, a service pension, when, in fact, we don't even do that for anyone else.

So I am greatly disappointed that this type of legislation is brought to the floor. This is legislation that should never have been done. Members are just flying back now, so they aren't even sure about this legislation or what it's about, and they're thinking that, well, because it came out of the committee, it must be great legislation. It must be veterans legislation. We all must be arm in arm and let's go ahead and pass it. Time out. I think we should be very cautious and careful.

Like I said, we don't even give a specialty payment to prisoners of war, and we're going to select a particular group of individuals to give them.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time because I have further comments I would like to make.

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I would like to yield such time as he may consume to one of our new Members who has been very active on our committee, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. NYE).

Mr. NYE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of our mer-

chant mariners from World War II and to urge this House to provide them with the compensation that is many years overdue.

I would first like to thank Chairman FILNER for his tireless work and his commitment to this issue. As a representative from an area with a long maritime tradition, it means a lot to me personally.

The Merchant Marines were an integral part of our fighting forces during the Second World War. Just like our war fighters, they answered the country's call. And just like those brave soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines, many of our merchant mariners made the ultimate sacrifice.

Over 1,500 Merchant Marine ships were sunk during the war, many of them by German U-boats during the perilous crossing of the North Atlantic. By the end of the war, our merchant mariners had suffered the highest casualty rate of any service. Of the approximately 250,000 Americans who served on our Merchant ships, more than one out of every 26 was killed.

But despite these sacrifices, they were not granted the same benefits that other veterans received. They were promised benefits by President Roosevelt, but they were systematically cut out of the GI Bill, health care, loans, and the other tools that our grateful Nation provided to our "Greatest Generation."

Even though many of our merchant marines were eventually granted veteran status many years later, the effects of their unequal treatment put them at a disadvantage that continues to this day.

That is why I am proud to be a cosponsor of H.R. 23. This bill will provide each qualifying merchant mariner with a \$1,000 monthly stipend, a small step in the right direction of acknowledging the great sacrifices that these brave men made.

Madam Speaker, this is an injustice that should never have happened. It should have been fixed long ago. But with every year that passes, there are fewer and fewer of these men left among us. It is now 2009, over 63 years after the end of World War II, and it is long past time for us to right this wrong.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

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

This conversation we are having here on the floor with regard to degrees of valor is off the mark. Merchant mariners exhibited valor. They have been granted their veteran status. The question is whether we should now give them a service pension, which we do not do for any other veterans groups except the most highly decorated veterans, our Medal of Honor recipients.

The argument being made is that merchant mariners were shortchanged because they did not receive GI Bill benefits, unlike the members of the Armed Forces who then served in

World War II. However, 28 other groups that also provided military-related service in the U.S. during World War II have received veteran status in the same manner as merchant mariners and, likewise, did not qualify for GI Bill benefits.

If equity were really the issue, this bill would help these groups, too. But H.R. 23, as amended, does not. This bill unfairly ignores them and, thus, does not provide full equity. It creates an inequity among veterans, distinguishing the value of one group over and above someone else, something that we don't do in the military. We're very cautious and very careful not to do that type of thing, to say that, well, if you're a combatant and you're on the front line, then your service is more important than someone who is in a rear echelon, or, gosh, if you were back in the home States or in the National Guard, then your service isn't as important as somebody who is on the battlefield. Time out. We don't do that in the military.

The reason we don't do that is we look at everybody as a team, as one team. So when we go to a theater of operations, it may take seven to actually put one combatant on the field of battle because everybody is important, from the theater Army all the way to the actual combatants. And as a matter of fact, when they fall on the battlefield, maybe when they go to Landstuhl, Germany, they come back to the States. Everybody is an important part of the team, and we don't then make discriminatory judgments that someone's military service is more important than another and, thereby, Congress then awards a service pension.

I'm just appealing to the Members do not do this. It will have consequences among the ranks and the services of our military.

I would like to talk about the other 28 groups. One of these other groups of veterans of whom are being discriminated here against if this legislation passes is the American all-volunteer group famously known as the Flying Tigers. They were American P-40 pilots and ground crews who worked for the Chinese Government in the air defense of Rangoon and other parts of China before and after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The Flying Tigers are credited with destroying an impressive 297 enemy aircraft and had one of the best kill ratios of any air group in the Pacific theater. There were approximately 80 pilots that flew for the Flying Tigers, of which 21 died in service.

□ 1530

An amazing 19 of them were credited with five or more air-to-air victories,

making them aces. Nineteen out of the 80 pilots were aces. But they are not worthy for this service pension, okay, because we are not going to do that. Of the over 300 original members of the Flying Tigers, 18 of them are still alive today.

Another one of the groups that is being discriminated against here today I would like to highlight is the Women Airforce Service Pilots, the WASPS. There is even a colleague of mine who has legislation to get them the Congressional Medal of Honor. Yet a vote in favor of this legislation today discriminates against the Women Airforce Service Pilots. These were female pilots who flew every type of mission that an Army Air Force male pilot flew during World War II, except combat missions.

They freed up their male pilots for combat by flying planes from factories to air fields and flew over 60 million miles in every type of aircraft in the Army Air Force arsenal, from the fastest of fighters to heaviest of bombers. More than 25,000 women applied for WASPS service and less than 1,900 were accepted. After completing months of military flight training, 1,078 of them earned their wings and became the first women in history to fly American military aircraft. Thirty-eight of these brave women died while serving their country.

Madam Speaker, these are just some of the stories of two of these groups out of the 28 who all served loyally, selflessly, and courageously. Yet their service also contributed directly to victory in 1945, but they are being ignored and discriminated against by the legislation before us.

In May 11 of this year, a letter to all Members opposing H.R. 23, as amended, the Veterans of Foreign Wars stated with respect to the Merchant Mariners of World War II that "singling out this group, no matter how valiant their service, will create inequities. Congress should not single them out for special benefits when they are not provided to other groups."

Madam Speaker, I offered an amendment at the full committee of H.R. 23, as amended, to include these other 28 groups, who are similarly situated. It was rejected on a 15-14 vote.

I would like to insert the May 11, 2009, letter from the VFW and the names of the other 28 groups who have been granted veteran status of World War II to be placed into the RECORD.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington DC, May 11, 2009.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: This week, the House of Representatives is expected to take action on H.R. 23, the Belated Thank You to

the Merchant Marines of World War II Act. This legislation would grant a \$1,000 monthly benefit to individuals who served in the Merchant Marines between December 7, 1941 and December 31, 1946. The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. has serious concerns with the equity of this bill, and we urge you to oppose it.

The VFW has no doubt about the dedication and bravery the Merchant Marines demonstrated during World War II. Their contributions to the war effort in transporting cargo to keep forces supplied enabled the Allied forces to win the War. They suffered heavy casualties, with nearly one-in-26 dying in the Atlantic theater. We value and salute their efforts.

However, the VFW cannot support a special monthly benefit for this single group. Merchant Marines are just one of 28 civilian groups that have been awarded Veterans status by virtue of their military-related service. Not one of these other 28 groups receives a special monthly benefit such as this. In fact, the only group of veterans that receives a special monthly benefit is Medal of Honor recipients.

Singling this group out—no matter how valiant their service—would create inequities. Congress should not single them out for special benefits when they are not provided to other groups, such as the Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WASPs) or those honorably discharged members of "The Flying Tigers." Further, many World War II veterans who served on the front lines are not receiving any form of compensation, and certainly not a \$1,000 monthly benefit. We cannot put one group ahead of all others.

The VFW is also concerned about the funding for this proposal. The special monthly benefit would consume almost \$500 million of the VA's budget over the next five years. With waves of service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and presenting challenges for the entire VA health care system, especially for those who are grievously wounded, taking away money to give a special bonus to one segment of veterans is not right. This is especially true because the vast majority of the Merchant Marines covered under this bill are already entitled to VA health care and most veterans' benefits.

The VFW greatly respects their bravery and their dedication, but we cannot support legislation that singles them out above other deserving groups. We ask you to keep these issues in mind, and to oppose this bill's passage.

Very truly yours,
ROBERT E. WALLACE,
Executive Director.

WORLD WAR II SERVICE BY PARTICULAR GROUPS

A number of groups who provided military-related service to the United States can receive VA benefits. A discharge by the Secretary of Defense is needed to qualify. Service in the following groups has been certified as active military service for benefits purposes:

RECOGNIZED GROUPS UNDER PUBLIC LAW 95-202

Date of recognition	Recognized group
1 8 Mar 79	Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WASPs) (WWII).
2 18 Mar 80	Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) (WWII).
3 22 Jan 81	Civilian Employees, Pacific Naval Air Bases, Who Actively Participated in the Defense of Wake Island during WWII.
4 17 Jul 81	Male Civilian Ferry Pilots (WWII).
5 7 Apr 82	Wake Island defenders from Guam (WWII).
6 27 Dec 82	Civilian Personnel Assigned to the Secret Intelligence Element of the OSS. (WWII).
7 10 May 83	Guam Combat Patrol (WWII).

RECOGNIZED GROUPS UNDER PUBLIC LAW 95-202—Continued

	Date of recognition	Recognized group
8	7 Feb 84	Quartermaster Corps Keswick Crew on Corregidor (WWII).
9	7 Feb 84	U.S. Civilian Volunteers Who Actively Participated in the Defense of Bataan (WWII).
10	18 Oct 85	U.S. Merchant Seamen Who Served on Blockships in Support of Operation Mulberry in the World War II invasion of Normandy (WWII).
11	19 Jan 88	American Merchant Marine in Oceangoing Service during the Period of Armed Conflict, December 7, 1941 to August 15, 1945 (WWII).
12	2 Aug 88	Civilian U.S. Navy IFF Technicians Who Served in the Combat Areas of the Pacific during World War II (December 7, 1941 to August 15, 1945) (WWII).
13	30 Aug 90	U.S. Civilians of the American Field Service (AFS) Who Served Overseas Under U.S. Armies and U.S. Army Groups in World War II During the Period December 7, 1941 through May 8, 1945 (WWII).
14	5 Oct 90	U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of American Airlines Who Served Overseas as a result of American Airlines' Contract with Air Transport Command during the Period December 14, 1941 through August 14, 1945 (WWII).
15	8 Apr 91	Civilian Crewmen of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey vessels who performed their service in areas of immediate military hazard while conducting cooperative operations with and for the United States Armed Forces within a time frame of December 7, 1941 to August 15, 1945 (WWII) (Qualifying vessels are: the Derickson, Explorer, Gilber, Hilgard, E. Lester Jones, Lydonia Patton, Surveyor, Wainwright, Westdahl, Oceanographer, Hydrographer and Pathfinder).
16	3 May 91	Honorably Discharged Members of the American Volunteer Group (Flying Tigers) Who Served During the Period December 7, 1941 to July 18, 1942 (WWII).
17	12 May 92	U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of United Air Lines (UAL), Who Served Overseas as a Result of UAL's Contract With the Air Transport Command During the Period December 14, 1941 through August 14, 1945 (WWII).
18	12 May 92	U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of Transcontinental and Western Air (TWA), Inc., Who Served Overseas as a Result of TWA's Contract with the Air Transport Command during the Period December 14, 1941 through August 14, 1945 (WWII).
19	29 Jun 92	U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corporation (Convair Division), Who Served Overseas as a Result of a Contract with the Air Transport Command during the Period December 14, 1941 through August 14, 1945 (WWII).
20	17 Jul 92	U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of Pan American World Airways and its subsidiaries and affiliates, Who Served Overseas as a Result of Pan American's Contract with the Air Transport Command and Naval Air Transport Service during the Period December 14, 1941 through August 14, 1945 (WWII).
21	29 Jun 92	Honorably Discharged Members of the American Volunteer Guard, Eritrea Service Command during the Period June 21, 1942 to March 31, 1943 (WWII).
22	13 Dec 93	U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of Northwest Airlines, Who Served Overseas as a Result of Northwest Airlines' Contract with the Air Transport Command during the Period December 14, 1941 through August 14, 1945 (WWII).
23	13 Dec 93	U.S. Civilian Female Employees of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps While Serving in the Defense of Bataan and Corregidor During the Period January 2, 1942 to June 12, 1945 (WWII).
24	2 Jun 97	U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of Northeast Airlines Atlantic Division, who served overseas in the result Northeast Airlines' contract with the Air Transport Command during the Period December 7, 1941, to August 14, 1945 (WWII).
25	2 Jun 97	U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of Braniff Airways, who served overseas in the North Atlantic or under the jurisdiction of the North Atlantic Wing as a result of a contract with Air Transport Command during the period February 26, 1942, to August 14, 1945 (WWII).
26	30 Sep 99	Approximately 50 Chamorro and Carolinian policemen, who received military training and under the command of the 6th Provisional Military Police Battalion, to accompany U.S. Marines in combat patrol activity from August 19, 1945, to September 2, 1945.
27	27 Aug 99	Operational Analysis Group of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, who served overseas from December 7, 1941, through August 15, 1945.
28	9 Aug 00	Service as a member of the Alaska Territorial Guard during World War II of any individual who was honorably discharged under section 8147 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 2001 (P.L. 106-259).

Now, while I am disappointed with regard to the outcome, I am encouraged that when the vote was concluded that Chairman FILNER had agreed to consider separate legislation with regard to these groups. Immediately following the markup, I introduced H.R. 2270, the Benefits of Qualified World War II Veterans Act of 2009, which provides equity to those other groups by providing them the same type of payment as sought here today.

Now that this whole issue is becoming better understood, it is my hope that other Members will join me in supporting H.R. 2270 to ensure fair treatment for all of these groups equally deserving.

H.R. 23, as amended, much like the legislation that comes to the floor, is certainly well meaning, but I must oppose it. I oppose it because you cannot resolve an inequity through discrimination, and that's exactly what this bill does.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 23, as amended, would provide an unprecedented \$1,000 monthly payment to World War II Merchant Mariners.

There is no dispute that these mariners braved great danger and suffered great loss in their service to the Allies.

This service has been recognized. These Merchant Mariners were given veteran status in 1988 and have VA healthcare and benefits. This bill would grant them a non-service connected pension unlike anything Congress has authorized, with one exception: the service pension of \$1,100 for recipients of the Medal of Honor.

Thus, the conversation about the Merchant Marines' degree of valor is off the mark. They were valorous. They have been granted vet-

erans' status. The question is whether we should now give them a service pension, which we do not do for other groups of veterans except our most highly decorated veterans, our Medal of Honor recipients.

The argument begin made is that the Merchant Mariners were shortchanged because they did not receive G.I. Bill benefits, unlike the members of the Armed Forces who served in World War II. However, twenty-eight other Veterans groups who were also contractors and mercenaries that also provided military-related service to the U.S. in World War II have also received veteran status as the Merchant Mariners, and likewise did not qualify for the G.I. Bill.

If equity was really the issue, this bill should help these groups, too; but H.R. 23, as amended, unfairly ignores them and thus does not provide full equity. It creates an inequity among veterans, diminishing the value of one group's service about others'. It is not possible to resolve an inequity through bias to Merchant Mariners by discriminating against similarly situated veterans groups.

Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the names of these 28 groups be inserted into the RECORD with my statement so that the discriminations against these veterans by this Congress will be noted.

One of those other groups of similarly situated veterans are members of the American Volunteer Group, famously known as the Flying Tigers. They were American P-40 pilots and ground crews who worked for the Chinese government in the air defense of Rangoon and other parts of China before and after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The Flying Tigers are credited with destroying an impressive 297 enemy aircraft and had one of the best kill ratios of any air group in the Pacific theater. There were approximately

80 pilots that flew for the Flying Tigers, of which 21 died in service.

An amazing 19 of them were credited with five or more air to air victories, making them aces.

Of the over 300 original members of the Flying Tigers only 18 of them are still with us today—yet the chairman has chosen to discriminate against them.

Another one of these groups that I would like to highlight are the Women Air Force Service Pilots (WASPS). These were female pilots who flew every type of mission that any Army Air Force male pilot flew during World War II, except combat missions.

They freed up male pilots for combat by flying planes from factories to airfields and overall flew 60 million miles in every type aircraft in the Army Air Force arsenal—from the fastest fighters to the heaviest bombers.

More than 25,000 women applied for WASP service, and fewer than 1,900 were accepted. After completing months of military flight training, 1,078 of them earned their wings and became the first women in history to fly American military aircraft. Thirty-eight of these brave pilots died while serving their country—yet the chairman has chosen to discriminate against them.

Madam Speaker, these are just the stories of two of these groups who all served loyally, selflessly, and courageously.

Their service contributed directly to victory in 1945 and yet they are ignored by this bill.

In their May 11th letter to all members opposing H.R. 23, as amended, the Veterans of Foreign Wars agreed with this argument and stated with respect to the Merchant Mariners of World War II that, "Singling out this group—no matter how valiant their service—would create inequities. Congress should not single them out for special benefits when they are not provided to other groups . . .".

Madam Speaker I offered an amendment at the Full Committee markup of H.R. 23, as amended, to include these other 28 groups but it was rejected by a vote of 15–14.

I am very disappointed by this outcome.

Immediately following the markup, I introduced H.R. 2270, the Benefits for Qualified World War II Veterans Act of 2009, which provides equity to these other groups by providing them the same \$1,000 a month pension that H.R. 23, as amended, would provide to Merchant Mariners. Now that this whole issue is becoming better understood, it is my hope that other members will join me in supporting H.R. 2270 to ensure fair treatment for all of these groups who are equally deserving.

H.R. 23, as amended, like much of the legislation that comes to this floor, is certainly well-meaning. It may well pass the House, although I have opposed it. And if it does, then it will behoove us to also provide full equity and pass H.R. 2270 as soon as it can be brought to the floor. I urge all members to oppose H.R. 23, as amended.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. BUYER. I urge all Members to oppose this legislation before us, and I appeal to them, do not create a service pension that will differentiate members' service from others. This is the wrong approach.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, without a doubt these men, now octogenarians, average age almost 85, fought the good fight and gave our country their all. And H.R. 23 will provide them with the compensation they earned or was promised them and has been denied for decades, not just in words but in deeds.

Madam Speaker, I ask that letters of support from the American Maritime Officers, the International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots, the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association, and the Seafarers International Union expressing their strong support for H.R. 23, as amended, be included in the RECORD.

MAY 5, 2009.

Hon. BOB FILNER,

*Chairman, House Veterans' Affairs Committee,
Cannon House Office Building, Wash-
ington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: We are writing on behalf of the undersigned American maritime labor organizations to express our strong support for H.R. 23, the "Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2009" and to urge your Committee to favorably report this legislation. The organizations we represent have the privilege of including among our retired members individuals who served our country with honor and distinction during World War II. These World War II merchant mariners are truly representative of the "Greatest Generation", and we are extremely proud of them and the example they have set for all merchant mariners who continue to respond to our Nation's call whenever and wherever they are needed.

General Colin Powell, following the Persian Gulf War, said that: "Since I became Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I have come to appreciate first-hand why our Merchant Marine has long been called our Nation's fourth arm of defense. The American seafarer provides an essential service to the

well-being of our Nation as was demonstrated so clearly during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. . . ."

We agree wholeheartedly with you that the enactment of H.R. 23 is necessary "to correct an injustice that has been inflicted upon a group of World War II veterans, the World War II United States merchant mariners." We sincerely thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your initiative in working to address this injustice by sponsoring legislation to provide long-overdue recognition and benefits to World War II merchant mariners. We are also grateful to your colleagues who have cosponsored H.R. 23 and for their decision to add their names to the bipartisan supporters who are committed to working with you and with us for the enactment of H.R. 23 this year.

There is not, nor should there be, any debate as to the invaluable service given by American merchant mariners during World War II. In fact, World War II merchant mariners suffered the highest casualty rate of any of the branches of the Armed Forces other than the United States Marine Corps, as they delivered troops, tanks, food, fuel and other needed equipment and material to every theater of World War II. Enemy forces sank more than 800 merchant vessels between 1941 and 1944 alone.

As General of the Army, Allied Expeditionary Forces in Europe, Dwight David Eisenhower stated, "When final victory is ours there is no organization that will share its credit, more deservedly than the Merchant Marine." Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief, Pacific Theater, said that "The Merchant Marine . . . has repeatedly proved its right to be considered as an integral part of our fighting team."

General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, speaking of the merchant seamen who supported the liberation of the Philippines, stated that "With us, they have shared the heaviest enemy fire. On these islands I have ordered them off their ships and into foxholes when their ships became untenable targets of attack. At our side they have suffered in bloodshed and death. . . . They have contributed tremendously to our success. I hold no branch in higher esteem than the Merchant Marine Service."

Finally, President Franklin Roosevelt eloquently and accurately summed up the contributions of World War II merchant mariners, telling the country and the world that they "have written one of the most brilliant chapters. They have delivered the goods when and where needed in every theater of operations and across every ocean in the biggest, the most difficult and most dangerous job ever taken."

Yet, despite this record of exemplary, indispensable service to America's war efforts, merchant mariners were not given the formal recognition and benefits granted other services by the Congress through the GI Bill of Rights in 1945. In fact, no legislation to recognize the contributions made by World War II merchant mariners was enacted until Congress extended limited veterans' status to these gallant American citizens in 1988.

We believe, as you have stated Mr. Chairman, that it is time to correct this injustice. We believe our country has an obligation to the remaining World War II merchant mariners, to fully acknowledge their service and to give them the measure of benefit called for in H.R. 23. We ask you and your Committee to take the first step in righting this wrong by favorably reporting H.R. 23 to the House of Representatives for its consideration.

We note that during the consideration of H.R. 23 in the last Congress, changes were made to the legislation that would, among other things, reduce its overall cost. For example, it no longer provides any payment of

benefits to survivors' spouses and revised the legislation so that it is no longer self-funded. Rather, it sets up a Merchant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund and leaves it to Congress to later determine funding within its spending caps. Finally, those who have received benefits under the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (the GI Bill—PL 78-346) are not eligible for benefits under H.R. 23. The bill, with these changes, is the legislation that was adopted by the House of Representatives on July 7, 2007 and we continue to support H.R. 23 with these changes.

We again thank you and your colleagues for the support you have shown for the World War II merchant mariners and we stand ready to work with you for its enactment this year.

Sincerely,

Thomas Bethel, President, American Maritime Officers; Timothy Brown, President, International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots; Don Keefe, President, Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association; Anthony Poplawski, President, Marine Firemen's Union; Gunnar Lundeberg, President, Sailors' Union of the Pacific; Michael Sacco, President, Seafarers International Union.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
FOR UNIFORMED SERVICES®,

Springfield, VA, May 11, 2009.

DEAR MEMBER OF CONGRESS:

On behalf of the National Association for Uniformed Services (NAUS), celebrating its 41st year representing all ranks, branches and components of the uniformed services, their spouses and survivors, I write to ask you to approve H.R. 23, the Belated Thank You to Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2009. NAUS strongly urges you to recognize finally, completely, and honorably, the service given in harm's-way during World War II by members of the U.S. Merchant Marines.

Despite recent arguments against this bill, H.R. 23 does not, repeat, not put one group ahead of all others nor does it take funding away from any other veterans groups or programs. History shows that the Merchant Mariners of World War II had every reasonable expectation that they would be treated as veterans for their service in World War II.

When President Roosevelt signed the GI Bill in 1944, he said, "I trust Congress will soon provide similar opportunities to members of the Merchant Marine who risked their lives time and again during the War for the welfare of their country." Unfortunately, Congress did not act until 44 years later, long after other war veterans had used the generous benefits our nation provided and had received the medical care necessary to treat their wounds.

For all those years, the U.S. Merchant Marine Combat Veterans received no help from the Government they served and little to no recognition for wartime service to our country. They missed out on the GI Bill for their education, the GI Home Loan Program for purchase of their family home, and related earned benefits, not to mention the cost of the medical care they underwent for the wounds, injuries and illnesses they experienced. Their service was shelved and taken for granted.

Nearly 300,000 men answered the call to train and serve in the U.S. Merchant Marine during WWII. Many never returned home and many others who did return came back with both physical and mental wounds. These men put their lives on the line for their country with 9,521 killed (or died from wounds), 12,000 wounded, 663 taken as Prisoner of War, and 66 who died in POW camps.

Fewer than 10,000 of these brave men, who challenged our enemy at sea and willingly

risked life to help win the war, survive today. We ask you to support those now almost-ancient mariners whose heroic contribution as members of the ocean-going Merchant Mariners struggled to help secure the American victory in World War II.

On behalf of a grateful nation, I urge you to honor these brave men with your vote for H.R. 23, The Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariner Combat Veterans of World War II. Time is running short for a final thanks to the Merchant Mariner of World War II. Let us not squander this opportunity. As always, thank you for your leadership and continued support of America's veterans.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM M. MATZ, JR.,
Major General, U.S. Army, Retired,
President.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
FOR UNIFORMED SERVICES,®
Springfield, VA, May 5, 2009.

Hon. BOB FILNER,
Chairman, Veterans' Affairs Committee, House
of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the National Association for Uniformed Services (NAUS), I write to offer our support for H.R. 23, The Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2009, a bill to recognize the honorable service these brave and courageous individuals gave in wartime to their country.

By establishing a Merchant Mariners Equity Compensation Fund, the bill would provide monthly payments of \$1,000 to qualifying members of the United States Merchant Marines who, motivated by a deep love of country and personal sense of patriotism, faced enemy action and contributed decisively to the war's final victory.

NAUS commends your strength of leadership in recognition of the heroic service put forth during World War II by the thousands of young men who volunteered for service in the U.S. Merchant Marine. These forgotten heroes have struggled for more than six decades for honorable recognition by the nation they proudly served and their recognition is long overdue.

Once again, the National Association for Uniformed Services fully supports The Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act. We appreciate working with you and thank you for your leadership in recognizing the vital role these brave men served in helping to win the war.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM M. MATZ, JR.,
Major General, U.S. Army, Retired,
President.

Madam Speaker, William Matz, Jr., major general of the U.S. Army, retired, who is president of the National Association for Uniformed Services, wrote to all Members of Congress that "on behalf of NAUS celebrating its 41st year representing all ranks, branches and components of the uniformed services, their spouses and survivors, I write to ask you to approve H.R. 23, the Belated Thank You to Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2009. NAUS strongly urges you to recognize finally, completely, and honorably, the service given in harm's way during World War II by members of the U.S. Merchant Marines.

"Despite recent arguments against this bill, H.R. 23 does not, repeat, not put one group ahead of all others nor does it take funding away from any other veterans group or programs. History shows that the Merchant Mariners

of World War II had every reasonable expectation that they would be treated as veterans for their service in World War II.

"When President Roosevelt signed the GI Bill in 1944, he said, 'I trust Congress will soon provide similar opportunities to members of the Merchant Marine who risked their lives time and time again during the War for the welfare of their country.' Unfortunately, Congress did not act until 44 years later, long after other war veterans had used the generous benefits our Nation provided and had received the medical care necessary to their wounds.

"For all those years, the U.S. Merchant Marine Combat Veterans received no help from the government they served and little to no recognition for wartime service to our country. They missed out on the GI Bill for their education, the GI Home Loan Program for purchase of their family home, and related earned benefits, not to mention the cost of the medical care they underwent for the wounds, injuries and illnesses they experienced. Their service was shelved and taken for granted.

"Nearly 300,000 men answered the call to train and serve in the U.S. Merchant Marine during World War II. Many never returned home and many others who did return came back with both physical and mental wounds. These men put their lives on the line for their country with 9,521 killed (or died from wounds) 12,000 wounded, 663 taken as prisoner of war, and 66 who died in POW camps.

"Fewer than 10,000 of these brave men, who challenged our enemy at sea and willingly risked life to help win the war, survive today. We ask you to support these now almost-ancient mariners whose heroic contribution as members of the ocean-going merchant mariners struggled to help secure the American victory in World War II.

"On behalf of a grateful Nation, I urge you to honor these brave men with your vote for H.R. 23, the Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariner Combat Veterans of World War II. Time is running short for a final thanks to the merchant mariner of World War II. Let us not squander this opportunity."

Madam Speaker, that was the letter from the president of the National Association for Uniformed Services, Major General William Matz of the U.S. Army, Retired.

I can say it no better, and I urge my colleagues to unanimously support H.R. 23, as amended.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 23, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GAO STUDY OF CIVIL AIR PATROL IN HOMELAND SECURITY MISSIONS

Mr. WALZ. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1178) to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study on the use of Civil Air Patrol personnel and resources to support homeland security missions, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1178

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

SECTION 1. CIVIL AIR PATROL STUDY.

(a) *STUDY.*—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study of the functions and capabilities of the Civil Air Patrol to support the homeland security missions of State, local, and tribal governments and the Department of Homeland Security. In conducting the study, the Comptroller General shall review the process by which the Civil Air Patrol may provide assistance to the Secretary of Homeland Security, other Federal agencies, and States to support homeland security missions by—

(1) providing aerial reconnaissance or communications capabilities for border security;

(2) providing capabilities for collective response to an act of terrorism, natural disaster, or other man-made event by assisting in damage assessment and situational awareness, conducting search and rescue operations, assisting in evacuations, transporting time-sensitive medical or other materials;

(3) providing assistance in the exercise and training of departmental resources responsible for the intercept of aviation threats to designated restricted areas; and

(4) carrying out such other activities as may be determined appropriate by the Comptroller General in the conduct of this review.

(b) *REPORT.*—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Committees on Homeland Security and Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report containing the findings of the review conducted under subsection (a). The report shall include—

(1) an assessment of the feasibility and cost effectiveness of using Civil Air Patrol assets for the purposes described in subsection (a); and

(2) an assessment as to whether the current mechanisms for Federal agencies and States to request support from the Civil Air Patrol are sufficient or whether new agreements between relevant Federal agencies and the Civil Air Patrol are necessary.

(c) *REPORT TO CONGRESS.*—Not later than 90 days after the date of receipt of the report under subsection (b), the Secretary of Homeland Security shall review and analyze the study and submit to the Committees on Homeland Security and Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report on such review and analysis, which shall include any recommendations of the Secretary for further action that could affect the organization and administration of the Department of Homeland Security.

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