

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 MIS- SIONS

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.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALZ. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material on H.R. 1178.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WALZ. Madam Speaker, I would like to insert into the RECORD an exchange of letters between Chairman OBERSTAR and Chairman THOMPSON regarding H.R. 1178.

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,  
WASHINGTON, DC, MAY 7, 2009.

Hon. JAMES L. OBERSTAR,  
*Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,*  
*House of Representatives, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing you regarding H.R. 1178, a bill "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," introduced on February 25, 2009, by Congressman Charles W. Dent. This legislation was initially referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and, in addition, to the Committee on Homeland Security.

In the interest of permitting your Committee to proceed expeditiously to floor consideration of this important legislation, I will waive further consideration of H.R. 1178. However, agreeing to waive consideration of this bill should not be construed as the Committee on Homeland Security waiving, altering, or otherwise affecting its jurisdiction over subject matters contained in the bill which fall within its Rule X jurisdiction.

Further, I request your support for the appointment of Homeland Security conferees during any House-Senate conference convened on this legislation. I also ask that a copy of this letter and your response be placed in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of this bill.

I look forward to working with you on this legislation and other matters of great importance to this nation.

Sincerely,

BENNIE G. THOMPSON,  
*Chairman.*

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE, WASHINGTON, DC,  
MAY 7, 2009.

Hon. BENNIE G. THOMPSON,  
*Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security,*  
*Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC.*

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: Thank you for your May 7, 2009 letter regarding H.R. 1178, a bill 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.

I agree that provisions in H.R. 1178 are of jurisdictional interest to the Committee on Homeland Security. I appreciate your willingness to waive rights to further consideration of H.R. 1178 to ensure the timely consideration of this legislation, and I acknowledge that through this waiver, your Committee is not relinquishing its jurisdiction over this legislation or similar language. Further, I will support your request to be

represented in a House-Senate conference on those provisions over which the Committee on Homeland Security has jurisdiction in H.R. 1178.

This exchange of letters will be placed in the Congressional Record as part of the consideration of H.R. 1178 in the House.

I value your cooperation and look forward to working with you as we move ahead with this legislation.

Sincerely,

JAMES L. OBERSTAR, M.C.  
*Chairman.*

Madam Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the gentleman from Pennsylvania's legislation, H.R. 1178. It does direct the Comptroller General to do a smart study of the Civil Air Patrol's ability to support the Nation's Homeland Security and emergency response activities.

Specifically, H.R. 1178 requires the Government Accountability Office to issue a report within 180 days of enactment that will describe the current functions and capabilities of the Civil Air Patrol to support emergency response and Homeland Security missions.

GAO is required to assess how the Civil Air Patrol may provide assistance for border security and a variety of threats and hazards, such as damage assessment, search and rescue operations, evacuations and transporting time-sensitive medical materials.

In addition, the report must focus on the cost-effectiveness of using the Civil Air Patrol to support a security mission, as well as whether mechanisms and agreements are sufficient, or whether new agreements between Federal agencies and the Civil Air Patrol are necessary to request support. The report must be reviewed and analyzed by the Secretary of Homeland Security and presented to Congress within 90 days with any recommendations for further action.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1178.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DENT. I thank my good friend, the gentleman from Minnesota, for his kind comments about my legislation.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1178. This bill, which I introduced in February of this year, is similar to the Civil Air Patrol legislation that was passed by this House during the 110th Congress with overwhelming bipartisan support. I am pleased to have the opportunity to bring this bill before the House for consideration once again.

I would like to thank Chairman OBERSTAR and Ranking Member MICA of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for their cooperation and support in bringing this legislation to the floor today. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Chairman BENNIE THOMPSON and Ranking Member PETER KING and the Committee on Homeland Security for their continued support for this initiative.

Additionally, I would also like to thank Chairwoman SHEILA JACKSON-LEE of the Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection, on which I serve as ranking member, for her support as a cosponsor of H.R. 1178.

This bill, H.R. 1178, directs the Comptroller General of the Government Accountability Office to conduct a study to determine how the Civil Air Patrol or CAP can help support Homeland Security missions. The GAO will generate a report based on the findings of the study. Once complete, the report will be reviewed by both the Homeland Security Committee and the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Specifically, this study will examine the ways in which the Civil Air Patrol may assist State, local and tribal governments and the Department of Homeland Security by providing aerial reconnaissance or communications assistance for border security, augmenting the Department's situational awareness in search and rescue capabilities in the aftermath of an act of terrorism, natural disaster or other catastrophic event, and providing other assistance deemed appropriate by the Comptroller General.

Once the study is completed and the GAO publishes its report, DHS must review and analyze that report, and within 90 days submit recommendations to Congress for further action. Aviation assets traditionally have played an important role in border security, in the interdiction of contraband and in search and rescue operations, evacuations and after-action analysis that must be performed in the wake of a catastrophic event.

We watch as communities continue to deal with fires or tornados, hurricanes, and floods that turn families' lives upside down. We continue to witness drug cartel violence on the Mexican border.

H.R. 1178 will allow for further explanation into the use of the Civil Air Patrol capabilities for delivering needed relief in such situations. The Civil Air Patrol has a long history of service to this Nation. The organization was founded at the outbreak of the Second World War, during which it served as a vital watchdog along the coastlines of America, protecting us from the threat of German U-boats that patrolled our shores. I even believe they got a few back then.

Since that time, the Civil Air Patrol has regularly assisted States in search and rescue operations and emergency response, including action during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The Civil Air Patrol deployed 1,800 members to the devastated areas, logging more than 50,000 volunteer hours and distributing over 30,000 pounds of relief supplies.

Today our Civil Air Patrol force of approximately 57,000 volunteers from varying professional backgrounds, with over 500 aircraft across the country, stands ready to assist in the aforementioned missions. In the Commonwealth

of Pennsylvania alone, we have over 2,300 volunteers, over 1,000 of which are cadets between the ages of 12 and 18.

I urge my colleagues to support this piece of legislation as we help to ensure the effective use of all available resources for securing our Homeland Security. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to say here today that the Civil Air Patrol enthusiastically supports this legislation.

Mr. PETRI. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1178 originally introduced by my colleague from Pennsylvania, Mr. DENT. The bill directs the Comptroller General of the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct a study to determine how the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) can help support homeland security missions and to report to Congress on his findings.

The Civil Air Patrol (CAP) is a Congressionally-chartered, federally-supported, non-profit corporation that serves as the official auxiliary of the United States Air Force (USAF). First organized over sixty years ago at the beginning of World War II, the Civil Air Patrol is a 57,000-member volunteer cadre that flies 500 planes nationwide.

In addition to its aerospace education mission for youth and the general public, the Civil Air Patrol handles 90 percent of inland search and rescue missions. Its members are responsible for approximately 75 lives saved each year.

Civil Air Patrol planes have been among the first to survey the aftermath of such disasters as the attacks of September 11, 2001, Hurricane Katrina, Texas and Oklahoma wildfires, and North Dakota flash flooding. The Civil Air Patrol has also assisted in humanitarian missions along the U.S. and Mexican border.

Border security, drug interdiction, search and rescue are just a few missions in which airborne reconnaissance and tracking would give homeland security officials valuable information critical to carrying out their objective.

The Civil Air Patrol is eager to further assist in Homeland Security missions. This bill will help better define how the Civil Air Patrol may be used more extensively to aid in homeland security missions.

Mr. DENT. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WALZ. I thank the gentleman for his thoughtful piece of legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1178, 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.

□ 1545

#### COMMENDING FLOOD FIGHTING EFFORTS IN NORTH DAKOTA AND MINNESOTA

Mr. WALZ. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 415) commending the he-

roic efforts of the people fighting the floods in North Dakota and Minnesota.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

#### H. RES. 415

Whereas 47 of the 53 counties in North Dakota and 28 of the 87 counties in Minnesota have been declared Federal disaster areas;

Whereas wide swaths of North Dakota and Minnesota have faced unprecedented flooding crises, including cities along the Des Lacs, Heart, James, Knife, Missouri, Little Missouri, Park, Pembina, Red, Sheyenne, Souris, and Wild Rice Rivers and Beaver Creek;

Whereas the people of North Dakota and Minnesota have suffered tremendous damage to their homes, livelihoods, and communities;

Whereas the ranchers of North Dakota and Minnesota are estimated to have lost nearly 100,000 head of livestock;

Whereas many of the roads and bridges, and much of the other infrastructure, in North Dakota and Minnesota are in need of repair;

Whereas, despite terrible conditions, the people of North Dakota and Minnesota have shown the strength of their shared bond, coming together in large numbers to save their cities, towns, businesses, farms, and ranches;

Whereas stories of exceptional efforts abound, from people filling millions of sandbags on short notice, to people saving lives and effecting rapid emergency evacuations;

Whereas Federal, State, and local officials have provided outstanding leadership and effective service throughout the crisis in North Dakota and Minnesota; and

Whereas the response of the people of North Dakota and Minnesota to the disaster has shown the world how communities can unite, fight, and win in a crisis: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) commends the people of North Dakota and Minnesota for their heroic efforts in fighting the floods in North Dakota and Minnesota;

(2) commends the many people from around the United States who assisted the people of North Dakota and Minnesota during this time of need;

(3) expresses appreciation to the officials of the numerous Federal agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, working on the ground in North Dakota and Minnesota for their consistently rapid, efficient, and effective response to the disaster; and

(4) continues to stand with the communities of North Dakota and Minnesota in the efforts to recover from the flooding during 2009, and to improve protections against flooding in the future.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALZ. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H. Res. 415.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise in the strongest support of H. Res. 415, a resolution to commend the heroic efforts of the people fighting the recent floods in North Dakota and Minnesota.

In October of 2007, the House passed H. Res. 657 to express sympathy for the victims of the devastating flooding that occurred in the States of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. I spoke on the House floor then to commend our fellow citizens in the wake of Mother Nature's wrath, and to thank the men and women who serve this Nation as National Guardsmen, police officers, firefighters, emergency medical personnel, and others, who put themselves in danger every day to protect us. These dedicated professionals were once again called in the wake of the Red River floods.

In April 2009, several counties in Minnesota were greatly affected by flooding along the Red River. The Red River flows between North Dakota and Minnesota. Flooding along the Red River, combined with extremely cold weather, caused severe ice damage. Flooding conditions along the river were the result of one of the wettest springs, where winter stream flows were 300 percent above normal.

Twenty-four hours a day, every day of the year, all over this country, when any type of tragedy enters our lives, from a medical emergency facing a neighbor to a large-scale national disaster, terrorist attack, or other incident, our Nation's emergency responders and charitable organizations are the first on the scene to provide professional services, expert help, aid and comfort. These well-trained, highly skilled individuals are truly on the front lines in preparing for, responding to, and mitigating damages from a variety of hazards.

In addition to the heroic acts of neighbors and friends, we rise today to also acknowledge and praise the support of local businesses and many charitable organizations whose boundless generosity and caring are just one of the pillars of recovery on which we come to rely. I strongly support this resolution and urge its passage.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, in March, both Minnesota and North Dakota, as the gentleman just said, began experiencing severe storms and flooding. As a result, major disaster declarations were issued for a number of counties in those States pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to provide for Federal assistance.

But the numbers are staggering. Forty-seven of 53 counties in North Dakota and 28 of 87 counties in Minnesota