

WOMEN AIR FORCE SERVICE PILOTS (WASPs)

(Mr. MAFFEI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MAFFEI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the forerunner of today's women military pilots, the Women Airforce Service Pilots, or WASPs, who served during World War II.

More than 1,100 women flew more than 60 million miles and provided crucial aid to our Nation in a time of war. From 1943 to 1944, they delivered aircraft from manufacturers in the United States to air bases throughout the country.

Three women from my district—Virginia Meloney, Ann Elizabeth O'Connor, and Aleta Johnson—are being awarded the Congressional Gold Medal today in recognition of their service to our country as WASPs. Their fearlessness led the way for future women military pilots. It is long overdue that we recognize these incredible women. Our country thrives because of the bravery and dedication of our citizens like the WASPs.

Ann O'Connor, a Syracuse resident since 1980, learned last year that this medal ceremony was going to happen. Her family told me it meant the world to her. Her daughter told me she would have loved to be here today, but Ann passed away in September of 2009. Her son and daughter and grandchildren are here and will attend the ceremony, and I know she is here today in spirit and through the eyes of her two lovely granddaughters.

I congratulate all of the extraordinary WASPs who served our country. Thank you for your dedication and service.

WAR POWERS RESOLUTION

(Mr. QUIGLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, the Constitution makes clear: Only Congress can declare war. While no one can dispute that we are at war, Congress has never been asked to make this declaration.

I disagree with the Congressman from Ohio's policy position; to leave Afghanistan at this moment would undermine our national security and imperil our troops. However, the War Powers Resolution is an important check on unfettered executive authority.

It is worth remembering the period in our Nation's history during which this act of Congress was passed. In 1973, during the height of the Vietnam War and following the Gulf of Tonkin, Congress overrode a Presidential veto to pass this measure into law. It did so because it was concerned with the erosion of congressional authority to decide when the United States should be-

come involved in a war. While Vietnam was a very different war, the frustration felt by the American public and Members of Congress at that point in time is similar to that of today.

In overriding a presidential veto and passing the War Powers Resolution, Congress was reclaiming a critical responsibility the Founding Fathers had granted to it: that such a declaration would be a product of robust discourse, one in which our leaders would identify the nature of the threat posed by our enemy, define the objective of the mission before us, and fully weigh the prudence of sending our troops into harm's way.

RECOVERING FROM THE GREAT RECESSION

(Mrs. MALONEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, this chart is a quick way to assess the direction things have been going in our efforts to recover from the Great Recession. While it is not success, it is definitely progress. It shows the monthly change in nonfarm payrolls over the past 2 years.

Point A on this chart is when the Great Recession and the job losses began in December of 2007. Back then, we were assured the fundamentals of the economy were sound. For over a year, the economy went straight downhill and shed jobs at an increasing rate, with no change in direction.

The last month that the former President was in office, President Bush, we lost over 700,000 jobs. Point C represents the jobs report from the last 2 months, clearly a dramatic improvement from 1 year ago—in fact, a 96 percent improvement, from over 750,000 jobs lost to 35,000 jobs; again, progress in the right direction.

In addition to this general trend, I would like to point out that the temporary help sector continues to improve. More than 40,000 workers have been added to the temporary help sector, a clear indication of improvement in the job market.

We still have a distance to go before we get every American back to work, but as this chart clearly shows, we are slowly and steadily moving in the right direction. Again, this is progress.

RECOGNIZING THE 60TH AIR MO- BILITY WING AT TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE

(Mr. GARAMENDI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker and Members, I want to bring to your attention an extraordinary unit in our military in the Air Force located at Travis Air Force base in Fairfield, California. The 60th Air Mobility Wing does an extraordinary job providing services to the military as well as humanitarian efforts.

When the earthquake in Haiti occurred, it was that Wing that brought immediate assistance, using rapid deployment. They also have hospital services available that are immediately deployed. And when it comes time to open a new military base or a new field anywhere in the world, it's the 60th Air Mobility Wing located at Travis Air Force Base, Fairfield that provides those immediate services.

So I ask all the Members to recognize the good service, the good work this unit does, the extraordinary service provided by the men and women of the 60th Air Mobility Wing located at Travis Air Force Base, Fairfield, California.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

AUTHORIZING COMPENSATION FOR FURLOUGHED TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4786) to provide authority to compensate Federal employees for the 2-day period in which authority to make expenditures from the Highway Trust Fund lapsed, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4786

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

SECTION 1. COMPENSATION AND RATIFICATION OF AUTHORITY.

(a) COMPENSATION FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.—Any Federal employees furloughed as a result of the lapse in expenditure authority from the Highway Trust Fund after 11:59 p.m. on February 28, 2010, through March 2, 2010, shall be compensated for the period of that lapse at their standard rates of compensation, as determined under policies established by the Secretary of Transportation.

(b) RATIFICATION OF ESSENTIAL ACTIONS.—All actions taken by Federal employees, contractors, and grantees for the purposes of maintaining the essential level of Government operations, services, and activities to protect life and property and to bring about orderly termination of Government functions during the lapse in expenditure authority from the Highway Trust Fund after 11:59 p.m. on February 28, 2010, through March 2, 2010, are hereby ratified and approved if otherwise in accord with the provisions of the Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2010 (division B of Public Law 111-68).

(c) FUNDING.—Funds used by the Secretary to compensate employees described in subsection (a) shall be derived from funds previously authorized out of the Highway Trust Fund and made available or limited to the

Department of Transportation by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010 (Public Law 111-117) and shall be subject to the obligation limitations established in such Act.

(d) EXPENDITURES FROM HIGHWAY TRUST FUND.—To permit expenditures from the Highway Trust Fund to effectuate the purposes of this section, this section shall be deemed to be a section of the Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2010 (division B of Public Law 111-68), as in effect on the date of the enactment of the last amendment to such Resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill, H.R. 4786, and to include extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1030

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, we are here on both sides of the aisle this morning on a mission of equity, fairness, even mercy, on behalf of 1,922 career Federal employees of the U.S. Department of Transportation. They were unintended victims of a standoff in the other body, which resulted in a 2-day lapse in the authorization of funding for Federal highway, highway and motor carrier safety, and public transit programs.

On February 25, the House passed by voice vote H.R. 4691, the Temporary Extension Act of 2010. The bill extended the authorization for Federal surface transportation programs which otherwise were scheduled to expire on February 28.

The Senate's efforts to pass the bill and to clear it for signature by the President were stalled by the actions of one Senator from the other party. His repeated objections held up consideration past the February 28 deadline.

As a result of those objections, the authority to reimburse States, metropolitan regions, and public transit agencies for federally approved Highway Trust Fund expenditures lapsed. Several States, like Missouri, immediately cancelled bid openings. DOT's authority to pay administrative expenses for Federal employees from the Highway Trust Fund also lapsed.

These authorities were restored only when the Senator relented on the evening of March 2, allowing the Senate to consider the bill. The Senate passed it, and the President signed it that evening, but these 1,922 employees were collateral damage. They were doing their jobs, career professionals, and they just happened to be hit by this roadside bomb. It affected them in a very specific way. Let me toll the numbers:

1,307 employees of the Federal Highway Administration, 434 employees of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, 143 employees of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and 38 employees of the Research and Innovative Technology Administration.

Well, in a few days, on March 16 to be exact, the DOT will process its payroll for the current March pay period. If Congress does not act to reinstate those career employees, those 1,922 public servants, through no fault of their own and having simply been doing their jobs as they have done for decades in many cases, will suffer a 20 percent pay cut in their biweekly paychecks. Now, this is not an abstraction. This is not a debating point. This is not something that, oh, we'll put this off, and we'll think about it later.

At the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, a long-term career secretary of NHTSA in Seattle, Washington normally would net \$1,540 per paycheck, but because of the furlough, would be paid \$1,150, a \$390 cut. A \$390 cut could affect your paying your mortgage, buying your weekly groceries, buying fuel for your car. Maybe it could even affect your sending a birthday card to a child or to a grandchild. It has a real effect, and I think the Senator on the other side just had no idea, no interest, and no care about what the effects would be of his actions.

An entry-level program analyst, a GS-7 in Chicago, Illinois at NHTSA, normally would net \$1,200 per paycheck in 2 weeks. Because of the furlough, he would be paid only \$900. That's a \$300 cut. If you're taking \$900 home over 2 weeks, \$300 out of that paycheck is serious money, a serious effect on your life, and it's a serious devaluation of appreciation for your service to the public.

These are career personnel. At any time, that's painful, but at this time, with this severe meltdown, economic recession, it's devastating. Miss a car payment; miss a tuition payment; miss part of your mortgage payment; miss your fuel bill; miss your electric bill. All of these things are the real-world consequences of one person's peak over some piece of this bill that had nothing to do with these personnel, with these careerists.

To the great credit of Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, a former colleague of ours in this body, he called and said, I am really concerned about these career personnel. We have to make them whole. They didn't do anything wrong. The department didn't do anything wrong. They were just stand-by victims of this action, and we will be able to restore their pay without any increase in budget. We will just shift dollars from one account to another.

The bill that we bring before you today does not require any new Federal funding. The Secretary, as I just described, will draw on administrative

funding previously authorized and appropriated to finance the lost compensation for those personnel. It is the right thing to do. We need to do this. We have got to pass it by a unanimous voice vote.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my strong support for H.R. 4786. The distinguished gentleman from Minnesota has pretty well covered this bill in detail. I will speak briefly to it.

Beginning at midnight on February 28 through March 2, all of the programs and the operations of the agencies funded under the Highway Trust Fund came to a halt because the extension of these programs was not passed by Congress, as the chairman has already pointed out. As a result, nearly 2,000 Department of Transportation employees were furloughed. This bill will ensure that those employees furloughed, at no fault of their own, will receive their normal compensation for that period of time.

Between February 28 and March 2, certain surface transportation activities were classified as "essential," such as the Federal safety inspection of trucks and buses. This bill approves these activities as essential actions taken to save lives and to protect property, allowing the DOT employees who worked on those activities during the furlough to be paid.

I urge my colleagues to support the passage of H.R. 4786. I support the bill.

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

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Northern Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY). I wish to express my great appreciation and admiration of his concern for these Federal employees. Many Federal employees reside in his district. Even some of these 1,900 likely reside in the gentleman's district. I appreciate his coming forward to champion this bill.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bipartisan legislation, compensating those Federal transportation employees who were unfairly furloughed on March 1 and 2 because of a lapse in the Highway Trust Fund.

I also want to thank my good friend, the chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Mr. OBERSTAR, and the ranking member, Mr. MICA from Florida, for their great leadership and for their sensitivity. I want to thank Mr. COBLE from North Carolina for his support on this on a bipartisan basis. Their leadership is critical to resolving this problem.

As the chairman has indicated, H.R. 4786 is a simple, commonsense bill. It would compensate the 1,922 Department of Transportation employees who were forced out of their jobs for 2 days because of political gamesmanship on the other side of the Capitol. These employees were spread across four agencies at the DOT: the Federal Highway

Administration, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and the Research and Innovative Technology Administration. These employees were furloughed through no fault of their own. They became unwitting victims of an arcane practice in the upper Chamber that allows one Member's objection, irrespective of merit, to grind to a halt the work of the American people.

As my colleagues will recall, an objection by one Senator from Kentucky led to the lapse of authorization for the Highway Trust Fund despite the objections of 21 of his Republican colleagues, a majority of the Republican caucus, who supported the ultimate extension on a 78-19 vote.

This bill does two simple things: It authorizes those workers who were furloughed to be compensated at their normal rate of pay for the 2 days in which they were laid off, and it ratifies actions taken by DOT during those 2 days to maintain minimum essential services. The Congressional Budget Office says this legislation has no new costs associated with it, as the chairman indicated, as the funding will come from existing expenses. By taking action now, this Congress will prevent a 20 percent cut in the next bi-weekly paycheck for these dedicated public servants.

There is a clear precedent for this type of restorative action dating back to the much longer government shutdown in the late 1995-early 1996 period during the Clinton administration. During that period, there were two funding gaps totaling 26 days which affected more than 800,000 Federal workers. As part of the final appropriations bill for FY 1996, the Republican-controlled Congress restored compensation for those employees. It was the right thing to do then, and it is the right thing to do now.

I thank Chairman OBERSTAR for his leadership and for his collaboration and generosity on this important legislation. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes."

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I wish to express my great appreciation to Mr. MICA, the senior Republican on our committee and my partner and good friend and co-participant, in all of the works of our committee.

I share with him this tragic fact of the loss of pay for these 1,922 employees. He immediately said, We have to fix that. We have got to make it right by them, and he volunteered to cosponsor the legislation, which he has done.

I am delighted he designated the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Speaker, who a great advocate for our committee, a great participant in all of our work and who is also a very good, fair and decent-minded Member.

Today, we will do something really good and decent. We can all go home and feel we have accomplished something useful in a very specific and di-

rect fashion for 1,922 career professionals in transportation of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Again, I express admiration for Secretary LaHood for taking the initiative to bring this issue forward and to find a funding solution for it as well.

We have got to be able to pass this on a voice vote and to do good by these 1,922, and we need to set a good example for the other body as well.

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. OBERSTAR) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4786.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1045

COMMEMORATING THE 45TH ANNIVERSARY OF BLOODY SUNDAY

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 249) commemorating the 45th anniversary of Bloody Sunday and the role that it played in ensuring the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 249

Whereas brave people in the United States, known and unknown, of different races, ethnicities, and religions, risked their lives to stand for political equality and against racial discrimination in a quest culminating in the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965;

Whereas numerous people in the United States paid the ultimate price in pursuit of that quest, while demanding that the Nation live up to the guarantees enshrined in the 14th and 15th Amendments to the United States Constitution;

Whereas the historic struggle for equal voting rights led nonviolent civil rights marchers to gather on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, on March 7, 1965, a day that would come to be known as "Bloody Sunday", where their bravery was tested by a brutal response, which in turn sent a clarion call to the Nation that the fulfillment of democratic ideals could no longer be denied;

Whereas, March 7, 2010, marks the 45th anniversary of Bloody Sunday, the day on which some 600 civil rights marchers were demonstrating for African-American voting rights;

Whereas Congressman John Lewis and the late Hosea Williams led these marchers across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, where they were attacked with billy clubs and tear gas by State and local lawmen;

Whereas during the march on Bloody Sunday, Congressman Lewis was beaten unconscious, leaving him with a concussion and countless other injuries;

Whereas footage of the events on Bloody Sunday was broadcast on national television that night and burned its way into the Nation's conscience;

Whereas the courage, discipline, and sacrifice of these marchers caused the Nation to respond quickly and positively;

Whereas eight days after Bloody Sunday, President Lyndon B. Johnson called for a comprehensive and effective voting rights bill as a necessary response by Congress and the President to the interference and violence, in violation of the 14th and 15th Amendments, encountered by African-American citizens when attempting to protect and exercise the right to vote;

Whereas a bipartisan Congress approved the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and on August 6, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed this landmark legislation into law;

Whereas the Voting Rights Act of 1965 stands as a tribute to the heroism of countless people in the United States and serves as one of the Nation's most important civil rights victories, enabling political empowerment and voter enfranchisement for all people in the United States;

Whereas the Voting Rights Act of 1965 effectuates the permanent guarantee of the 15th Amendment that "the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude";

Whereas the Voting Rights Act of 1965 has increased voter registration among racial, ethnic, and language minorities, as well as enhanced the ability of those citizens to participate in the political process and elect representatives of their choice to public office; and

Whereas the citizens of the United States must not only remember this historic event, but also commemorate its role in the creation of a more just society and appreciate the ways in which it has inspired other movements around the world: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) commemorates the 45th anniversary of Bloody Sunday;

(2) observes and celebrates the 45th anniversary of the enactment of the Voting Rights Act of 1965;

(3) pledges to advance the legacy of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to ensure its continued effectiveness in protecting the voting rights of all people in the United States; and

(4) encourages all people in the United States to reflect upon the sacrifices of the Bloody Sunday marchers and acknowledge that their sacrifice made possible the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the concurrent resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, just this past Sunday, on March 7, we commemorated the 45th anniversary of Bloody Sunday, one of the most significant moments in the