

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I thank the managing Member for yielding me this time, and I also thank the Member who is managing for the other side for allowing this important piece of legislation to come to the floor. I want to thank Representative HENSARLING who is not here today. He is in Financial Services, and we have a hearing there that is exceedingly important; but for that, I am confident he would be here. He and I serve on the committee together.

Representative HENSARLING and I have been working on this resolution for some time. For us it has become a means by which we not only developed what I believe to be a good piece of legislation for the House, but also we have developed a good relationship as a result of working together. This is truly a bipartisan piece of legislation. We have 107 cosponsors from both sides of the aisle.

I also would like to thank Representative JOHN DINGELL for helping us with this piece of legislation. He, at a crucial time, stepped forward to help us move the legislation such that we are now on the floor with it. I would also mention the staff members from Congressman HENSARLING's office and from my office, my staff, I thank you for what you have done, Representative DINGELL's staff, and all of the persons who have been associated with this piece of legislation, especially Representative CAPPS because I thank you for helping us get it to the floor as well.

This resolution, H. Res. 713, does two things: it recognizes the significant contributions of the auto dealerships; and it expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that dealerships which were successful, and I highlight and underline successful, dealerships that were successful and are being closed, some have been closed because of the economic crisis, that these dealerships be given consideration when the market rebounds and we start to bring on new auto dealerships. It is an opportunity for consideration.

With these two things in mind, I would share these thoughts: one, that the auto dealerships are the face of the auto industry within our various communities. As the face of the industry, they do more than simply sell cars, which is a good thing to do. Selling cars promotes growth and jobs, and helps us have people who are employed, but they do more than this. They also engage in being good corporate citizens, which means that they allow their largess to be shared by various not-for-profit organizations in the community, various community organizations that are involved at the grassroots level in communities. For example, the Little League baseball teams will often be sponsored by auto dealerships. Other small, but significant, organizations in our communities benefit from these auto dealerships.

They are across the length and breadth of the community in large cit-

ies and small towns. They make it possible for us to experience the opportunity of having largess that we would not ordinarily have, and I will tell you that that largess is being sorely missed at this time of economic crisis. So we want to get them back. We want to get them back online because they are good corporate citizens.

My next point, 20,000 independently owned dealerships exist across the country—maybe a little more, maybe a little less, depending on who is counting and how you count—employing about 900,000 people, new car dealerships alone. These 900,000 jobs are jobs that our country benefits from greatly, and we have missed many of the jobs because of the dealerships going offline. We want to see these dealerships give the community the job base it has enjoyed by virtue of these many persons who were trained to do various and sundry things, giving these jobs back to the community.

Bringing them back will be an important part of these dealerships coming back online as a result of the rebound in the economy. In 2008, there was about \$650 billion that we can call revenue generated from the dealerships. They are truly small businesses at their best, and some of them large businesses because of just the sheer amount of revenue that they generate. But they are small businesses that benefit greatly from what we are trying to do in Financial Services today, but they are also small businesses that cause a community to benefit greatly because of what they do in the various communities wherein they are located.

I would simply remind us that as we vote on this, please, dear friends, give thought to your community; give thought to the fact that this is a small business that brings jobs back to the community; give thought to the fact that these corporations are good corporate citizens, for the most part; that they are part of the fiber and the fabric of the communities; that they help the Little League baseball teams, the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, all of these organizations that benefit from their largess; and give some thought to the fact that but for them, many of our communities would not be as vibrant as they are. In fact, many of our communities are not as vibrant as they were because we have lost some of these various small businesses, these auto dealerships.

I beg all of my colleagues, please support this resolution. It encourages us to do the right thing, and that is give these dealerships that were successful that went offline the opportunity, not because of some fault of their own but because of some economic crisis that they had little control over. In fact, no control over for the most part.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 713, expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the automobile dealers whose franchises

were terminated through no fault of their own, be given an opportunity of first consideration once the auto market rebounds and stabilizes.

Dealerships play an important function in the distribution model. It was the economic downturn that exacerbated the already slowing automobile sales. Some dealers assert that they had sufficient sales and should not have been marked for closure. Despite their importance to manufacturers, the fact that they were well-run businesses and the Federal Government's bailout of GM and Chrysler, to the tune of \$80 billion, many franchises were taken away from these dealerships. Jobs supported by these dealerships were eliminated, and this lost income continues to plague American families.

In addition, the lost tax revenue and absence of those dealerships that played an important civic role in their communities has further strained local communities. When the auto market recovers, these dealerships should be given an opportunity to reclaim their franchises as manufacturers expand their distribution channels.

I would like to commend Congressman GREEN and Congressman HENSARLING for their leadership on this issue. I support the resolution and urge my colleagues to support it.

Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, I would like to make the point that several minor changes were made in House Resolution 713 in order to clarify that the focus of the resolution is on automobile dealerships and not on automobile manufacturers.

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 California (Mrs. CAPPS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 713, as amended.

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

The title of the resolution was amended so as to read: "Recognizing the significant contributions of United States automobile dealerships, and expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that in the interest of equity, automobile dealers be given consideration to enter the automobile market once it rebounds and stabilizes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1400

BLUE STAR/GOLD STAR FLAG ACT OF 2009

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2546) to ensure that the right of an individual to display the Service flag on residential property not be abridged.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.
The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2546

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 “Blue Star/Gold Star Flag Act of 2009”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

For purposes of this Act—

(1) the term “Service Flag” has the meaning given such term under section 901 of Public Law 105-225 (36 U.S.C. 901);

(2) the terms “condominium association” and “cooperative association” have the meanings given such terms under section 604 of Public Law 96-399 (15 U.S.C. 3603);

(3) the term “residential real estate management association” has the meaning given such term under section 528 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C. 528); and

(4) the term “member”—

(A) as used with respect to a condominium association, means an owner of a condominium unit (as defined under section 604 of Public Law 96-399 (15 U.S.C. 3603)) within such association;

(B) as used with respect to a cooperative association, means a cooperative unit owner (as defined under section 604 of Public Law 96-399 (15 U.S.C. 3603)) within such association; and

(C) as used with respect to a residential real estate management association, means an owner of a residential property within a subdivision, development, or similar area subject to any policy or restriction adopted by such association.

SEC. 3. RIGHT TO DISPLAY THE SERVICE FLAG.

A condominium association, cooperative association, or residential real estate management association may not adopt or enforce any policy, or enter into any agreement, that would restrict or prevent a member of the association from displaying the Service Flag on residential property within the association with respect to which such member has a separate ownership interest or a right to exclusive possession or use.

SEC. 4. LIMITATIONS.

Nothing in this Act shall be considered to permit any display or use that is inconsistent with—

(1) any regulations prescribed by the United States Secretary of Defense regarding rules or customs pertaining to the proper display or use of the Service Flag; or

(2) any reasonable restriction pertaining to the time, place, or manner of displaying the Service Flag necessary to protect a substantial interest of the condominium association, cooperative association, or residential real estate management association.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. DEGETTE). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MOORE) and the gentlewoman from Kansas (Ms. JENKINS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and to insert extraneous material thereon.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2546, the Blue Star/Gold Star Flag Act, drafted by my colleague from Ohio, Representative JOHN BOCCIERI. This bipartisan legislation has 54 Democratic and Republican cosponsors, and I'm proud to be one of them.

The Service flag, which is referred to as either the Blue Star or Gold Star flag, is an official banner authorized by the Defense Department for display by families of members serving in the Armed Forces during a period of war. Each blue star on the flag represents a servicemember in Active Duty, while a gold star signifies a servicemember who was killed in action or who died in service. As authorized by the Defense Department, organizations can fly the Service flag as long as it honors the members of that organization serving during a period of war.

In April of last year, a constituent of Representative BOCCIERI was asked by her condominium association to remove the Service flag she placed in her window in honor of her son who served in Operation Desert Storm in 1991, and again in 2003, for his service defending our country in Iraq. Her son suffered injuries not once but twice from roadside bombs. Thankfully, the condominium association later reversed its decision and allowed the woman to display a Blue Star flag.

This thoughtful legislation drafted in response to this incident will make sure no condominium association, cooperative association, or residential real estate management association is able to prevent residents from displaying the Service flag in honor of their loved ones on or around their homes.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 2546, the Blue Star/Gold Star Flag Act. This bill ensures the rights of an individual to display the Service flag on a residential property without limitation.

The Service flag, also referred to as either the Blue Star or Gold Star flag, is an official banner authorized by the Defense Department for display by families of members serving in the Armed Forces during a period of war. Since World War II, the Blue Star and Gold Star Service flag has been a way for families and the communities they live in to show their pride and concern for our troops in the field.

Each blue star on the flag represents a servicemember on Active Duty, while a gold star signifies a servicemember who was killed in action or who died in service. The Service flag may also be displayed by an organization to honor the members of that organization serving during a period of war or hostilities.

We must do everything we can to show our support for our troops. For

the men and women serving in our military and their families, the Service flag has significant meaning. This flag is a symbol of the sacrifices that our military men and women make as they put their lives on the line to protect our country. Their family members should be allowed to fly the flag in honor of those sacrifices, no matter where they live, and H.R. 2546 ensures the rights of an individual to display the Service flag on residential property without limitation.

The bill we are considering today is similar to the Freedom to Display the American Flag Act of 2005, which passed the House by a voice vote and was later signed into law.

Madam Speaker, I too want to thank my colleague from Ohio (Mr. BOCCIERI) for championing this important legislation. H.R. 2546 ensures that our America's military families are able to honor their loved ones' service to our country by displaying the Service flag no matter where they live.

This bill deserves our support, and I urge the adoption of H.R. 2546, the Blue Star/Gold Star Flag Act.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOCCIERI), the chief sponsor of this important legislation.

Mr. BOCCIERI. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MOORE) and the committee for their work on this important bill that recognizes the service of our strong military members who find themselves on multiple rotations, and some of those who find themselves injured. Today the Blue Star/Gold Star Flag Act of 2009 is a tribute to those military families.

In 2009, one of my constituents was required by her condominium association to remove the Service flag. It was placed in her window in honor of her son, an Iraq war soldier who had served multiple tours and was twice injured in the line of duty while serving over in Iraq. They were both roadside bombs.

The Service flag, or the Blue Star flag or Gold Star flag, is an official banner, as has been said, by the Department of Defense, and it's been on display by families of members serving in the Armed Forces during a period of war.

The Service flag has significant meaning to our Nation and the families of the men and women who are serving. It's a symbol of the sacrifices and service of our members of the military who put their lives on the line every day to protect all of us, and that's why family members should be allowed to fly the flag in honor of those sacrifices, no matter where they live.

This bipartisan, commonsense measure is based on the Freedom to Display the American Flag Act of 2005 that passed both Chambers overwhelmingly during the 109th Congress. The legislation prohibits residential real estate management associations from preventing residents from displaying the

Service flag on or around their homes or places of dwelling. I introduced this measure to ensure that people have the right to display the Service flag without limitation.

As a major in the Air Force Reserve and flying multiple missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, flying those wounded and fallen soldiers out of the country, it is significant that we allow the families to be represented and to be represented of the service of their loved one. I was honored when I learned that the Ohio State Legislature had displayed a Service flag for me while I was serving in Iraq and Afghanistan from 2004 through 2005. It was at the State capitol and on display.

I would like to thank all the supporters of this legislation, as my office has received thousands of signatures from Ohioans and members of the military, as well as those families around the country who support this measure, as well as endorsements from the Air Force Sergeants Association, VoteVets.org, and over 50 of my colleagues have supported this legislation, which will aid in its passage.

I would like to thank Chairman FRANK, Ranking Member SPENCER BACHUS for their help on this important bill that honors the service of our military members and gives all people, no matter where they live, the right to honor them, too.

As I've said before, as a military member myself, I'm proud to stand before you today having worked on those critical measures which can become law for our veterans, including improving access to health care in rural areas for veterans, ensuring the VA can adequately handle mental health issues for those returning vets from the front lines.

You know, today we stand together in a bipartisan way. We intend to make the Blue Star/Gold Star Flag Act of 2009 a law for military families. While they stood up and fought for us, it's now time that we stand up and fight for their families to recognize their service.

Ms. JENKINS. Madam Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PAULSEN), my friend and colleague.

Mr. PAULSEN. Madam Speaker, I also rise today as a strong supporter of H.R. 2546, the Blue Star/Gold Star Flag Act. This is a straightforward bill that will ensure that those who want to honor the men and women of our Armed Forces can absolutely do so. Specifically, this bill protects the rights of an individual to display the Service flag on residential property without limitation.

Service flags are official banners authorized by the United States Department of Defense for display by families of military members serving our country during periods of war. The blue star, as was mentioned earlier, represents that a family member is currently serving, and the gold star signifies that a family member has given

their life in service to our Nation. Both of these flags are a constant reminder of the honor, of the duty, of the service and the sacrifice our members embody that provide that service each and every day.

There should be no question, no question at all that America's military families can display a Service flag in front of their place of residence if they choose to do so. Unfortunately, current law does not allow that to take place. It doesn't guarantee that right to display that Service flag in certain housing condominium associations or in real estate management associations. So this bill merely addresses a commonsense problem in allowing the military families to proudly honor their loved ones.

I just want to thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOCCIERI) for his leadership on this issue, his service himself. This is important legislation. It goes right to the heart of the servicemember families and what they believe in, and I urge support.

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, we have no further speakers and we are prepared to close, so I will reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. JENKINS. Madam Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LEE), my friend and colleague.

Mr. LEE of New York. Madam Speaker, to follow on to what my colleagues' points have been, first and foremost, I do want to thank my good friend from Ohio (Mr. BOCCIERI) for his hard work with this important bill that ensures the Service flag can be displayed on residential properties, which is key, without limitation.

Each day, millions of Americans proudly display the Service flag in recognition of conflicts overseas. However, due to some unreasonable and misguided policies instituted by some housing associations, the Service flag has been unable to fly free. The bill before us today will ensure that those who wish to proudly honor those serving in conflicts around the world will be able to do so.

The Service flag is a meaningful symbol used by many to honor brave men and women currently serving in war zones, as well as those killed in action or who have died in service. There should be no restrictions on honoring these courageous souls, and the passage of this bill brings us one step closer to ensuring that this is the case.

Ms. JENKINS. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time and yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, H.R. 2546 is a commonsense, bipartisan bill that rightfully honors all of our servicemen and women fighting to protect us and the families that support them. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill.

Mr. BACHUS. Madam Speaker, when it comes to supporting our troops, it is essential that we as Americans unite as one community.

Our brave men and women in uniform need our support. And so do their families, who live daily with the knowledge that a loved one may be put in harm's way in the defense of freedom.

Since World War I, the Blue Star and Gold Star banners have been a way for families—and the communities they live in—to show their consideration and respect for our troops in the field.

My home State of Alabama has very active Blue Star and Gold Star programs. Glenn Nivens of Blue Star Salute in Alabama, Rachel Clinkscale of Gold Star Wives of America, and Marynell Winslow of Alabama Gold Star families represent, as leaders of their respective organizations, the many citizens of Alabama who are tireless in their support of our troops and their families.

Whenever I see those powerful banners—and in fact, I've had the honor of being presented with a Blue Star banner which I proudly display in my office—I always reflect on what it takes to keep America free. This has been the case for generations of Americans.

There should never be an impediment to displaying the Blue Star and Gold Star banners, whether it is in the window of a house, a business, or in the case of this legislation, a condominium unit. Some of my colleagues may remember that in 2005, we passed similar legislation also referred to the Financial Services Committee that protected the display of the U.S. flag.

If anything, we should be promoting greater participation in the Blue Star and Gold Star programs as a way to show appreciation for our troops and our solidarity with their families.

The Sixth Annual Blue Star Salute will be held at the American Village in Montevallo in my district on Memorial Day. It would be a great pleasure to report to them that the House of Representatives has voted strongly to support the freedom of our families to proudly display the Blue Star and Gold Star banners.

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. I yield back my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MOORE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2546.

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.

5-STAR GENERALS COMMEMORATIVE COIN ACT

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1177) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in recognition of five United States Army 5-Star Generals, George Marshall, Douglas MacArthur, Dwight Eisenhower, Henry "Hap" Arnold, and Omar Bradley, alumni of the United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to coincide with the celebration of the 132nd Anniversary of the founding of the United States Army Command and General Staff College, as amended.