

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays. The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SALUTING SONS AND DAUGHTERS IN TOUCH ON ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 278) expressing the sense of Congress that a grateful Nation supports and salutes Sons and Daughters in Touch on its 20th Anniversary that is being held on Father's Day, 2010, at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, the District of Columbia.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 278

Whereas there is virtue in remembering and honoring the service and sacrifice of those who died or remain missing as a result of the war in Southeast Asia and the families and children they left behind;

Whereas an estimated 20,000 American children lost fathers in the war in Southeast Asia;

Whereas Father's Day is a fitting day to recognize the sacrifice and service of these fallen heroes and their families;

Whereas the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in the Nation's capital symbolically and literally represents the men and women who gave their lives in the war in Southeast Asia;

Whereas Sons and Daughters in Touch (SDIT) is the only national organization formed specifically to bring together and support the children and families of these American heroes;

Whereas SDIT locates, unites, and supports sons, daughters, and other family members of those who died or remain missing as a result of the Vietnam War and promotes healing through various outreach and education efforts;

Whereas SDIT has held regular Father's Day gatherings for the past 20 years to bring together such sons, daughters, wives, and other family members in a spirit of honor, remembrance, and learning;

Whereas America's current military campaigns have produced a new generation of Gold Star sons and daughters who have lost parents in war;

Whereas Sons and Daughters in Touch is in a unique position to serve as an example to current and future generations of Gold Star families as they bear the painful burden resulting from the selfless sacrifices made by their fathers and mothers in wartime service to the Nation, and SDIT can also serve as a resilient example to all nations affected by war;

Whereas Sons and Daughters in Touch will celebrate its 20th anniversary, which is being held on Father's Day, 2010, at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, the District of Columbia; and

Whereas there is triumph, comfort, and honor in healing: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that a grateful Nation supports and salutes Sons and Daughters in Touch on its

20th Anniversary that is being held at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, the District of Columbia.

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 House Concurrent Resolution 278.

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.

Madam Speaker, H. Con. Res. 278 is a resolution expressing the sense of Congress that a grateful Nation supports and salutes the Sons and Daughters in Touch on its 20th anniversary being held on Father's Day at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 278, a concurrent resolution expressing the Sense of Congress that a grateful Nation supports and salutes the Sons and Daughters in Touch on its 20th Anniversary being held on Father's Day at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC. This is very important legislation that I would like to bring to your attention today.

I want to recognize and applaud the outstanding efforts of the sponsor of this legislation, my colleague Representative DEBORAH HALVORSON a stellar member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Sons and Daughters in Touch is a national organization consisting of 3,000 Americans whose fathers were killed or went missing during the Vietnam War. Throughout the Vietnam War 58,236 Americans were killed, 153,452 were wounded and 2,489 of these brave servicemen still remain missing. These numbers are mind-boggling and we owe it to these families to continue to support and recognize those that served and gave their lives to protect this Nation.

It has been estimated that among the 58,236 Americans lost in Southeast Asia, that more than one-third were fathers. It has been noted that more than 20,000 American children were left fatherless during this time.

This Father's Day weekend, Sons and Daughters in Touch will celebrate its 20th anniversary. Hundreds of sons and daughters who lost their fathers in the Vietnam War will join together on the Nation's Capitol to hold a series of remembrance ceremonies to continue the healing process for these families.

The sponsor of this resolution is one of our new Members, Mrs. HALVORSON of Illinois, who has taken such a very dynamic part in our deliberations on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman for an explanation of the bill.

Mrs. HALVORSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res.

278, a resolution honoring the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Sons and Daughters in Touch.

For the last two decades, this organization has provided support to those sons and daughters who lost a parent fighting during the Vietnam War. During the war in Southeast Asia, we lost over 58,000 men and women in uniform; of those, it is estimated that more than one-third were fathers. That means that more than 20,000 children were lost without a father to help raise them. This means that thousands of children missed out on the memories of growing up with a parent or, in some cases, even the opportunity to meet them.

Founded by a son who helped bury his father after being shot down over Vietnam, Sons and Daughters in Touch was founded by Tony Cordero, who simply wanted to find others like him who had lost a parent in battle. Working with members of other organizations that connected and supported those left behind at home, Tony worked to create an organization that continues to benefit 3,000 people every day.

Next Monday, those of us here will return home to honor the lives of those who sacrificed everything to keep our country safe. Today, we can honor those who were left waiting. Today, we can honor those who fought the battle of moving on without that loved one by their side. I ask my colleagues to stand here with me as we stand up for our military families. I ask my colleagues to stand with me and with those who have joined us today as we honor the loss and sacrifice they have endured. I ask that my colleagues join me in supporting H. Con. Res 278, honoring the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Sons and Daughters in Touch.

I would also like to take a moment to recognize Chairman FILNER for his dedication and hard work on behalf of our veterans, as well as for his help in bringing this resolution to the floor in such a timely manner.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res 278, and I want to thank DEBORAH HALVORSON, a member of the committee, for introducing the legislation. It expresses a sense of the Congress that a grateful Nation supports and salutes the Sons and Daughters in Touch on its 20th anniversary that is being held on Father's Day, 2010 at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial here in Washington, D.C., the District of Columbia.

During the conflict in Vietnam, more than 20,000 children lost a parent. These children suffered a profound loss and deserve the gratitude and appreciation of the Nation for the sacrifice made by their families. Founded in 1990 to join together the children of those who lost their fathers during this conflict, the Sons and Daughters in Touch work to locate, unite, and provide support to other sons and daughters and other family members with regard to

those who died and remain missing as a result of the Vietnam War.

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The organization works to promote healing through networking and special projects, and it regularly addresses high schools and college classes in the hopes of providing education on the historical and emotional legacies of war. Today, through local chapters' events, this organization has reunions and partnerships with the veterans' community.

These sons and daughters have become examples of America's resilience. It is fitting that we remember the contributions and the legacies left behind by those who served and who made the ultimate sacrifice for their Nation. These young men and women left their homelands to fight on foreign soil, answering their Nation's call to duty. They served honorably and often with merit and honor.

This Father's Day, the Sons and Daughters in Touch will be honoring their fathers on their 20th-year reunion. With a new generation of children who recently suffered the loss of parents in current conflicts, the members of the Sons and Daughters in Touch will be able to provide them with support and encouragement for years to come. In honoring the children of those lost during the Vietnam War, we honor the men and women who served during that conflict, and we remember their sacrifices to a grateful Nation.

It is always very, very important to tell the story, not only by those who served in war but also with regard to those who kept the watch fires burning and remained home—not only by the wives but also by the widows and by the children. It is important to tell their stories, to actually convey their stories.

At times, those of us who have served this Nation in war have come back home and have gotten upset with individuals who may not share the same dimension of our experience, and we can get upset with them just as easily as they can get upset with regard to whatever conflict we participated in. Sometimes we judge the world through our own prism and our own dimensions, and we have our own value systems. Yet, unless we are able to convey the stories, how can we even hope that someone would be able to understand? So, when the widows and, in fact, the orphans of those who lost their lives in service to this country tell their stories, it helps others to understand the sacrifice.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, again, I thank the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. HALVORSON), who put together this important resolution that we are considering.

I urge my colleagues to unanimously support H. Con. Res. 278, and 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 agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 278.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

VETERANS DOG TRAINING THERAPY ACT

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3885) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on dog training therapy.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3885

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 "Veterans Dog Training Therapy Act".

SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PILOT PROGRAM ON DOG TRAINING THERAPY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Commencing not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of the Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program for the purpose of assessing the effectiveness of addressing post-deployment mental health and post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms through a therapeutic medium of training service dogs for veterans with disabilities.

(b) DURATION OF PILOT PROGRAM.—The pilot program required by subsection (a) shall be carried out at least three and not more than five Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers during the five-year period beginning on the date of the commencement of the pilot program.

(c) LOCATIONS OF PILOT PROGRAM.—In selecting medical centers for the pilot program required under subsection (a), the Secretary shall ensure that each medical center selected provides a training area for educating veterans with mental health conditions in the art and science of assistance dog training and handling. Such training area shall—

- (1) include a dedicated space that is suitable for grooming and training dogs indoors;
- (2) be wheelchair accessible;
- (3) include classroom or lecture space;
- (4) include office space for staff;
- (5) include a suitable space for storing training equipment;
- (6) provide for periodic use of other training areas for training the dogs with wheelchairs and conducting other exercises;
- (7) include outdoor exercise and toileting space for dogs; and
- (8) provide transportation for weekly field trips to train dogs in other environments.

(d) DESIGN OF PILOT PROGRAM.—In carrying out the pilot program under this section, the Secretary shall—

- (1) administer the program through the Recreation Therapy Service of the Department of Veterans Affairs under the direction

of a certified recreational therapist with sufficient administrative experience to oversee all pilot program sites;

(2) establish, for purposes of overseeing the training of dogs at medical centers selected for the pilot program, a director of service dog training with a background working in social services, experience in teaching others to train service dogs in a vocational setting, and at least one year of experience working with veterans or active duty service members with post-traumatic stress disorder in a clinical setting;

(3) ensure that each pilot program site has certified dog trainers;

(4) ensure that each assistance dog used in the program is purpose-bred for assistance dog work and has adequate temperament and health clearances;

(5) ensure that each assistance dog participating in the pilot program is taught 90 commands pertaining to assistance dog skills;

(6) ensure that each assistance dog live at the pilot program site or a volunteer foster home in the vicinity of such site while receiving training;

(7) ensure that the pilot program involves both lecture of assistance dog training methodologies and practical hands-on training and grooming of assistance dogs; and

(8) ensure that the pilot program is designed to—

(A) maximize the therapeutic benefits to veteran participating in the program; and

(B) provide well-trained assistance dogs to veterans with disabilities.

(e) VETERAN ELIGIBILITY.—A veteran with post-traumatic stress disorder or other post-deployment mental health condition may volunteer to participate in the pilot program under subsection (a) if the Secretary determines that there are adequate program resources available for such veteran at the pilot program site.

(f) HIRING PREFERENCE.—In hiring service dog training instructors under the pilot program under subsection (a), the Secretary shall give a preference to veterans who have successfully graduated from post-traumatic stress disorder or other residential treatment programs and who have received adequate certification in assistance dog training.

(g) COLLECTION OF DATA.—The Secretary shall collect data on the pilot program required under subsection (a) to determine how effective the program is for the veterans participating in the program. Such data shall include data to determine how effectively the program assists veterans in—

(1) reducing stigma associated with post-traumatic stress disorder or other post-deployment mental health condition;

(2) improving emotional regulation;

(3) improving patience;

(4) instilling or re-establishing a sense of purpose;

(5) providing an opportunity to help fellow veterans;

(6) reintegrating into the community;

(7) exposing the dog to new environments and in doing so, helping the veteran reduce social isolation and withdrawal and increase their sense of safety;

(8) building relationship skills;

(9) relaxing the hyper-vigilant survival state;

(10) improving sleep patterns; and

(11) enabling veterans to decrease the use of pain medication.

(h) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than one year after the date of the commencement of the pilot program under subsection (a), and each year thereafter for the duration of the pilot program, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the pilot program. Each such report shall include—

- (1) the number of veterans participating in the pilot program;