

HONORING THE HISTORIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF VETERANS

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1622) honoring the historic contributions of veterans throughout all conflicts involving the United States.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1622

Whereas veterans of service in the United States Armed Forces have served the Nation with honor and great sacrifices;

Whereas the people of the United States owe the security of the Nation to those who defended it;

Whereas United States veterans past and present have served the Nation in times of peace and war at great personal sacrifice for both themselves and their families;

Whereas historic contributions include involvement in the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Eastern Indian Wars, Mexican War, Civil War, Western Indian Wars, Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam Conflict, Lebanon crisis of 1958, Persian Gulf War, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and other conflicts;

Whereas veterans have served the United States in hundreds of deployments, large and small, responding to acts of aggression against the United States and its allies, protecting and evacuating civilians, bringing stability to areas experiencing political turmoil, and providing comfort and support in the wake of natural disasters;

Whereas the service and sacrifice of generations of men and women have shaped the history of the United States and transformed its society;

Whereas as civilians, veterans continue to provide a valuable service by working and volunteering in their communities across the Nation;

Whereas on Veterans Day each year, the Nation honors those who have defended democracy by serving in the Armed Forces;

Whereas the observance of Veterans Day is an expression of faith in democracy, faith in American values, and faith that those who fight for freedom will defeat those whose cause is unjust;

Whereas section 6103(a) of title 5, United States Code, provides that "Veterans day, November 11th" is a legal public holiday;

Whereas we must honor and express the Nation's gratitude to all veterans for their unwavering commitment to country, justice, and democracy; and

Whereas the Nation reaffirms its obligation to provide veterans and their families with the essential support they were promised and have earned: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes and honors the courage, service, and sacrifice of all veterans and their historic contributions to the United States;

(2) encourages the people of the United States to demonstrate their support for Veterans Day each year by treating that day as a special day of reflection;

(3) encourages schools and teachers to educate students on the historic contributions veterans have made to the country and its history, both while serving as members of the United States Armed Forces and after completing their service; and

(4) requests that the President issue a proclamation each year in connection with the observance of Veterans Day calling on

the people of the United States to recognize the historic contribution of all veterans by observing that day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 1622.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago, as we all know, Americans came together to honor Veterans Day and pay tribute to the over 23 million veterans that have served our Nation. We have a proud legacy of appreciation and commitment to the men and women who have worn the uniform and have made great sacrifices. We know that we owe the security of this Nation to those who defended it.

This resolution before us encourages Americans to demonstrate their support for veterans also. No other group of Americans has stood stronger and braver for our democracy than our troops and our veterans.

I firmly believe that Veterans Day should not be observed for just one day a year but that our Nation's heroes must be celebrated, honored, and remembered for their service to our Nation the whole year through. So I encourage all Americans to reach out to veterans, thank them and their families for their amazing sacrifice, learn more about their great contribution to our Nation, and gain the wisdom of their personal stories of this Nation's history.

This year, like the last, our country observed Veterans Day while engaged in conflicts abroad that required the dedication of our uniformed troops. Our thoughts remain with those who are in uniform engaged in conflicts abroad.

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We must be united in seeing that every soldier, sailor, airman, and marine is welcomed back with all the care and compassion that this grateful Nation can bestow. This democracy must stand together to support our veterans because our freedom and liberty depend on it. On Veterans Day and this whole year through, join me and take the time to show your gratitude to those who have answered the call to duty.

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

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 1622, a bill honoring the historic contributions of veterans throughout all conflicts involving the United States. All of our veterans have provided a great service to our country through their personal sacrifices. As a Nation, we owe them our gratitude for their service.

Section 6103 of title 5 of the United States Code provides that Veterans Day, November 11, is a legal public holiday. House Resolution 1622 reaffirms the Nation's obligation to support our veterans and their families.

H.R. 1622 would resolve that the House of Representatives recognizes the honor, the courage, sacrifice, of all veterans, and their historic contributions to the United States. It encourages the people of the United States to demonstrate their support for Veterans Day each year by treating that day as a special day of reflection. It encourages schools and teachers to educate students on the historic contributions veterans have made to the country and its history, both while serving as members of the United States Armed Forces, and after completing their service, and requests that the President issue a proclamation each year in connection with the observance of Veterans Day, calling on the people of the United States to recognize the historic contribution of all veterans by observing that day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

However, I am saddened that the House of Representatives was unable to pass this worthy resolution before Veterans Day, November 11.

Again I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1622, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FILNER. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I do want to again say that in our district and in many districts around the country it's not just Veterans Day, it's Veterans Week. We spend an entire week celebrating the service and sacrifice made by our veterans. During this past 2 weeks ago we had Veterans Day during the entire week because many of us as Congressmen like to attend as many of these as we can. To show you the support, in one small community of Morristown, Tennessee, there were almost 6,000 people at an event for veterans. Our keynote speaker was General Livingston, who is a Medal of Honor winner, a Marine.

I attended church the following Sunday with Arnold "Bud" Pate, who lost his arm in Vietnam, who is a Baptist pastor there. And on and on we see stories of these heroes who served our Nation. So I would encourage all of us to support this resolution.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in support of House Resolution 1622, legislation I introduced to honor the historic contributions of veterans throughout all conflicts involving the United States.

Every Veterans Day, Americans come together to remember those who have served

our country in the name of freedom and democracy.

It's important that all Americans reflect on the sacrifices made by men and women in uniform from all conflicts involving the United States, from the Revolutionary War to current wars and conflicts.

Regardless in time of peace or in the time of war—the service and sacrifice of generations of men and women shaped America's history and transformed our society.

A great example of this courage is one of my constituents from Fontana, California—CPL Ernest Gonzalez, who received the bronze star for actions against Cambodian armed and hostile forces in 1970, including bravely exposing himself to enemy fire to retrieve his platoon leader.

For most veterans, their contributions extend well beyond active duty, and include their service as valuable members of our communities.

Another constituent of mine, Robert Allen Bartleman, from San Bernardino, California recently received military decorations for his courageous service as a combat Marine in Vietnam. He is now active in the legal community in my district.

Pete Martinez, an Airborne Paratrooper during the Korean war, is currently active in the Inland Empire Airborne Association in my district. He continues to work on behalf of veterans and is a great asset to his community.

After serving his country, Marine Col. John Kazalunas—formerly of the Rialto Unified School Board—went on to obtain his Ph.D. in Education to further contribute his talents and hard work in the field of education.

John Weininger, a proud Marine and Army veteran, and formerly a member of my district staff, remains a dedicated supporter and true champion of veterans after his service to this country.

Two additional veterans I'd like to mention are Mike Trujillo, a former member of my district staff and Jess Vizcaino, currently on my district staff. Both have been valuable assets to me by providing outstanding public service to the constituents of my district.

Another dedicated veteran is Anthony Acevedo, a World War II veteran who was 1 of 300 captured American soldiers held prisoner at a Nazi slave labor camp.

Through his courageous work as a medic, Mr. Acevedo kept a detailed diary of his imprisonment. Decades later he worked tirelessly to obtain the recognition of the U.S. Army for this group; his diary is now part of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

This resolution: Urges all Americans to recognize and encourages schools to educate students about the historic contributions of all veterans; and makes a request to the President to issue a proclamation for Veterans Day.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H. Res. 1622. As a Vietnam-era veteran, I am committed to ensure America keeps its promises to our nation's troops and the 23 million plus American veterans.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today in support of H. Res. 1622, "Honoring the historic contributions of veterans throughout all conflicts involving the United States." I would like to begin by thanking my colleague, Representative BACA, for introducing this resolution to the House, as honoring those who have fought for our Nation should remain a priority. I urge my colleagues

to also support this resolution, which recognizes that our great Nation stands strong today because of the dedication and sacrifice of American veterans. The United States is surely indebted to the veterans of every conflict, who have made great sacrifices for themselves and their families in defense of our national security. Our freedom is intertwined with the sacrifices of our veterans, whose devotion to our way of life is unparalleled. I am privileged to officially honor their sacrifices and the role they play in our Nation.

Every Veterans Day, Americans come together to remember those who have served our country around the world in the name of freedom and democracy. The debt that we owe to them is immeasurable. Their sacrifices and those of their families are freedom's foundation. Without the brave efforts of all the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and Coast Guardsmen and their families, our country would not live so freely.

This resolution not only solidifies the importance of Veterans Day, but also extends the importance of support for veterans throughout the year. In observing Veterans Day, the people of the United States must also encourage the education of our youth on how those dedicated individuals have contributed to the United States history and today's society. We must continue the tradition of honoring those who have served for the greatest causes, freedom, democracy, and justice; their commitment to the United States at home and abroad should never be forgotten. I am truly proud to rise in support of the recognition of the courage, service, and sacrifice of all United States veterans.

We recognize and honor the veterans of the Armed Forces not only of today, but also of years past, who have sacrificed their lives for our great Nation. House Resolution 1622 recognizes the historic contributions of the United States veterans in the involvement of the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Eastern Indian Wars, Mexican War, Civil War, Western Indian Wars, Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam Conflict, Lebanon crisis of 1958, Persian Gulf War, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, among other conflicts. This resolution reaffirms our country's utmost respect and pride for our service people who have contributed to the shaping of the United States' history and our current place in the world today. This resolution expresses our deepest gratitude to United States Armed Forces veterans throughout history who have committed and sacrificed their lives to serve their country and its dedication to democracy. Currently, our Nation has 3 million troops and reservists, and 23 million veterans, who deserve the greatest respect from their fellow citizens. Our Nation has a proud legacy of appreciation and commitment to the men and women who have worn the uniform in defense of this country, and we must ensure that this legacy continues in the future.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, I urge my colleagues to unanimously support House Resolution 1622, and yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TONKO). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Cali-

fornia (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1622.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DIRECTING VA TO DISPLAY A WOMEN VETERANS BILL OF RIGHTS

MR. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5953) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to display in each facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs a Women Veterans Bill of Rights, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5953

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

SECTION 1. DISPLAY OF WOMEN VETERANS BILL OF RIGHTS.

(a) DISPLAY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that the Women Veterans Bill of Rights described in subsection (b) is printed on signs in accessible formats and displayed prominently and conspicuously in each facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs and distributed widely to women veterans.

(b) WOMEN VETERANS BILL OF RIGHTS.—The Women Veterans Bill of Rights described in this subsection is a sign stating that women veterans should have the following rights:

(1) The right to a coordinated, comprehensive, primary women's health care, at every Department of Veterans Affairs medical facility, including the recognized models of best practices, systems, and structures for care delivery that ensure that every woman veteran has access to a Department of Veterans Affairs primary care provider who can meet all her primary care needs, including gender-specific, acute and chronic illness, preventive, and mental health care.

(2) The right to be treated with dignity and respect at all Department of Veterans Affairs facilities.

(3) The right to innovation in care delivery promoted and incentivized by the Veterans Health Administration to support local best practices fitted to the particular configuration and women veteran population.

(4) The right to request and get treatment by clinicians with specific training and experience in women's health issues.

(5) The right to enhanced capabilities of medical providers, clinical support, non-clinical, and administrative, to meet the comprehensive health care needs of women veterans.

(6) The right to request and expect gender equity in provision of clinical health care services.

(7) The right to equal access to health care services as that of their male counterparts.

(8) The right to parity to their male veteran counterpart regarding the outcome of performance measures of health care services.

(9) The right to be informed, through outreach campaigns, of benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and to be included in Department outreach materials for any benefits and service to which they are entitled.