

AMENDING THE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010

Mr. GOODWIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 6102, which was received from the House and is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6102) to amend the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2010 to extend the authority of the Secretary of the Navy to enter into multiyear contracts for F/A-18E, F/A-18F, and EA-18G aircraft.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, the bill H.R. 6102 is an important bill. Based on authority provided in two acts, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 and the Department of Defense Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2010, the Navy and contractor team negotiated a multiyear contract for purchasing F/A-18E/F and E-18G aircraft.

The Secretary of Defense approved the Navy's request to sign such a contract. The Secretary also provided the necessary certifications required by title 10, United States Code. The independent cost estimators within the Department of Defense, the office of Cost Analysis and Program Evaluation, or CAPE, agreed with the Navy's estimate that the multiyear contract would save an estimated \$590 million. Unfortunately, the Navy and the contractor team were unable to conclude negotiations by the deadlines set forth in the two acts authorizing and appropriating funds for the multiyear contract.

We should not let these savings slip through our fingers just because the Navy and contractors were not as prompt as the Congress envisioned when we passed the two acts last year. This bill would allow the Navy and the taxpayer to achieve those savings by authorizing the Navy to sign a multiyear contract for the F/A-18E/F and E-18G program despite having missed those deadlines.

I urge that the Senate pass this bill immediately.

Mr. GOODWIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read the third time, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 6102) was ordered to be read the third time, was read the third time, and passed.

THE AMERICAN LEGION DAY

Mr. GOODWIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 627, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 627) designating September 16, 2010, as "The American Legion Day."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Ms. SNOWE. Madam President, I rise in support of legislation with Senator LINCOLN, Senator COLLINS, and Senator CHAMBLISS, which would officially recognize The American Legion and its vital role in communities across the Nation, by designating September 16, 2010, as "The American Legion Day."

Nothing describes the role of The American Legion more beautifully than the preamble to its constitution which is recited by its members at the beginning of every official meeting. "For God and Country, we associated ourselves together for the following purposes: to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the Master of Might; to promote peace and good will on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy; and to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness."

I think we all would agree that these are extremely lofty goals for any organization, but amazingly for over 90 years The American Legion has worked towards these objectives—not for themselves, but for America.

Most people are surprised to learn that The American Legion was actually founded in Paris, France. World War I veterans remembered the challenges facing wartime veterans from previous generations and vowed not to let their fellow comrades face the same hardships, especially those with service-connected disabilities. They wanted employment opportunities for returning combat veterans. They were concerned about the survivors of combat veterans who had paid the ultimate sacrifice in service to their country. And most importantly, they wanted medical care provided to the wounded and ill returning service members.

Now, as it did at its founding, The American Legion remains focused on supporting veterans, military service members, and their families. Since December 2008, The American Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to buy merchandise for Wounded Warriors in military medical centers around the country. Through the "Heroes to Hometowns" program The American Legion helps local communities prepare "welcome home" events when

wounded warriors are finally released from military or veterans' affairs medical centers. Since the first gulf war, The American Legion has maintained its Family Support Network which assists deployed service members and their families, especially members of the National Guard and Reserves. Some requests are for financial assistance, but other requests are simply for household chores, such as lawn work or car maintenance, that would normally be done by the soldier, sailor, airmen, or marine, were they not deployed. No request is too large or too small.

Many Legionnaires can be found in public schools on Veterans' Day or Memorial Day talking about their military service during periods of armed conflict to make sure the next generation of Americans understands the sacrifices and hardships of previous generations of wartime veterans. Legionnaires also teach students about the proper display and care of the flag of the United States.

The American Legion works closely with the American Red Cross—the largest organization of blood donors and a working partner in disaster assistance. Many American Legion Posts serve as Red Cross and Federal Emergency Management Agency work centers in areas hit by natural disasters. Members of more than 14,000 American Legion Posts donate nearly 100,000 pints of blood to the American Red Cross each year.

The American Legion is also proud of its membership's spirit of volunteerism. Each year, Legionnaires volunteer about 1 million hours of services in VA and military medical facilities, State veterans' homes, and other such community volunteer opportunities.

And one of the most solemn of functions performed by The American Legion is providing burial details for fallen comrades of every generation. The American Legion Color Guards, Buglers and Rifle Squads perform thousands of burials in veterans' and private cemeteries around the Nation.

As all of us in this Chamber know, The American Legion remains today an active and vigorous advocate for service members, veterans, and their families here on Capitol Hill. Among its greatest legislative achievements was the enactment of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, the GI Bill of Rights. The initial draft of the GI Bill was written by Legionnaires at the Mayflower Hotel here in Washington, DC. Many consider the GI bill to be one of the greatest pieces of legislation ever enacted.

Congress presented The American Legion its Federal charter on September 16, 1919. Therefore, I think it only fitting that we proclaim September 16, 2010, "The American Legion Day." I sincerely hope that my colleagues will join me in supporting this well-earned measure, demonstrating our respect and esteem for this outstanding organization.

Mr. GOODWIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 627) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 627

Whereas, on September 16, 1919, Congress issued to the American Legion a Federal charter as a wartime veterans service organization;

Whereas the American Legion remains active in communities at the national, State, and local levels;

Whereas members of the American Legion (commonly referred to as "Legionnaires") provide millions of hours of volunteer service to medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs and State homes for veterans throughout the United States;

Whereas the American Legion continues to sponsor activities for children and youth, including the National Oratorical Contest, Boy Scouts, American Legion Baseball, Boys State, and Boys Nation;

Whereas the American Legion awards millions of dollars in college scholarships to young men and women;

Whereas the American Legion National Emergency Fund provides financial assistance to Legionnaires displaced by natural disasters;

Whereas the American Legion Family Support Network provides assistance to members of the Armed Forces of the United States and their families;

Whereas the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation has provided millions of dollars to programs focused on youth in the United States, including the Special Olympics and the Children's Miracle Network;

Whereas the American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance provides grants to veterans with children experiencing financial hardships;

Whereas the American Legion remains second to none in steadfast support of strong national defense;

Whereas the American Legion supports maintaining a viable and principled foreign relations agenda;

Whereas the American Legion is a staunch advocate for the principal missions of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

Whereas the American Legion wrote the original draft of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (58 Stat. 284, chapter 268), commonly referred to as the "G. I. Bill of Rights";

Whereas the American Legion continues to support employment programs and opportunities for veterans; and

Whereas Legionnaires believe that a veteran's service to the United States continues long after the veteran is honorably discharged from the Armed Forces of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate designates September 16, 2010, as "The American Legion Day".

RECOGNIZING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL

Mr. GOODWIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 628, submitted earlier today.

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The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 628) recognizing the 10th anniversary of the National Book Festival.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. GOODWIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution and preamble be agreed to en bloc, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc, and that any statements relating to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 628) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 628

Whereas the National Book Festival is a great national treasure that fosters the joy of reading;

Whereas the first National Book Festival held on September 8, 2001, was organized and sponsored by the Library of Congress and hosted by First Lady Laura Bush;

Whereas the first National Book Festival, held on the grounds of the Library of Congress and the United States Capitol, was such a success that it has become an annual event;

Whereas the National Book Festival has grown in popularity, in recent years bringing over 130,000 book lovers to the National Mall;

Whereas, each year, the National Book Festival has featured more than 70 award-winning and nationally known authors, illustrators, poets, and storytellers;

Whereas the National Book Festival invites readers from around the United States to celebrate books, reading, and creativity;

Whereas the National Book Festival convenes the "Pavilion of the States" which includes representatives from all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the territories and possessions of the United States who discuss and distribute materials about their respective reading and literacy promotion programs;

Whereas this year the Festival has reached a milestone for both the Library of Congress and the Nation; and

Whereas the 10th National Book Festival will be held on September 25, 2010, on the National Mall, and supported by Honorary Co-Chairs President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes and emphasizes the important historic and ongoing role of the National Book Festival; and

(2) encourages the celebration of "A Decade of Words and Wonder" on Saturday, September 25, 2010.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. GOODWIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 629, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 629) recognizing Hispanic Heritage Month and celebrating the heritage and culture of Latinos in the United States and their immense contributions to the Nation.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I rise today to recognize September 15 through October 15 as Hispanic Heritage Month. America has always celebrated its diverse heritage with pride. It has always honored those who have contributed and made this Nation great.

Irish Americans, Italian Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans—all Americans—have come to this Nation and added to the rich and colorful patchwork quilt of American democracy.

This resolution recognizes Hispanic Americans for the contributions they have made to the rich fabric of America. It designates the next 30 days as Hispanic Heritage Month and in so doing celebrates the long history of Latinos in the United States and the extraordinary contribution they have made to this Nation throughout our history. That history is clear—written boldly but sometimes little known. But this is our history in America, and it is America's history.

Latinos have proudly served this Nation, helped build it and defend it, and continue to serve today.

We have been contributing to and have been part of the American tapestry for hundreds of years. Hispanics fought for freedom alongside the patriots in the American Revolution.

Increasingly, we find references to those who came before us—Bernardo de Galvez, a Spanish army officer—the Governor of Louisiana from 1775 to 1785—who played a role in blocking British advances against George Washington in the American Revolution. And Jorge Farragut, a Spanish ship captain who came to America and fought for the colonies against the British.

He was the father of the Civil War hero ADM David Farragut, known for his famous rallying cry, "Damn the torpedoes, full steam ahead."

I would imagine that few who walk past Farragut Square in Washington—not far from this Chamber—realize that Admiral Farragut was of Hispanic origin.

Latinos fought and died on both sides of the Civil War and have participated in every war since. There were at least 10,000 Mexican Americans fighting for the Union during the Civil War and a number of others fighting for the Confederacy.

In one of the folkloric tales of the Civil War, there was the story of Loretta Velasquez who was born in Cuba and claimed that she disguised herself as a male lieutenant and fought against Union forces at several battles, including Bull Run, and later claimed to have worked as a spy for the Confederacy.