

That's why I was troubled to hear news reports about several of our most highly trained and skilled Air Force pilots experiencing loss of oxygen while in the cockpit of the F-22 aircraft. We're talking about blacking out, losing control of the plane, and suffering memory loss. In fact, 18 percent of those who flew the F-22 reported an incident similar to this. In fact, one family blames this mysterious affliction for a crash that killed their loved one.

We have some of our most fearless pilots afraid and even refusing to take the controls of the F-22. Two pilots went so far as to appear on shows like "60 Minutes" without permission from their superiors so that they could expose the problem.

In response, Madam Speaker, I prepared an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act, which the House will debate today. My amendment would cut off funding for the F-22 until the Pentagon inspector general completes an investigation on these malfunctions and finds a solution to protect the safety of our pilots.

Thankfully, my amendment wasn't necessary because, yesterday, Secretary of Defense Panetta took steps to impose flight restrictions on the F-22, demanding that the Air Force take stronger safety measures to protect our troops. Because of the Secretary's response to these life-and-death concerns, I have withdrawn my amendment, but I will stay on top of the situation.

The F-22 isn't exactly a "bargain basement" item, Madam Speaker. Throughout the life of the program, it's cost taxpayers \$79 billion. And that's for a plane originally designed to fight the next generation of Soviet jet, even though the Soviet Union, itself, didn't have a next generation, and it doesn't even exist any longer. What's more, the F-22 hasn't flown a single mission in Iraq or Afghanistan.

It troubles me, Madam Speaker, that we've spent so much on slick, supposedly state-of-the-art aircraft that are making our Air Force pilots dangerously sick—at a moment when we could use that money on programs our servicemembers badly need. For example, veterans groups are fighting for more resources for mental health treatment, for job placement, for access to education, for VA home loans, and much more. Certainly we should invest in improving the lives of our troops instead of endangering them.

My Republican colleagues are fond of pointing out that we're in a challenging fiscal environment where every government expenditure should receive the strictest scrutiny. I just hope that they'll apply as tough a standard to expensive weapons systems as they do to foreign humanitarian aid and important domestic safety net programs right here at home.

As we debate the defense authorization today, we must choose the defense programs that actually enhance our national security over ones like the F-

22 that are creating more problems than solutions.

Madam Speaker, I believe more strongly than ever that we need to end the war in Afghanistan, supporting our troops by bringing them home; but, in the meantime, making sure that the planes they fly and the equipment they use are as safe as possible is certainly our number one responsibility. We owe them nothing less.

STOP MILITARY RAPE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, today I rise again to speak about the horrific situation in the military, and that is the epidemic of rape and sexual assault that goes on unabated.

This is the 20th time that I am here on the floor to tell the story of yet another victim. Nineteen times before, I've been on this floor to tell about victims in military service. I've told you about the military culture that treats sexual harassment and assault with a silent acceptance and the command structure that punishes the victim and does not take care of dealing with the perpetrator.

Today I'm going to tell you about the culture that exists in our military service academies that train our cadets to become commissioned officers. I have not told you that the same conflicted chain-of-command structure that exists in the military also exists at our prestigious service academies. The military academy at West Point as well as the Naval, Coast Guard, Air Force, and Merchant Marine academies follow the same rule as the military, the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Today I am going to tell you the story of Karley Marquet, who was a first-year cadet when she was raped just last year. She was a brand-spanking-new West Pointer. Gifted in both academics and athletics, Karley was a star high school student. She had her pick to go to any number of colleges. She chose West Point because she wanted to serve her country. West Point chose Karley because she possessed the skills and character that the Army needs for success.

But only a few months at the academy, Karley was betrayed. She was raped by a West Point upperclassman that she knew and thought she could trust. He came to her room one night when she was alone to talk about girl troubles. He gave her a sports drink that had alcohol in it. Peer pressure by upperclassmen to consume alcohol is pervasive at West Point. Karley drank about one-quarter of the liquid in the bottle, and she became intoxicated. The upperclassman convinced her to go to his room, and he raped her. Later, the upperclassman repeatedly went to Karley's room to prevent her from reporting the rape. She also heard West Point upperclassmen talk about another female cadet who had reported

being raped. They called the victim a "slut" who "was asking for it."

But Karley was not intimidated. She reported the crime to her chain of command. But just like so many of the stories I have told here before, no serious action was taken to assist her. West Point did not move the perpetrator from Karley's company. She had to see him every day. West Point did not alter Karley's duties, which meant that she still had to do chores with the upperclassman who raped her.

As a result of the rape and the hostile environment, Karley began to suffer posttraumatic stress symptoms, becoming depressed and suicidal. Karley resigned from West Point less than a year after becoming a cadet.

It's been over a year since Karley was raped, yet the perpetrator has not been brought to justice. Why was nothing done to help this talented young woman who, only 12 months before, was deemed qualified and deserving of a spot at the prestigious United States Military Academy?

The violent act committed against Karley is reprehensible. The dismissive attitude held by academy officials is shocking and inexcusable. It is time for this narrative to change.

Last December, a Department of Defense report revealed a nearly 60 percent increase in reported sexual assaults at service academies in addition to the fact that West Point was found "not in compliance" with the Pentagon's policies to prevent rape and sexual assault.

Civilian colleges and university students can report crimes to local police officers. They can press charges directly against perpetrators, and they can obtain their own legal counsel. Military cadets must comply with the military justice system that has a horrible record of providing justice for victims of rape and sexual assault. Our future military leaders deserve better.

Survivors can email me at stopmilitaryrape@mail.house.gov if they would like to speak out as well.

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THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENDING OF CIVIL WAR IN SRI LANKA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. It is my pleasure to rise today to note the third anniversary of the ending of the civil war in Sri Lanka. On May 19, 2009, a new era—an era of peace—began in this country; an era of hope, an era of possibility, and an era of justice with movement towards reconnection and reconciliation. Unfortunately, implementation of this new era of hope seems to be slow in coming, it seems to many Tamils in the country and throughout the diaspora who have lingering fears that governance of the country will remain closed and not as democratically

operated as they would like to see and that justice demands.

The President of Sri Lanka started talks with the Tamil National Alliance, the party that has won all elections in the northeast since the end of the war more than a year ago. Unfortunately, these talks seem to have bogged down and are not progressing as was anticipated. Sri Lanka is a highly centralized state. The lack of control over areas that we take for granted, such as the police, the use of land, and the education system, are often cited as being one of the causes of the civil war. It is reported that even areas not affected by the war suffer from neglect by Colombo and distant government officials who make arbitrary decisions, as is frequently noted by the World Bank and others. Tensions continue to exist between the Sinhalese, who control the government, and the Tamils, who consider the north and east as their traditional homeland. It is unfortunate that after hostilities ended on the battlefield, they still seem to exist in many of the same ways that occurred before the war actually broke out.

It is my hope that Sri Lanka will be able to work through its difficulties so that this beautiful country can experience the peace and stability its citizens rightly deserve.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 12 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker.

PRAYER

Reverend Dr. Ken Chroniger, Alfred Station Seventh Day Baptist Church, Alfred Station, New York, offered the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, in this moment, we wait on You. We take a deep breath and try stopping the rush and the hurry of life. For an instant, we ask You to lift the weight of government and the burdens of our role in it from our hearts, minds, and souls. We accept what we read, "Come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

With the pressures of living in the House fishbowl, give grace and mercy to receive favors. Limit the mistakes made simply because we are human. Like those who have preceded within these Chambers, give wisdom to govern. Fill us with faith and hope that what we do here is not running on a treadmill but encouragingly touching the lives of the people at home. Teach us as we serve to care for one another.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from New York (Mr. REED) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. REED led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING REVEREND DR. KEN CHRONIGER

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from New York (Mr. REED) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. REED. Today, I welcome to the House Chamber a great individual from our district, Pastor Ken Chroniger. Pastor Ken is the spiritual leader of 70 in my district in Alfred Station, New York, for the Seventh Day Baptist Church there. It is an honor to have Pastor Ken with us.

I have great respect for Pastor Ken, not only for what he does for his congregation, but for what he does for the community, in particular, the baseball games that we have attended together for the youth as they have participated in their summer leagues in Alfred Station.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I welcome Pastor Ken as we from the Southern Tier and the Finger Lakes, the beautiful area of New York, join him in starting off our deliberations here today.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Brian E. Pate, one of his secretaries.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan). The Chair will entertain 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

HELPING OUR VETERANS FIND JOBS

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, for the past 39 months, our Nation's unemployment rate has remained above 8 percent due to the administration's failed policies. Sadly, the average unemployment rate for our veterans is even higher.

Congress has developed a pilot program to help veterans find jobs. Veterans should be prepared to simultaneously meet the same standards and perform the same tasks in the military and industry as in the workplace.

In order to address this issue, Congressman JOE WALSH of Illinois has proposed an amendment for today's National Defense Authorization Act, providing for the Department of Defense to reform the pilot program, helping servicemembers apply the skills learned during their military service to the civilian workplace.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this amendment for servicemembers, military families, and veterans.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF NAGORNO-KARABAKH INDEPENDENCE

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to join the people of Nagorno-Karabakh in recognizing the 20th anniversary of the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh and of the formation of the Republic's army.

Twenty years ago, the people of Nagorno-Karabakh fought and died for their independence from Soviet Azeri repression and discrimination. From the earliest days of its formation, the Republic's freely elected governmental bodies have built an open democratic society through free and transparent elections. Over the next few days, families of Armenian descent throughout my home State of Rhode Island will honor the 20th anniversary of the formation of the Republic's army and the liberation of Shushi.

Today, the Rhode Island General Assembly will be joined by Mr. Robert Avetisyan, the Permanent Representative of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic to the United States, as they adopt a resolution supporting the Republic's efforts to develop as a free and independent Nation—a fact that many Rhode Islanders take great pride in.

CELEBRATING NORWAY'S CONSTITUTION DAY

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Madam Speaker, it was nearly 200 years ago that the people of Norway proclaimed their independence as a free nation, and each year on May 17, Norwegians all over the world celebrate the day that their