

2000 to over 1.4 million in the year 2011. As more vets return home from multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, the need for assistance will grow even greater. We must do all we can to support inventive programs such as Pits for Patriots that provide essential support and assistance to our veterans in need.

I want to end with the words of Sergeant Danny Randall, who said about his pit bull, Shiloh:

He truly gives me a reason to be successful. Shiloh gives me a great sense of calm and balance. He is an amazing dog, not just where he has been and what he's lived through, but all that he has overcome. In that sense we are a lot alike, and I believe that is why we have such a strong bond. We truly do everything together, and I could not have asked for a better pittie partner.

Let's make sure other veterans in need have access to the same program that has done so much to help Danny and Shiloh.

#### TRIBUTE TO CONGRESSMAN RON PAUL

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

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my friend, RON PAUL. I have now served in Congress for 24 years, the last 16 of which I have served with Congressman PAUL. During all of that time, I have never once seen him waver or stray from a commitment to liberty and freedom and his promise to uphold and defend our Constitution.

I can assure you that no one runs for office wanting to make people mad. In fact, it may be that people who run for office have a stronger desire to be liked than most people. Thus, I feel certain that at times it has been hurtful to Congressman PAUL to be the only Member out of 435 to vote "no" on some popular bill or seemingly harmless resolution. Yet, on many occasions, he has been the only vote on some issue. Yet, because of his courage and sincerity and his steadfast belief in free enterprise, private property, and individual freedom, he has earned the respect and admiration of almost everyone with whom he has served on both sides of the aisle.

When there was tremendous pressure, especially on the Republican side, to vote to go to war in Iraq, only six Republicans voted "no." Three of those were very liberal Republicans, and three were very conservative. The three conservative "no" votes came from John Hostettler of Indiana, Congressman PAUL, and myself.

It is probably accurate to say that, during the 16 years Congressman PAUL and I have served together, no two Members have voted more alike than we have. Most of that time we have arrived at our decisions separately and independently. But we also have discussed many votes over the years, and I have attended most of the meetings

of the Liberty Caucus. Congressman PAUL has hosted in his office with a wide variety of speakers.

One national magazine about 4 years ago gave just three Members 100 percent ratings on a freedom index—Congressman PAUL, Congressman JEFF FLAKE of Arizona, and myself. Last year I was very surprised when the National Taxpayers Union ranked me as the most fiscally conservative Member on all 338 spending votes. But the only reason Congressman PAUL was not first was because he missed many votes during his run for the White House.

There have been articles and comments and questions about who would be the next RON PAUL in Congress, but, really, no one can replace RON PAUL or fill his shoes or be the next RON PAUL. He has achieved a fame and a following and a position of influence that is almost miraculous considering his unique independence.

He is such a kind, humble, almost bashful person that I know he has been amazed by the numbers that have turned out to support him, and especially the following he has among young people. After all, there is nothing cool or hip about him, but several million college students and 20-somethings love the man. I think his appeal lies in his principled stands on the issues, the concern young people have for their future and where this country is headed, and the fact that Congressman PAUL is real. There is nothing fake about him. He believes what he says and says what he believes and then sticks by it even when it is not "politically correct."

Financial columnist Charles Goyette probably summed up Congressman PAUL's time in office best in a column a few days ago. He wrote:

Politics has ways of bending such lesser men and molding even the well-intentioned to become servants of the State. The tools are many: Congressional leadership bribes and bestows its favors from plum committee assignments to nicer Capitol offices. The parties reward the lockstep marchers, too. For those who stay in step, there are endorsements and campaign funds. Meanwhile, for those who march to a different drummer—well. And then there is the simple social pressure to which men whose eyes are not focused on a polestar of principle soon succumb. The description you've heard of Washington that you have to go along to get along is all too true.

Mr. Goyette concluded by writing:

Ron Paul never succumbed. He never sold out for a better assignment, a nicer office, lobbyist largesse, or shallow conviviality.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I think words written in a 1930 novel called "The Lion's Den" fit Congressman RON PAUL. The words described a fictional Congressman named Zimmer. The author, Janet Fairbank, wrote:

No matter how the espousal of a lost cause might hurt his prestige in the House, Zimmer had never hesitated to identify himself with it if it seemed to him to be right. He knew only two ways; the right one and the wrong, and if he sometimes made a mistake, it was never one of honor. He voted as he believed he should, and although sometimes his

voice was raised alone on one side of the question, it was never stilled.

□ 1030

#### PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO VOTE

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

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, Americans turned out in record numbers this past election day, November 6, to exercise our most cherished and fundamental right, the right to vote.

No doubt my colleagues heard from their constituents who endured, in many cases, outrageously long lines. I spoke with voters who reported having to wait two or more hours, and in some cases up to 5 hours, to cast that precious vote. In most cases, the absence of early voting and the shortage of voting machines and well-trained election volunteers were the primary culprits leading to unacceptably long lines.

Whether one lived in a blue or red State, or voted in an urban, suburban or rural precinct, residents at polling places in more than a dozen States, including Florida, Pennsylvania, Colorado, Ohio, New York, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, South Carolina, Montana, Tennessee, Hawaii, Arizona, Rhode Island, and my own Commonwealth of Virginia, encountered significant, yet avoidable, barriers to casting their ballots.

This is not a Republican or a Democratic problem. Voters from both parties were affected. This is truly a national bipartisan challenge, if not a crisis. And to quote President Obama: "It's one we have to fix."

I think about the employee who struggles to manage his commute or her commute and work schedule on election day, or the senior citizen who may not have had the stamina to stand in line for 5 hours, or the young working mom waiting to vote, worried about the fact that she won't get to the front of the line in time to pick up her kids at daycare.

The experience of our constituents on election day amount to a modern-day poll tax on all Americans that must be eliminated. Twelve years after the 2000 Presidential election exposed the deep structural problems that plague our decentralized voting system, our troubles appear to have worsened, not improved.

Long waits in the cold or the heat, confusing and conflicting instructions from poorly trained election officials, a paucity of voting machines or malfunctioning machines showing their age, a shortage of paper ballots, absentee ballots that failed to reach civilian and military voters in time were among the litany of voting problems that came to a head on election day.

I saw the problem firsthand at polling places in my district as I visited with voters in one Prince William County precinct who had been waiting in line for more than 4 hours in the

cold. That's why I joined with Congressman JIM LANGEVIN to introduce the Fair, Accurate, Secure and Timely Voting Act of 2012, the FAST Act. A Senate companion bill was introduced by Senators CHRIS COONS of Delaware, MARK WARNER of Virginia and SHELDON WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island.

Representative LANGEVIN and I have significant experience serving at the State and local levels, and we strongly believe that the Federal Government often works best when it leverages those laboratories of democracy at the local and State levels to test innovative solutions and governing reforms and best practices that might have applicability at the Federal level.

Consistent with this principle, our bill avoids overly prescriptive requirements and, instead, offers States a menu of options and financial incentives to adopt voting reforms.

Our FAST Voting Act recognizes that modernizing the Nation's voting system will require collaborative and coordinated efforts at the State, Federal, and local levels. It creates a competitive grant program, similar to the President's Race to the Top schools initiative, and rewards those States that aggressively implement the most effective and promising reforms to expand the franchise.

The menu of reforms includes flexible voter registration opportunities, including same-day registration; early voting, with a minimum of at least 9 days before the election; no-excuse absentee voting; assistance to voters who do not speak English as a primary language; assistance to voters with disabilities, including the visually impaired; effective access to voting for members of the Armed Services; formal training of election officials, including State and county administrators and volunteers; auditing and reducing waiting times at polling stations; creating contingency plans for voting in the event of a natural or other kind of disaster.

To be clear, the FAST Act is the latest in a series of proposals to reform how our elections are administered. Given the renewed interest among the public, Members of Congress, and the President, we ought to at least move forward with hearings to debate the merits of these proposals.

This is the world's greatest and oldest democracy. How can any of us be satisfied with the scandalous operations that occurred in all too many voting places that impaired the ability of Americans, free Americans, to freely cast their vote?

We ought to clean this up. It's a solvable problem, and it ought to be solved on a bipartisan basis.

#### HONORING SERGEANT FIRST CLASS RILEY G. STEPHENS

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

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, America recently lost another hero in the war

on terror. On September 28, America lost Army Sergeant First Class Riley G. Stephens of Tolar, Texas.

Riley grew up in Tolar. He enlisted as an infantryman in the Army in 1993. He volunteered for the Special Forces Assessment and Selection Course. He also went on to graduate from the Special Forces Qualification Course in March of 2005.

At the time of his tragic death, he was assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) as a Special Forces medical sergeant. He would go on five separate deployments in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

During his 19 years of service to our country, Sergeant Stephens earned many awards and decorations. He earned the Bronze Star Medal with Valor, two Bronze Star Medals, the Purple Heart, the Army Achievement Medal with Valor, four Army Commendation Medals, four Army Achievement Medals, the National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with three campaign stars, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon Military, the Army Service Ribbon, two Overseas Service Ribbons, the NATO Medal, the Air Assault Badge, the Basic Parachutist Badge, the Expert Infantryman Badge, the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Ranger Tab and the Special Forces Tab.

On October 7, Sergeant First Class Riley G. Stephens was laid to rest at the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery, not far from his hometown in Tolar where, earlier that day, his life was celebrated and his service to our country was celebrated in a church full of friends and family and fellow patriots.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of Sergeant Stephens. He will forever be remembered as an outstanding soldier, a husband and a father. We thank him and his family for their service and sacrifice for our country.

His sacrifice reflects the words of Jesus in John 15:13 which say: Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

As I close, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all Americans to continue praying for our country during these difficult times, for our military men and women, and for our first responders who keep us safe by their sacrifice each day.

God bless our military men and women, and God bless America.

#### COMMEMORATING THE CANONIZATION OF SAINT MARIANNE OF MOLOKAI

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

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution commemorating the remarkable life of

service of Mother Marianne Cope of Molokai, and her canonization as a saint of the Roman Catholic Church on October 21, 2012. She joins Saint Damien of Molokai among the 12 American saints.

I am joined in introducing this resolution by Congresswoman ANN MARIE BUERKLE, who represents Syracuse, New York, where Mother Marianne's Order of the Sisters of Saint Francis is based; by Congressman RICHARD HANNA, who represents Utica, New York, where Mother Marianne grew up; and by Congresswoman COLLEEN HANABUSA, who represents Hawaii's First Congressional District. I am proud to represent Hawaii's Second Congressional District, which includes the island of Molokai.

It may seem surprising that one-sixth of America's saints are connected to the tiny Kalaupapa Peninsula on the Hawaiian island of Molokai. The story of Kalaupapa is heartbreaking.

We have all heard of how isolated native populations are especially susceptible to new diseases. Once Westerners and other peoples came to Hawaii, diseases like smallpox and measles caused high mortality. It was no different with leprosy. Native Hawaiians made up the majority of those afflicted with this disease.

To stem the spread of leprosy, the Kingdom of Hawaii decided in 1866 to forcibly relocate persons found to have the disease to the Kalaupapa Peninsula. Those with the disease were outcasts in every sense of the word. Kalaupapa was chosen because it is surrounded by the ocean and some of the tallest sea cliffs in the world, effectively cutting off escape.

□ 1040

Mothers, fathers, and children who contracted the disease were taken from their families and brought to Kalaupapa, where living conditions were terrible and medical care almost nonexistent. Father Damien, who ultimately contracted and died from the disease, is recognized throughout the world for all he did to improve conditions for the outcasts of Kalaupapa. Mother Marianne carried on and expanded on his work. This resolution honors Mother Marianne for her legacy of compassionate care and recognizes her example of what it truly means to dedicate one's life in service to others. One does not need to be Catholic to be humbled and inspired by the life of someone who devoted herself so selflessly to those whom almost everyone else shunned and rejected.

Mother Marianne, born Barbara Koob, immigrated to this country from Germany as a young girl. She and her family settled in Utica, New York. At the age of 24, she entered the religious life as a Catholic nun and commenced a life dedicated to children, education, and the sick. Mother Marianne later focused her efforts on health care and was influential in establishing St. Elizabeth Hospital in Utica. She was also