

matter contained in the bill that falls within its jurisdiction. In addition, if a conference is necessary on this legislation, I will support any request that your committee be represented therein.

Finally, I shall be pleased to include your letter and this letter in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of H.R. 324.

Sincerely,

JEB HENSARLING,  
Chairman.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. I rise today to give great support for H.R. 324.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, at the outset that the Congressional Gold Medal is our highest honor; and there is no greater recipient that we can give this honor to than the First Special Service Forces, known as the Devil's Brigade. They were courageous. They risked their lives. As a matter of fact, they were the unit that led the liberation of France and Italy from the Nazis with daring, with courage, with skill. So it is very important for us to stand here today and to give great recognition to this unit.

There is a special bond between Canada and the United States, and that special bond started in World War II. For it was the first unit—and the only unit—where two nations, Canada and the United States, formed a force that accomplished what many felt was impossible.

□ 1310

You know, the Lord Jesus Christ said that there is no greater love—no greater love—that you can show than one who would give his life for another.

What a great honor this is, Mr. Speaker. I am just proud to join with my colleague, Mr. MILLER from Florida—my good friend—and Mr. COTTON from Arkansas to give this recognition, this high nobility of purpose to the first unit.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we are proud to have our Navy SEALs, our Green Berets, our Special Ops, those special soldiers who go where many times few others would go. But the foundation of that was the Devil's Brigade.

I can just imagine that Nazi soldier who wrote that note, scared out of his wits when he called them the "Black Devils," when they would go and put shoe polish on their faces so that they could be expertly disguised to go in and to help to liberate Europe from Nazi Germany.

So it is with great pleasure that I stand here to join my colleagues in urging unanimous passage of this extraordinary legislation to honor this extraordinary group of soldiers.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COTTON. I appreciate that reference to John 15:13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend." Certainly, many members of the Devil's Brigade did that, as they do today in our Special Forces.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gen-

tleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER), the sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I also thank my friend, Mr. SCOTT, for his kind words. I also want to thank Chairman HENSARLING and Ranking Member WATERS and Subcommittee Chairman CAMPBELL, with his Ranking Member CLAY, all the members of the Financial Services Committee and the House leadership for their support in bringing to the floor here today H.R. 324. It is a bill that grants the Congressional Gold Medal to the members of the First Special Service Force.

I also want to thank the members of the First Special Service Force Association, specifically Mr. Bill Woon for his advocacy, and for the association's efforts in continuing to spread the inspirational story of a truly heroic group of American and Canadian servicemen.

I would be remiss not to thank Congressman AL GREEN of Texas and Congresswoman DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ of Florida for encouraging support from their caucus members for this broad bipartisan piece of legislation, and the 324 Members of this body who have cosponsored the bill.

I join my colleagues today in support of a bill that bestows upon the First Special Service Force the Congressional Gold Medal. It's Congress' highest expression of national appreciation for distinguished achievement and contributions for their superior service during World War II.

The First Special Service Force was a covert World War II military unit born through the efforts of President Franklin Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill. The Force conducted ultrahigh-risk military missions in Italy and in France. Once sent into action, the First Special Service Force never failed a combat mission.

The First Special Service Force achieved remarkable success in battle and contributed prominently in the liberation of Italy and France. Most notably, the Force conducted battles south of Cassino, including Monte La Difensa and Monte Majo, two mountain peaks critical to the German defensive line.

During the night of December 3, 1943, the Force ascended to the top of the precipitous face of Monte La Difensa, where the Force suffered heavy casualties and overcame fierce resistance to overtake the German line.

The First Special Service Force lost a total of 2,314 men, which was 134 percent of the original combat force. These heroic servicemen represent the breadth of intrepidity and courage, and they have earned our country's deepest gratitude and highest praise.

Though many of the brave troops of the First Special Service Force have been lost to us, this gold medal is an important step in immortalizing their service and honoring the forefathers of today's Special Forces.

With just 6 days remaining until Memorial Day, I cannot think of a more

appropriate way to honor the heroism and sacrifice of the warriors of the First Special Service Force, and I urge all of my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation.

To all of the men and women who have guarded our great Nation in the name of protecting and defending liberty that we hold so dear, we say thank you. And to all of those who have given the ultimate sacrifice, may you forever remain in our hearts and in our prayers.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I'll just take this opportunity to join all of us in the Congress of the United States to salute the First Special Service Force for the outstanding work that they have done.

I urge unanimous passage on this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COTTON. I yield myself the balance of my time.

I join my colleagues, the gentleman from Georgia and the gentleman from Florida, in urging unanimous passage of this very important legislation the week before Memorial Day to honor the Devil's Brigade.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 324, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. COTTON. Mr. 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, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### HELPING HEROES FLY ACT

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1344) to amend title 49, United States Code, to direct the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security (Transportation Security Administration) to provide expedited air passenger screening to severely injured or disabled members of the Armed Forces and severely injured or disabled veterans, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1344

*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 "Helping Heroes Fly Act".

#### SEC. 2. OPERATIONS CENTER PROGRAM FOR SEVERELY INJURED OR DISABLED MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AND SEVERELY INJURED OR DISABLED VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 449 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

**“§ 44927. Expedited screening for severely injured or disabled members of the Armed Forces and severely injured or disabled veterans**

“(a) PASSENGER SCREENING.—The Assistant Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and organizations that advocate on behalf of members of the Armed Forces and veterans, including organizations that advocate on behalf of severely injured or disabled members of the Armed Forces and severely injured or disabled veterans, shall develop and implement a process to facilitate the ease of travel and to the extent possible provide expedited passenger screening services for severely injured or disabled members of the Armed Forces, severely injured or disabled veterans, and their accompanying family members or nonmedical attendants. Such process shall be designed to protect the privacy of the individual being screened to the maximum extent practicable.

“(b) OPERATIONS CENTER.—As part of the process required under subsection (a), the Assistant Secretary shall maintain an operations center to provide support and facilitate the movement of severely injured or disabled members of the Armed Forces and severely injured or disabled veterans through screening prior to boarding a passenger aircraft operated by an air carrier or foreign air carrier in air transportation or intrastate air transportation. Such operations center shall be operational at all times.

“(c) PROTOCOLS.—The Assistant Secretary shall—

“(1) establish and publish protocols, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and organizations that advocate on behalf of members of the Armed Forces and veterans, including organizations that advocate on behalf of severely injured or disabled members of the Armed Forces and severely injured or disabled veterans, under which a severely injured or disabled member of the Armed Forces or severely injured or disabled veteran, or the family member or other representative of such a member or veteran, may contact the operations center maintained under subsection (b) and request expedited screening services described in subsection (a) for the member or veteran; and

“(2) upon receipt of such a request, require such operations center to notify the appropriate Federal security director of the request to facilitate the expedited passenger screening services described in subsection (a) for the member or veteran.

“(d) TRAINING.—The Assistant Secretary shall integrate training on the protocols established under subsection (c) into the training provided to all employees who will provide the screening services described in subsection (a).

“(e) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section affects the authority of the Assistant Secretary to require additional screening of a severely injured or disabled member of the Armed Forces, a severely injured or disabled veteran, or their accompanying family members or nonmedical attendants, if intelligence, law enforcement, or other information indicates that additional screening is necessary.

“(f) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this section, and annually thereafter, the Assistant Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the implementation of this section. Each such report shall include each of the following:

“(1) Information on the training provided under subsection (d).

“(2) Information on the consultations between the Assistant Secretary and organiza-

tions that advocate on behalf of members of the Armed Forces and veterans as described in subsection (a).

“(3) The number of people who accessed the operations center during the period covered by the report.

“(4) Such other information as the Assistant Secretary determines is appropriate.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 44926 the following new item:

“44927. Expedited screening for severely injured or disabled members of the Armed Forces and severely injured or disabled veterans.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS) and the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. GABBARD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Indiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As a member of the Committee on Homeland Security's Transportation Security Subcommittee, I am proud to be a cosponsor of this commonsense piece of legislation that will increase accessibility and privacy for our wounded warriors at airport checkpoints.

□ 1320

This legislation directs TSA to develop and implement a process to facilitate the ease of travel and, to the extent possible, provide expedited screening through our Nation's airports for severely injured or disabled members of our Armed Forces and veterans. The last thing our heroes need is to face unnecessary scrutiny or hassle, or be forced to answer endless questions about their conditions, when all they want to do is board a plane to fly home to their loved ones or maybe to a job interview.

This bill would ensure that our wounded warriors—those dedicated men and women who have been severely injured while fighting to protect our Nation—are treated with the highest dignity and respect when traveling through our Nation's airports.

I was pleased to find out that shortly after Administrator Pistole testified before the Transportation Security Subcommittee on TSA's efforts to advance risk-based security, TSA began to offer expedited screening services to severely injured members of the Armed Forces and veterans, provided they contact the TSA in advance of traveling. While I support TSA's newly adopted protocols, I feel this bill is

necessary because it codifies current TSA policy and ensures that it will remain intact during future administrations.

Mr. Speaker, this bill not only benefits severely injured and disabled members of the United States Armed Forces, veterans, and their accompanying families, but it also supports the TSA administrator's intent to develop a more risk-based method of screening for all passengers.

Expedited travel for our military heroes is an important step toward reasonable transportation security reforms that will allow us to focus precious taxpayer dollars on the unknown travelers and the real threats.

As we look forward to this upcoming Memorial Day, let us honor the all-too-often painful sacrifices our wounded warriors have made for our Nation by adopting this important and commonsense piece of legislation.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of 1344, the Helping Heroes Fly Act, and yield myself such time as I may consume.

In response to documented grievances my fellow servicemembers made because of various challenges and trying experiences that they went through at airport checkpoints across the country, I introduced the Helping Heroes Fly Act to ensure that the Transportation Security Administration—working alongside veterans advocacy organizations—develop sensible screening policies that honor and respect the service and sacrifice of our Nation's injured and disabled heroes.

On March 27 of this year, just a few days after this legislation was introduced, the Transportation Security Administration made an announcement of some improvements that they have made in this area as they took steps to expedite airport screening for severely injured members of our Armed Forces. With these changes, individuals can presently request assistance ahead of time and move through security checkpoints without having to remove their shoes, light outerwear, jackets, or hats. Taking off a jacket—while maybe a simple inconvenience for you and I—can be a very physically challenging task for someone who, for example, has lost the use of an arm.

While this announcement was a good step, it didn't go nearly far enough, as there are still more improvements that need to be made. As I've spoken with wounded warriors and listened to their experiences, I've heard stories that have been varied and included things like having to take off a prosthetic leg, putting the leg through the X-ray machine, and then having to balance on one leg going through the full body scan without help from anyone.

This is unacceptable. Severely injured and disabled Active Duty and veterans both experience widely varied screening protocols among different

airports, and even among screeners in the same airport. This makes it very hard for a wounded warrior to anticipate and prepare what will be required of them, to make sure that they are ready physically and mentally. Again, this may not seem like much to us, but to someone—a trained and hardened warrior—learning to adjust to these severe injuries, it can sometimes be difficult and can be the difference between a smooth and dignified screening experience or one that is filled with frustration, shame, and pain for the injured servicemember and delays for all people waiting in that screening line.

Another issue that frequently has come up has been privacy. Veterans have shared with me their own experiences of having to take off prosthetics, despite TSA guidance that it's not necessary. And in the instances where extra screening of these prosthetics is necessary, it has been done in public view, even when clothing needs to be removed.

No one—no one—should be required to remove their shirt or pants in public, nor should scans of sensitive or private areas be viewed by other airline passengers. Again, this has been already a humiliating, shameful experience for some veterans when there's absolutely no requirement or necessity for it.

The Disabled American Veterans have spoken in strong support of this legislation stating:

At some airports, our amputee members receive relaxed screening, while at others these screenings are horrific. Perhaps it is TSA's purpose to make screenings unpredictable. Some screenings have required these amputees to expose their prostheses when they lack the ability to reposition their clothing, and TSA agents are not allowed to help them, nor do they allow spouses or traveling companions to enter search areas to assist the amputees.

Our objective with this legislation is to ensure consistent treatment by screeners, greater attention to privacy concerns, and consulting with these advocacy organizations who speak for our wounded warriors to ensure they have a voice in the process.

This bill before us today, the Helping Heroes Fly Act, achieves these improvements by requiring TSA to take into account the privacy of the individual being screened. It also mandates training of screening officers on the expedited protocols to make sure that no matter where you travel, no matter what city you are in, you will have consistent screening procedures so you know what to expect. TSA is also required to consult with these advocacy organizations to make sure that as these changes are implemented, that the unique needs of our wounded warriors are implemented to the best of its ability.

To ensure these changes over the long term, this legislation requires regular reporting to Congress, as well as maintenance of the TSA's operations center that these wounded warriors and veterans can contact for assistance as they prepare to travel.

Mr. Speaker, as you well know, members of our U.S. Armed Forces are entrusted to protect the security of our country with their lives. By definition, these individuals pose very little risk to aviation security and should be consistently screened in a manner befitting and honoring their service and sacrifice.

I urge my colleagues to ensure our Nation's wounded warriors are treated respectfully, and urge them to vote "yes" in support of H.R. 1344.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS).

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. I appreciate you yielding on this. And I appreciate not only the gentlewoman from Indiana, but the gentlewoman from Hawaii for bringing this legislation.

I bring a little bit different perspective to this. As a chaplain in the military and working with our heroes who have been wounded and coming from bodies that were strong and healthy and vibrant to a situation in which now they're put in a position that they've never been in, in some ways a dependency, and counseling in those roles and seeing them having to go through this process, which is inconsistent and frankly unfair, I think this is the reason I strongly support this legislation.

But I also support it from a different perspective. Having a daughter who has been in a wheelchair since she was able to walk—as we call it, "roll"—she's never known anything different. And so we've had to adjust over time, and she's adjusted in ways of going through screenings and going through processes like that.

But when you balance what our wounded warriors have done, heroes who came home who had healthy bodies and now have bodies that are not healthy, this is something that will provide them a measure of dignity—and it is an honor to stand here and support this legislation—because I believe that an inconsistency in this area is an inconsistency in what we believe as Americans in what those men and women have done for us.

We have to remember that in times of war now it is not like it used to be where these men and women would actually have died on the battlefield. Now they're coming home. They're coming home to lead productive lives, great lives, because of the sacrifices that they have made. It is time that we—and this legislation proves this—stand for them in the fairness that they deserve for what they have given to us.

I congratulate the gentlewoman from Hawaii and also the gentlewoman from Indiana for sponsoring this. I look forward to voting for it, and encourage my colleagues to do so.

□ 1330

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the

ranking member of the Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security of the Committee on Homeland Security, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to be able to come to the floor today as we approach the week that we memorialize those fallen heroes and as well, at the same time, acknowledge those who yet live who have served and who are wounded. Even today, as we stand on the floor in the backdrop of enormous tragedies among our civilian population in Oklahoma over the last couple of days and in Texas and elsewhere, this is a very important legislative initiative.

As the former ranking member and chair of the Subcommittee on Transportation Security and as a cosponsor, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1344, the Helping Heroes Fly Act of 2013.

I congratulate my new colleague for this outstanding legislation, Ms. GABBARD from Hawaii; and to the manager, thank you very much. It is important, and I am glad we are standing here together in a bipartisan manner.

I support this legislation because it eases and facilitates the expedited passenger screening at airports for servicemembers who are severely injured or disabled, along with their families. Of course, the thoughtfulness in introducing this legislation is appreciated because it is necessary legislation. I thank you for indicating that, even as the TSA, of which we have oversight, is formulating policies, it's good to codify it, to make it law, because these heroes deserve their law.

The Helping Heroes Fly Act requires the Transportation Security Administration to maintain an operations center to provide support and to facilitate the movement of these disabled servicemembers and veterans, and it requires the TSA to publish protocol so disabled servicemembers and veterans and their families will be able to contact the operations center and request expedited screening. The bill also requires that these protocols be integrated into the training of TSA agents.

Now, I know that there are many home ports, if you will, for our returning heroes. I happen to know that Texas has had a very large number of our men and women go to Iraq and Afghanistan and to places beyond. I've been to Hawaii and know the transition there of many who are on R&R, coming from places around the world, and I know that it is a place where many come home because it was their home, and, yes, they come home disabled, with prostheses and other wounds, that require their privacy. I am glad that this bill acknowledges, not only that they are heroes, but that they are desirous and deserving of the respect—why don't I say an admiration and commendation and respect again—of those who would expedite their going into a secured area.

Mr. Speaker, more than 2.2 million veterans—one in 10—have been disabled or seriously wounded in the service of our Nation; and disabled veterans typically find it much harder, by some estimates twice as hard, to readjust to civilian life. The least we can do for these heroes is to make it a little less burdensome and difficult to navigate the obstacles, barriers, and checkpoints that have been erected in the aftermath of 9/11 to enhance the security of air travel—and rightly so.

Most of these inconveniences are necessary but are no less burdensome to those who have suffered physical disabilities in defending the Nation from those who would make air travel dangerous and deadly. Let's give them respect for what they have done to secure the homeland and to make us safer. The legislation before us strikes an appropriate balance between these competing interests.

I have seen the operation of TSA and TSO officers and some of what they call these "specialty officers." Allow me to thank you publicly for the work you have already done and for the sensitivity you've had.

I've seen these soldiers, these heroes, coming home at DCA and at Dulles. I've certainly seen them in the airports in Texas. I've seen them in their uniforms. I've seen them, as I said, disabled, and I've seen them with families. I saw one young man who was wandering in my airport. He was, obviously, in uniform, but had not a good day. I don't know what might have been impacting him, but we stopped, and I hailed an officer in uniform, a TSO officer, and said, You won't be alone now. We're going to find out where you need to go.

One of the factors of this particular legislative initiative that is good is that, wherever you land, sometimes it may not be your home airport—every airport is different—and I think they work themselves up to make sure that they make it exciting and confusing.

Thank you for the Helping Heroes Fly Act to help improve airport security screening processes for wounded and severely disabled servicemembers, but also thank you for giving them a helping hand. You are helping the veterans as well. This authorizes a Wounded Warrior Screening program and requires the TSA to maintain an operations center. These improvements will facilitate and expedite air travel for our disabled veterans and servicemembers. More importantly, they will help our Nation's heroes to be shown the respect, as I said earlier, and the appreciation of a Nation that is so grateful.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this legislation, and I urge all of my colleagues to join me in voting for the Helping Heroes Fly Act of 2013. I am glad to be back in the well again in this week of honoring our soldiers and those who have fallen, and I am delighted for the leadership of my colleague on the Homeland Security Committee and of the manager on this

great bill, and I hope that we have a very strong vote.

Mr. Speaker, as a member and former chair of the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Transportation Security, and a cosponsor, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1344, the "Helping Heroes Fly Act of 2013." I support this legislation because it eases and facilitates expedited passenger screening at airports for service members who are severely injured or disabled, along with their families. I thank my colleague, Congresswoman GABBARD of Hawaii, for introducing this thoughtful and necessary legislation.

The Helping Heroes Fly Act requires Transportation Security Administration to maintain an operations center to provide support and facilitate the movement of these disabled service members and veterans, and it requires TSA to publish protocols so disabled service members and veterans, and their families, will be able to contact the operations center and request expedited screening. The bill also requires that these protocols be integrated into the training of TSA agents.

Mr. Speaker, more than 2.2 million Veterans, one in ten, have been disabled or seriously wounded in the service of our nation. And disabled veterans typically find it much harder, by some estimates twice as hard, to readjust to civilian life. The least we can do for these heroes is to make it a little less burdensome and difficult to navigate the obstacles, barriers, and checkpoints that have been erected in the aftermath of 9/11 to enhance the security of air travel. Most of these inconveniences are necessary but no less burdensome to those who suffered physical disabilities defending the nation from those who would make air travel dangerous and deadly. The legislation before us strikes an appropriate balance between these competing interests.

The Helping Heroes Fly Act improves airport security screening processes for wounded and severely disabled service members and veterans; authorizes a Wounded Warrior Screening Program and requires TSA to maintain an Operations Center. These improvements will facilitate and expedite air travel for our disabled veterans and service members. More importantly, they help that our nation's heroes are shown the respect and appreciation of a grateful nation.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support H.R. 1344, and urge all my colleagues to join me in voting for the Helping Heroes Fly Act of 2013.

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 2 minutes to a distinguished gentleman who has also served his country admirably in the military and is someone who serves on the Homeland Security Committee with Congresswoman GABBARD and me, the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY).

Mr. PERRY. I would like to start out by thanking the gentleladies from Indiana and, of course, from Hawaii for this very significant and impactful legislation. It is particularly a privilege to speak in favor of this knowing that Ms. GABBARD is from Hawaii and, today, currently serves as a comrade in arms just like me.

The TSA started an expedited free screening program in 2011 called PreCheck, but just recently expanded

the program to include Active Duty members of the military and most recently, just this March, to severely injured members of the military.

As a matter of fact, there is a Member of this House who was severely injured, and I served right along with her soldiers. I flew with those soldiers in Iraq myself. Many of these injured soldiers and servicemembers want to continue to serve. They want to—that's their calling in life—but they cannot for their own good and for the good of the mission, but their hearts are in the right place. So while it's great that the TSA has recognized severely injured members of the military in that regard, what about these veterans who want to serve but cannot continue to serve? This bill rightfully extends similar benefits to severely injured or disabled veterans and members of the Armed Forces.

Increased and more stringent security is understandable in the wake of 9/11, and it's kind of a bitter irony that many of these members who have been severely injured joined just because of those events. Now how ironic is it that they are caught up in this web of security for the injuries they received because they answered the call of their country?

Servicemembers I know don't ask for special recognition or any recognition for being soldiers or servicemembers and certainly not for the injuries they have received as a result of their service. So I stand in very strong support of this legislation, and I urge all of my colleagues to vote "yes" on this bill.

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. SWALWELL).

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H.R. 1344, the Helping Heroes Fly Act.

I am a proud sponsor of this bipartisan legislation introduced by my friend Congresswoman GABBARD. Congresswoman GABBARD is a person who knows a thing or two about what it's like to be a combat veteran who comes back from the battlefield and who has to use our airports. Fortunately, she is back in one piece, but we know all too well that many of our veterans are not, and this bill eases their ability to move through our airports.

It would extend benefits through TSA screenings at airports, benefits similar to the expedited PreCheck program, to severely injured or disabled veterans and to members of the armed services who fly. As it stands now, many of our Nation's wounded warriors report that screening protocols aren't properly standardized at airports around the Nation. Consistent treatment by screeners would help create certainty for the newly injured and give greater attention to addressing their privacy concerns. Despite TSA guidance to the contrary, some veterans report having been required to take off prosthetics in public view during screenings. This is a difficult process that our injured and veterans should not have to endure.

□ 1340

In January, I met with Staff Sergeant Jason Ross from Livermore, California, in my district. Sergeant Ross was severely injured by an IED while honorably serving in Afghanistan and lost both of his legs. This bill would help ease the transition back home for wounded warriors and heroes like Sergeant Ross.

The continued sacrifice and selfless service of our Nation's heroes, a group Sergeant Ross exemplifies with distinction, is immeasurable. That's why we as a Nation must live up to our responsibilities to properly support the men and women of our Armed Forces when they return home. We must leave no soldier behind, and we owe our troops more than just "thank you for your service."

Today, it is too easy to spend money, and we've spent over a billion dollars a year recruiting people into our armed services while we're not doing enough to take care of them and keep the promises we make, whether it's providing GI funding or making sure that disability claims are taken care of. Currently, the average wait time for a disability claim ranges between 316 and 327 days. This is far too long.

The Oakland VA, which serves the veterans of my district, has one of the worst backlogs in the Nation. At a time when our wounded warriors are left waiting so long to receive the care that they have rightly earned, helping to ensure our Nation's heroes are able to travel seamlessly and without hindrance when they return home is a step we must take.

I want to thank again my colleague, Congresswoman GABBARD from Hawaii, for sponsoring this bill. I'll always support legislation that helps our returning servicemembers and their families receive the care and thanks they were promised and have earned.

I urge my colleagues to vote for the Helping Heroes Fly Act.

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. If the gentlewoman from Hawaii has no further speakers, I'm prepared to close once the gentlewoman does.

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

It's been an honor to stand here on the floor today in a bipartisan manner with my colleagues.

I want to thank the gentlewoman from Indiana for managing this and her strong support and advocacy for this issue, which is symbolic of us taking action to honor our heroes, especially as we head into Memorial Day.

You've heard from many Members why this is a good bill and why it should pass. It's been subject to scrutiny by all the stakeholders, and it has resulted in a bill that will be efficient and effective.

One example of steps we have taken to make sure that this is an efficient bill is making sure that, as we provide training as a central requirement to make sure that consistency in all air-

ports exists, the provision requiring employee training was modified to make it clear that only screening personnel who participate in these expedited services will be mandatory—required to be trained under this bill—as opposed to requiring every single employee of the TSA to be trained, even when their job has nothing to do with passenger screening responsibilities. This modification ensures that the department's limited resources are spent in the most efficient manner, while also ensuring the consistent policies and treatment that are our objectives of this legislation.

I'd like to take a moment to highlight the support that this bill has gotten from veteran organizations. In addition to the Disabled American Veterans, I also have letters of support from the Wounded Warrior Project, the American Legion, and the Paralyzed Veterans of America. The Wounded Warrior Project sums it up perfectly, as they say:

Wounded warriors should not have to sacrifice their privacy, encounter conflicting screening policies and procedures, or be subject to significant travel delays. We welcome the steps proposed in H.R. 1344 to foster expedited screening and to protect the privacy of our wounded warriors going through this process. We also commend the proposal to require the TSA to continue to consult with veterans' service organizations as they develop these improved screening processes.

Mr. Speaker, before yielding back, I just want to take a moment to thank the chairman of the committee, Mr. MCCAUL, and the ranking member, BENNIE THOMPSON, whose strong support for this bill allowed it to move very quickly and to be considered here on the floor here today. Subcommittee Chairman Mr. HUDSON and Ranking Member RICHMOND, as well as SHEILA JACKSON LEE, along with my colleague, Mrs. BROOKS from Indiana, have also been incredible champions and supporters. Last but not least, I would like to take a moment to recognize senior professional staff Brian Turbyfill, who has been invaluable in providing his assistance in guiding this bill through the process.

Mr. Speaker, this is a commonsense measure that aligns with the intelligence-driven, risk-based approach to security that TSA is striving for. It addresses a clearly identified problem and provides a solution that will serve and honor the sacrifices of our Nation's selfless heroes and great servant leaders.

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

WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT,  
Washington, DC, April 8, 2013.

Hon. TULSI GABBARD,  
Cannon House Office Building,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSWOMAN GABBARD: As an organization whose mission is to honor and empower wounded warriors, Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) is committed to assisting service members and veterans thrive within the community. For wounded veterans living with prosthetics or other service-connected

conditions, airport screening is often a frustrating, degrading, and lengthy process. With that concern, we welcome the introduction of the Helping Heroes Fly Act, H.R. 1344, and the improvements it proposes to screen these men and women in a manner befitting their service.

Wounded warriors should not have to sacrifice their privacy, encounter conflicting screening policies and procedures, or be subject to significant travel delays. We welcome the steps proposed in H.R. 1344 to foster expedited screening and to protect the privacy of warriors going through the screening process. We also commend the proposal to require the Transportation Security Administration to consult with veterans' service organizations in the development of improved screening.

We look forward to working with you to advance this legislation and toward improving the airport screening process for those who have served.

Sincerely,

CHARLIE ABELL,  
EVP for Government Affairs.

THE AMERICAN LEGION,  
Washington, DC, April 24, 2013.

Hon. MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,  
Chairman, Homeland Security Committee, Ford  
House Office Building, Washington, DC.

Hon. BENNIE G. THOMPSON,  
Ranking Member, Homeland Security Committee,  
House of Representatives, Ford  
House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MCCAUL AND RANKING MEMBER THOMPSON: On behalf of the 2.4 million members of The American Legion I express our support for H.R. 1344, the Helping Heroes Fly Act. This bill will ensure our nation's wounded warriors and veterans are consistently screened in a manner befitting their service and sacrifice. This bill is supported by The American Legion's National Resolution No. 14 which encourages airport courtesy to military personnel.

Although the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has announced it will offer expedited screening to severely injured servicemembers, there are still issues that need to be addressed which will be resolved with this legislation. The legislation makes the following improvements:

Requires TSA to provide privacy for the individual being screened;

Requires TSA to consult with advocacy groups;

Mandates TSA training on expedited screening protocols;

Requires TSA to maintain an operations center that wounded warriors and veterans can contact for assistance in advance of flying; and

Requires TSA to report to Congress on its progress implementing the screening process.

Thank you for your support of our nation's servicemembers, veterans, and their families.

Respectfully,

JAMES E. "JIM" KOUTZ,  
National Commander.

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA,  
Washington, DC, April 18, 2013.

Hon. MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,  
Chairman, House Committee on Homeland Security,  
Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC.

Hon. BENNIE G. THOMPSON,  
Ranking Member, House Committee on Homeland Security,  
Ford House Office Building,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MCCAUL AND RANKING MEMBER THOMPSON: On behalf of Paralyzed

Veterans of America (PVA), I write to support H.R. 1344, the bipartisan "Helping Heroes Fly Act", which was introduced by Representatives Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI), David P. Joyce (R-OH), and Cedric L. Richmond (D-LA) and referred to the Subcommittee on Transportation Security on April 1, 2013.

H.R. 1344 authorizes the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) Wounded Warrior Screening Program, which facilitates and expedites the screening of severely injured or disabled members of the Armed Forces and veterans at our nation's airports. TSA recently announced efforts to ease the security screening process for people with disabilities, but the program may still have inconsistencies in how its protocols are implemented and leaves privacy concerns and stakeholder input lacking. The "Helping Heroes Fly Act" addresses these shortcomings by, among other things, requiring consultation between TSA and advocacy groups like PVA, which will allow us to share our veterans' screening experiences and guarantee that their concerns are heard. Further, the bill mandates that TSA make every effort to protect the privacy of wounded warriors and ensure that our nation's heroes are shown their due respect and appreciation.

While some paralyzed veterans may not need the assistance provided by the program, we have had reports from our members that greatly appreciate the service offered. One member recently reported that a TSA officer unexpectedly met him at the gate on arrival in Milwaukee, managed his luggage and even helped him jump the battery in his car—greatly reducing the time and anxiety he would have otherwise encountered.

Every one of our veterans appreciates TSA's and the Committee on Homeland Security's attention to this matter. We encourage your support of this legislation and urge you to see that it receives consideration in the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

BILL LAWSON,  
National President,  
Paralyzed Veterans of America.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS,  
Washington, DC, April 9, 2013.

Hon. MICHAEL T. McCAUL,  
Chairman, House Committee on Homeland Security,  
Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC.

Hon. BENNIE G. THOMPSON,  
Ranking Member, House Committee on Homeland Security,  
Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN McCAUL AND RANKING MEMBER THOMPSON: I am writing on behalf of the DAV, a congressionally chartered national veterans service organization with 1.2 million members, all of whom were wounded or injured as a result of active duty in the United States Armed Forces. The DAV is dedicated to a single purpose: empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. We accomplish this by ensuring that veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them; fighting for the interests of America's injured heroes on Capitol Hill; and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life.

H.R. 1344, the Helping Heroes Fly Act, would direct the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security, Transportation Security Administration (TSA), to provide expedited air passenger screening to severely injured or disabled members of the Armed Forces and severely injured or disabled veterans.

With many of the members of DAV suffering from the loss of limbs due to their wartime service in defense of our nation, we are finding it increasingly difficult to under-

stand the screening policies of the TSA affecting those with prosthetic limbs, wheelchairs and scooters boarding aircraft.

While TSA offers a variety of outstanding services, such as Notification Cards, TSA Cares, pat-down screening, multiple types of imaging and metal detection screening, and the compassionate TSA Military Severely Injured Program, amputees are not exempt from additional screening when necessary. In fact, screenings experienced by our members lack uniformity, understanding and compassion.

At some airports, our amputee members receive relaxed screening, while at others these screenings are horrific. Perhaps it is TSA's purpose to make screenings unpredictable. Some screenings have required these amputees to expose their prostheses when they lack the ability to reposition their clothing, and TSA agents are not allowed to help them, nor do they allow spouses or traveling companions to enter search areas to assist the amputees.

We applaud Representatives Gabbard, Richmond, and Joyce for introducing this legislation and for their continued support of America's wounded and injured veterans. While the DAV does not have a specific resolution from our members on this subject, it would be beneficial to many of our members. Accordingly, we support the passage of this legislation. I look forward to working with you and your staff to continue the DAV mission of empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives.

Sincerely,

BARRY A. JESINOSKI,  
Executive Director,  
Washington Headquarters.

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

On behalf of myself, as well as Congressman McCAUL, the chair of the Homeland Security Committee, we would like to commend Congresswoman GABBARD of Hawaii not only for her service in moving this issue, but for her military service. I'm very proud to be serving with her, and we are so pleased that this is being done in such a bipartisan manner. The Congresswoman from Hawaii and I have enjoyed a new strong friendship, and I hope there are many more bills to come that we can work on together.

I must say that we know that there are so many brave men and women throughout this country who have been severely injured while fighting. In fact, according to the Employment and Disability Institute at Cornell University, there are 6,800 working-age civilian veterans in Indiana, alone, who have had the most severe service-connected disability rating.

And this past weekend when I was out at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in honor of Armed Forces Day on Sunday and as we swore in the young men and women who have agreed to step up and serve in the National Guard and they were reporting to basic training that day, I knew that this bill was on the House floor this week. It was quite emotional to see these young men and women who we know between them and their families are providing the most incredible sacrifice. I am just very pleased that we are working on this bill in this manner.

To sit by while one of these heroes—and to me, all of these young 18-year-olds to 22-year-olds that I saw in front of me are heroes. We pray that they will not be injured. But those who are injured and who provide that incredible sacrifice cannot be treated like potential enemies here at home, and particularly at our airports. It should put us all to shame. Our wounded warriors are a special group of citizens in this country. They are a trusted group of citizens, and we can and must do more to treat them as such and to recognize their commitment to our Nation. With the Memorial Day holiday fast approaching, this bill is a timely tribute to their sacrifice.

I must also say that this weekend at the Indianapolis 500, before the race, it is the most moving ceremony when our armed services march down Pit Lane, and the quarter of a million people that will be there say it is probably the most moving ceremony they have ever witnessed. So we look not only for safety this weekend at our race, but it is a wonderful reminder of the incredible sacrifice all of the men and women in the military give day in and day out.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 1344, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi: Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1344, the "Helping Heroes Fly Act."

Mr. Speaker, at the outset, I would like to commend the gentlewoman from Hawaii, Representative GABBARD, for introducing this thoughtful, bipartisan legislation.

I also commend the Chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, the gentleman from Texas, Mr. McCAUL, for working diligently to have this bill receive timely consideration by the House.

We owe a great debt to the women and men who have served to defend our freedom.

Those who were injured or rendered disabled because of their service, in particular, deserve our deepest gratitude and respect.

They deserve to be treated with the upmost respect and dignity upon their return home.

Unfortunately, when it comes to flying domestically, all too often, the security screening experience for injured and disabled veterans is anything but respectful and dignified.

H.R. 1344, the "Helping Heroes Fly Act," seeks to improve the screening experience for these brave men and women by requiring the Transportation Security Administration to develop and implement a process to facilitate the ease of travel and provide expedited screening to these members of the Armed Forces and veterans.

It specifically requires consultation with organizations like the Wounded Warrior Project, American Legion, and Paralyzed Veterans of America that advocate on behalf of service members and veterans.

Importantly, to help ensure consistency across the aviation security system, it also requires training for screeners on the protocols for screening injured and disabled service members and veterans.

Passage of this legislation is the right thing to do to for those who sacrificed and were injured while serving our nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by



the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1344, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. 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, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

## FREEDOM TO FISH ACT

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 982) to prohibit the Corps of Engineers from taking certain actions to establish a restricted area prohibiting public access to waters downstream of a dam, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 982

*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 "Freedom to Fish Act".

### SEC. 2. RESTRICTED AREAS AT CORPS OF ENGINEERS DAMS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

(1) RESTRICTED AREA.—The term "restricted area" means a restricted area for hazardous waters at dams and other civil works structures in the Cumberland River basin established in accordance with chapter 10 of the regulation entitled "Project Operations: Navigation and Dredging Operations and Maintenance Policies", published by the Corps of Engineers on November 29, 1996, and any related regulations or guidance.

(2) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Army, acting through the Chief of Engineers.

(b) EXISTING RESTRICTED AREA.—If the Secretary has established a restricted area or modified an existing restricted area during the period beginning on August 1, 2012, and ending on the day before the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall—

(1) cease implementing and enforcing the restricted area until the date that is 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act; and

(2) remove any permanent physical barriers constructed in connection with the restricted area.

(c) ESTABLISHING NEW RESTRICTED AREA.—If, on or after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary establishes any restricted area, the Secretary shall—

(1) ensure that any restrictions are based on operational conditions that create hazardous waters;

(2) publish a draft describing the restricted area and seek and consider public comment on that draft prior to establishing the restricted area;

(3) not implement or enforce the restricted area until the date that is 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act; and

(4) not take any action to establish a permanent physical barrier in connection with the restricted area.

(d) EXCLUSIONS.—For purposes of this section, the installation and maintenance of measures for alerting the public of hazardous water conditions and restricted areas, in-

cluding sirens, strobe lights, and signage, shall not be considered to be a permanent physical barrier.

(e) ENFORCEMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Enforcement of a restricted area shall be the sole responsibility of the State in which the restricted area is located.

(2) EXISTING AUTHORITIES.—The Secretary shall not assess any penalty for entrance into a restricted area under section 4 of the Act entitled "An Act authorizing the construction of certain public works on rivers and harbors for flood control, and for other purposes", approved December 22, 1944 (16 U.S.C. 460d).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) and the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

□ 1350

### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend and include extraneous materials on S. 982.

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

There was no objection.

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

S. 982, the Freedom to Fish Act, would prohibit the Corps of Engineers from restricting public access in the vicinity of the 10 dams on the Cumberland River in Kentucky and Tennessee. This bill, this legislation, was introduced in the Senate by the leader, Senator McCONNELL, and also by Senator RAND PAUL of Kentucky, and our own in-House version authored by our colleague, ED WHITFIELD from Kentucky.

The bill provides for a 2-year moratorium to give the public, the two States, and the Corps of Engineers more time to carefully review conditions at these facilities, and to deal with the immediate threat to fishing, tourism, and the economy.

I applaud our leadership for bringing this legislation to the floor today. This is an excellent example of Congress exercising our constitutional authority to oversee Federal agencies. Far too often, the executive branch and the Federal bureaucracy operate without input and guidance from Congress. My colleagues on the floor of this House every day criticize rules, regulations, and actions by unelected bureaucrats that hurt our districts, our constituents, and our economy. Congress has the right, the constitutional duty, to oversee Federal agencies and provide them with clear guidance and direction.

As chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, problems with the Army Corps of Engineers are frequently brought to my attention by my colleagues from both sides of the aisle, Republicans and Democrats. I am

pleased to work whenever possible to address these issues with clear guidance from Congress.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The pending measure was introduced in the Senate on May 16 of this year, 2013, and passed the very same day. While the bill is apparently a Senate-revised version of the legislation introduced in February of 2013, no committee hearings or markups were held on either bill.

Since 1996, the Army Corps of Engineers has been required to establish restricted areas for hazardous waters upstream and downstream of all Corps dams. As written, S. 982 would revise the current agency policy and would also prohibit the Army Corps of Engineers from establishing any restricted areas in hazardous waters at dams and other structures in the Cumberland River basin for a period of 2 years, and also require them to remove any physical barriers that already exist to prevent access to the hazardous areas. If after the 2-year moratorium, the Corps decided to implement new restricted areas around these dams and other structures, it would continue to be prohibited from erecting any physical barriers to prevent people from entering hazardous areas.

Mr. Speaker, I have serious concerns over this legislation because it does pose risks for public safety and national security. Currently, the Corps restricts access to certain areas above and below the dams of the Cumberland River basin in order to keep people from being sucked into the spill waste or from having their boats swamped or sunk by unplanned releases from the hydropower units, which are very much un-timed. The reason they do this is very simple: to prevent people from drowning and to restrict access to Federal dams that would be targets for terrorism or destruction. Without full-time law enforcement patrols, areas above and below dams are not constantly monitored, and the Corps has not been able to alert and rescue people who get into trouble. They have to base it on people who are in boats nearby to help effect a rescue. Fourteen people drowned in the last few years, and there have been 20 near misses where there is no Corps staff to help.

In fact, according to a report by WRCB-TV in Chattanooga, Tennessee, there have been three fatalities in the hazardous waters immediately downstream of those dams on the Cumberland River. The waters are so hazardous at these locations that wearing a life jacket is ineffective. And I repeat: ineffective.

To legislatively preclude a Federal agency from protecting public health and national security seems a very unwise course of action, and I have significant concerns about the precedent that would be set by this legislation.