

THE REENLISTMENT OF STAFF SERGEANT MARY VALDEZ

(Ms. GABBARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GABBARD. Madam Speaker, on January 21, I attended a USARPAC Sisters in Arms forum in Hawaii, and I met a warrior and a hero. Her name is Staff Sergeant Mary Valdez. I watched in awe, inspired as she stood at attention with her right hand raised, tears streaming down her face as she swore to defend the Constitution, to obey the orders of the President, and to obey the orders of the officers over her.

Her strength and love for our Nation was palpable for everyone in the room, despite her having been savagely raped by a fellow soldier just weeks before her 2011 deployment to Afghanistan. She pressed charges, she took him to trial, and the man who raped her was acquitted and still serves in our United States Army today.

When she spoke after her reenlistment, tears streaming down her face, she said, "I love being a soldier. I love this Army." Her courage, resilience, and commitment to fulfilling her duty is what makes our military the strongest in the world.

We owe it to Staff Sergeant Valdez and all servicemembers to bring about reforms so they are not faced with this kind of adversity. They are fulfilling their duty and their responsibility every day. We must fulfill ours.

CALLING FOR SANDY RELIEF OVERSIGHT

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

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to remind every Member of this Chamber that just over a year ago this Congress voted to provide \$50 billion in much-needed Hurricane Sandy relief, including to my home State of New Jersey. I fought very hard for that money, and now this Congress has the responsibility and obligation to ensure that the Federal Sandy recovery funds are being distributed properly to the people who need it most. Constituents from my district are still displaced from their homes and are awaiting much-needed help.

According to a report released by the Fair Share Housing Center of New Jersey, low-income individuals are being denied claims at a higher rate than wealthier individuals. There is a need for more transparency on the standards being used to distribute these funds.

Also, a report on where and whom the funds are going to is obviously needed. I urge my colleagues to make sure that proper oversight is conducted and that the funding gets to those communities who are in most dire need.

EXTEND UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

(Ms. HAHN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. HAHN. Madam Speaker, this is the third month that my colleagues and I have asked that unemployment benefits be extended to help our communities. Those benefits expired on December 28, and more than 1.7 million Americans, including 263,000 in California alone, have already lost access to these benefits, and another quarter of a million will be hit by the end of the month if we don't act.

Madam Speaker, if we act now, we can still help our friends and our neighbors who are trying to support their families as they find a new job instead of taking away what may be the only way they can afford food. There are more than 1 million Americans trying to do just that, and we should do everything we can to help them return to the workforce.

Previous Congresses have extended unemployment benefits time and time again with bipartisan support. Why is it that a program that we know helps members of our community and strengthens our economy is suddenly disposable? Let me remind you that these are unemployed workers who deserve our help.

I hope that we are allowed to vote on this bill and extend this vital economic lifeline.

COVERED CALIFORNIA ENROLLMENT

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to highlight the success of California with the Affordable Care Act in bringing some of the highest enrollment numbers across this Nation. I am not surprised to see California leading the way; after all, we are the Golden State.

However, there is so much work still to be done by the 31st of March, which is the deadline for enrolling people this year. And I am going to work very hard, along with my California colleagues. I have reached out to our Covered California executive director, Peter Lee, and asked him to make sure that we enroll every single eligible Californian.

With only 8 weeks left for open enrollment, I am making it my top priority that every qualified resident of my 46th Congressional District is given the opportunity to enroll, and I strongly encourage all of my fellow colleagues to do the same. To make good on the promise of quality and affordable health care, it is not enough to educate. We must make sure everybody is enrolled.

THE FLOOD INSURANCE TRUST FUND

(Ms. CASTOR of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise to urge the Republican leadership here in the House to immediately take up the bill to provide flood insurance relief to millions of Americans across the country and develop a long-term solution for the flood insurance trust fund. Last week, the Senate passed, by a broad bipartisan vote, a bill to provide just such relief by a vote of 67 bipartisan Members in the affirmative.

I urge the House Republican leadership right away to take up the Senate-passed bill in the House for a vote. We already have over 182 bipartisan cosponsors that are ready to act.

Madam Speaker, there is great skepticism that this Republican-controlled House of Representatives will act to protect the middle class and to boost our economy across this country. Well, let's prove them wrong, and let's work together to pass a flood insurance relief bill as soon as possible. We can work together to solve this problem.

□ 1215

YEAR OF ACTION

(Ms. HANABUSA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HANABUSA. Madam Speaker, happy Lunar New Year, or as we say in Hawaii, Kung Hee Fat Choy. This is the "Year of the Horse," which has as one of its characteristics decisive action. It is said that it is not the year to procrastinate, and the lack of procrastination will bring success.

Remember President Obama said in his State of the Union, this year we are in the year of action. The people of this great Nation have been waiting for us to show action. Some have just given up hope on us, and you can't blame them. Let us show them that we are capable of doing the job that they sent us here to do by at least addressing critical legislation like creating jobs, restoring unemployment benefits, addressing the minimum wage, reforming the immigration system, and, of course, avoiding the default. Let's show them, Madam Speaker, that we are able to do this because we can.

SOLVING UNEMPLOYMENT CRISIS

(Ms. WILSON of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Madam Speaker, solving our unemployment crisis is not only about restoring our economy, it is about restoring dignity to tens of millions of Americans. Unemployment means anxiety and insecurity that translates into worse mental and physical health. Unemployment

means lower lifelong earnings, not only for workers but also for their children. It means a loss of dignity that is impossible to quantify.

Madam Speaker, today with nearly 30 million Americans either unemployed or underemployed, we have a moral obligation to solve the crisis. Unemployment is rampant in both red States and blue States. Creating jobs means creating dignity.

We have bipartisan options to build a full-employment society, including proposals to spur public-private investments in infrastructure and close the skills gap, but we must act now.

The mantra of this Congress should be, could be, and must be jobs, jobs, jobs.

SPORTSMEN'S HERITAGE AND RECREATIONAL ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2013

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 470 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 470

Resolved, That at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3590) to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. No amendment to the bill shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan). The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield my-

self such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Madam Speaker, I want to apologize for being 2 minutes late to come here. I apologize to not only you but also the staff and my friends from the Rules Committee for being late.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, House Resolution 470 provides for a structured rule for consideration of H.R. 3590. This rule makes in order 11 amendments which provide for discussion and opportunities for Members of the minority and the majority to participate in this debate.

Yesterday in the Rules Committee, we held what I consider to be an open discussion about this bill where amendments were fully discussed and debated, and I am pleased to say that there will be these 11 amendments as a result of the action by the Rules Committee.

Madam Speaker, the bill before us today represents a yearlong bipartisan, bicameral legislative process to protect our public lands and to preserve traditional hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting for American sportsmen and sportswomen.

Specifically, H.R. 3590 improves access to Federal lands for hunting and fishing. It protects Second Amendment rights enshrined by the Constitution of the United States and promotes sportsmen's views by giving them a seat at the table through an innovative advisory committee to collaborate with the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture on ways to better conserve wildlife, habitat, and traditional outdoor activities.

American sportsmen are some of the strongest stewards of our Nation's unparalleled natural resources. We have an abundance of natural resources, but they all must be in a protected and stewardship role, and that is what the American hunter does for this country. They direct conservation projects. They establish nonprofit organizations to protect wildlife and precious habitat. Sportsmen are leading advocates to ensure that we leave a stronger, more vibrant America for future generations, and, I might add, we teach our children and the next generation the same so that the legacy that we leave is preserved for our future.

Additionally, according to the 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, American sportsmen contribute roughly \$90 billion in economic activity every year. These resources sustain thousands of American jobs and protect our Nation's rich outdoor herit-

age. They also provide many of our rural areas of this country with needed jobs, jobs for people who live in rural areas who care very much about conservation and of their local areas to keep them natural.

Unfortunately, all too often the Federal Government erects unnecessary barriers which prevent Americans from participating in the many activities that also should be available on Federal lands. That is why H.R. 3590 is important. It streamlines government regulations to allow for greater access to our Nation's public lands so that all Americans can enjoy everything that our great outdoors have to offer.

As a sportsman myself, I will tell you I have enjoyed our national parks. I have enjoyed State parks and the outdoors, and in particular, as a young Boy Scout growing up all of the way through being an Eagle Scout and an adult leader, I have utilized these resources, which has allowed me an opportunity to know more about America and to be able to pass it on to my sons and others. It is a great way to spend an afternoon or a weekend or a week with your family, the outdoors and learning more about America.

Today I want to thank the Natural Resources Committee Chairman DOC HASTINGS, who is from Washington. He understands the West, and he understands the outdoors. His leadership on this issue was essential, as well as that of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus cochairmen BOB LATTA from Ohio and BENNIE THOMPSON from Mississippi. Both of these men met with me and the committee early on to make sure that we would be prepared for their bills that would come to the floor as a package, with the understanding that on a bicameral, bipartisan basis, we would move this legislation.

I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the rule and "yes" on the underlying legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the chairman of the Rules Committee, Mr. SESSIONS, for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I rise today in opposition to the rule and the underlying bill, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, this bill is a solution in search of a problem. It is an omnibus bill that has been cobbled together in a back room by the Republican leadership. While the Resources Committee has considered some of these bills, not every bill made it through the committee process. In fact, two of the measures in this bill were never reported out of committee, and no committee considered this omnibus bill. So much for regular order.

Madam Speaker, we have a number of major time-sensitive issues that we should be tackling here in this Congress. We should be extending unemployment benefits for the 1.6 million Americans whose benefits expired on December 28, and the 72,000 more who lose them each week we fail to act. We