

The administration must also remember that the implementation of any agreement will almost definitely require congressional approval. The President cannot unilaterally lift sanctions. It must come back to Congress for that.

So why hasn't the administration kept us apprised of the negotiations? It cannot expect Congress to automatically accept any agreement it comes up with. Congress needs to be an active partner in this process.

I urge the administration to provide Congress with increased transparency and to consult Congress on elements of the deal. It is imperative that Congress plays a critical role throughout this process.

We must continue to insist that any final agreement with Iran ensures the dismantlement of Iran's nuclear infrastructure and that Iran has no pathway to a bomb. A nuclear-armed Iran would be a national security disaster. We must do everything we can to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, and that includes a congressional role in the current negotiations.

COMMEMORATING THE VETERANS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE ALLIED LANDINGS AT NORMANDY ON D-DAY

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

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I am joined here today by my colleagues from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the French Caucus so that we may pay tribute to the bravery and sacrifice of the American soldiers who landed at Normandy, France, on June 6, 1944.

This marks the 70th anniversary of D-day. Next week, Members of the House will travel to Normandy to join President Obama and other Allied heads of state to honor and remember the heroism of "the longest day."

130,000 soldiers stormed the beaches at Normandy, long stretches with no cover from the enemy, fire that rained down from the hillsides above. Others parachuted or glided into the countryside, while at Pointe du Hoc, situated between Utah and Omaha, the 2nd Rangers climbed straight up the high cliffs, dodging gunfire and grenades and straight into the sights of the enemy cannons. It was a daunting, terrifying battlefield, but our troops answered the call with first-class bravery, and they got the job done as they always do.

The historic victory came at a price. The Allied casualties that June day were tragically high: 1,100 Canadians, 2,700 British, 15,000 to 20,000 Free French, and 6,000 Americans perished. Their bravery, their sacrifice, and their courage changed the very course of world history.

Today marks the 10th anniversary of the dedication of the World War II Memorial. I want to thank the gentle-

woman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for the key role she played in ensuring it was built.

The memorial provides a place for solemn reflection and gives World War II veterans the chance to share their memories with each other as they participate and Honor Flights from across the country with their sons and daughters and grandchildren. A living piece of history.

The World War II Memorial and the Veterans History Projects are employing every tool possible to catalogue, preserve, and make these firsthand memories for future generations. This effort is very important because there is a story that we must never forget.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, to the sailors, soldiers, marines, and airmen who stormed the beaches, parachuted into the thorny hedgerows, scaled the cliffs, and fought their way inland, America and the world owes you, our Greatest Generation, a debt we can never repay. May God bless each and every one you, and may God bless the United States of America.

MADE IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BENTIVOLIO). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, American manufacturing has always been the engine driving the American economy. While the recent recession has slowed our growth, American manufacturing is poised once again to propel our Nation and to propel our families forward.

My district in Pennsylvania is home to over 700 manufacturing facilities that sustain tens of thousands of good-paying, family-sustaining jobs. The people of Pennsylvania know that when they buy American-made goods, not only are they buying quality products, they are helping businesses and workers in their neighborhoods and across our country.

With that in mind, last summer I introduced the Made in America Act. It is bipartisan legislation that would connect American consumers to American manufacturers like never before by creating a definitive, standardized definition of "American-made goods."

Michael Araten, the CEO of the Rodon Group based in my district, correctly notes: "The keys to the success of American manufacturing are STEM education, abundant energy, and consumers who can easily recognize that products they love are made in the USA."

By incentivizing manufacturers to meet certain Made in America benchmarks for domestic production and providing consumers with reliable and easy-to-understand information, the Made in America Act can meet two very valuable goals: the reshoring of American businesses and jobs, and increasing American purchases of American-made goods.

"Made in America" has always stood for quality, value, and ingenuity. With the passage of this commonsense legislation, "Made in America" can also mean jobs.

SEVENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

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

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay my respects to the Greatest Generation of American heroes by honoring our courageous veterans of World War II, in particular, those who took part in the Normandy landing on June 6, 1944.

On that historic day, 160,000 Allied troops landed on the 50-mile stretch of beaches along the Normandy coast, commencing the largest amphibious assault ever of continental Europe. Their mission was clear: to gain a foothold from which to fight Nazi Germany and defeat Adolf Hitler.

With more than 5,000 ships and 13,000 aircraft, the Allied forces succeeded, but 9,000 patriots were killed or wounded in battle. The bravery and heroism of those Americans and our Allies when they stormed the French coastline was most definitely the turning point of the war. And they could not have done it without the extraordinary work of the Seabees.

During World War II, around 175,000 Seabees were staged directly through Port Hueneme and Ventura County. The Seabees, who were recruited for their civil construction skills, laid the groundwork for D-day.

□ 1100

On that historic day, the Seabees were among the first to go ashore, as members of the naval combat demolition units. Working with the U.S. Army engineers, they destroyed the steel and concrete barriers that the Germans had built along the Normandy coast to forestall an amphibious landing. Coming under fire at dawn, whole teams of Seabees were wiped out by the Germans, but their fellow servicemen continued their life-threatening task of planting all of their explosive charges. Because of their heroic actions the charges went off as planned, blowing huge holes in the enemy's defense.

But the Seabees' contributions to D-day didn't stop there. After the Allied fleet arrived on the coast of Normandy, Naval Construction Regiment 25—a team of around 10,000 Seabees—moved their pontoon causeways to create a beachhead from which the Allied infantry could land ashore.

Then, after the unheralded yet no less heroic work of the Seabees was complete, our troops and tanks went ashore, took back Normandy, and drove the Germans inland.

We remember and honor those heroes who gave their lives for us, and we thank the brave men and women who

served our country, returned home, and helped the U.S. become the indispensable leader of liberty and freedom.

Many of us have family members who fought in World War II, including my uncle Pete, who served in the Army. Of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II, just over 1 million of them are still alive, with around 93,000 in my home State of California.

Seven decades later, we are rapidly losing this Greatest Generation, so it is of the utmost importance that we continue to show our gratitude and appreciation for their sacrifices by recording their oral histories, with Honor Flights, and by ensuring that they live their final years with dignity and respect—and we shall never forget.

As a Member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I am committed to ensuring that the 20 million veterans in the United States receive the care and benefits they have earned and deserve—for everyone who donned the uniform, from the World War II generation to the post-9/11 generation.

I thank the World War II veterans in Ventura County and across the country for the sacrifices they and their families made to serve our great Nation, and for protecting our liberty and freedoms, our democracy at home, and our allies abroad.

The example their generation has set for us of coming together as a Nation with a common purpose is one we continue to aspire to today and one my colleagues and I on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee emulate as we seek the best possible care for our veterans.

PECOS, TEXAS

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

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to continue my journey through the 23rd District of Texas and saddle up and ride along the Butterfield Trail to a place that is truly American, and that is the city of Pecos, Texas, home of the Eagles, the mighty purple and gold.

Pecos is on Forbes' Top 400 Fastest-Growing Small Towns list. Spurred by growth in agriculture, Pecos is the home of the sweetest cantaloupes—Pecos cantaloupes—grown anywhere in the country, and also of incredible growth in oil and gas, as Pecos is part of the Permian Basin.

Pecos can be found sitting quietly in rich tradition just outside the Chihuahuan Desert where the Pecos River flows. The formidable Pecos River was nearly impossible to ford at one time. But being intrepid citizens, Americans using their ingenuity explored and discovered several places of the river where they could cross, and they founded the city of Pecos.

The city of Pecos was established in the late 1800s, and with the arrival of the Texas Pacific Railroad in 1881, Pecos functioned as a transportation

hub and created something that was Texas tough, kind of a combination of a cowboy culture and a Hispanic culture that still thrives even today. Many outlaws like Bill Earhart and John Denson met their end in Pecos, messing with the Texas tough values of Pecos.

That combination of cultures encouraged competitiveness. As a result, the dusty air was filled with cowboys contending for bragging rights through friendly rivalries that would eventually lead to the first ever rodeo on July 4, 1883, in Pecos, Texas. The winner of many Pecos rodeos was that mythical person Pecos Bill, a man who legend says was raised by coyotes and can be found in many movies and many books.

Today, Pecos continues that longest-running annual rodeo. If you are lucky, perhaps you can catch a glimpse of Pecos Bill still carrying on that rich tradition of accomplishment, perhaps eating a cantaloupe—as I said, one of the fruits that that area is famous for.

I invite all to visit Pecos, to learn more about the culture, the beauty, the traditions of the 23rd District. I am certain you won't regret your visit to west Texas.

OAKLAND BENEFITS OFFICE

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, as the secret waiting lists in veterans health care come to light more and more, I implore my colleagues to include the benefits administration in the VA as part of this investigation. I echo Chairman MILLER's statement from yesterday's hearing, where he told the witnesses: "Until VA understands that we are deadly serious, you can expect us to be looking over your shoulder every single day." Count on it.

I want the Oakland Regional Office to know that I, too, am serious and will continue to spend my time and that of my staff to correct the claims disaster crushing the veterans in my district. With the help of an ever-growing group of whistleblowers at the Oakland VA, we absolutely will be looking over their shoulder every single day.

Claim dates are concurrently being manipulated by the Oakland VA to improve their backlog statistics. This is a flagrant disregard of VA rules and contrary to the training received by every employee. Because of practices like these, thousands of veterans in my district are not even eligible for the secret health care waiting lists that we hear about, such as in Arizona. Their claims are still pending or summarily denied on technicalities prior to full consideration.

Many of these veterans have more than one claim unanswered. One man in my district has a 36-year-old claim, and a secondary claim appears to have been deliberately sidelined now for 212 days. Despite these facts, the Oakland

VA boasts that they have no claims over 125 days old. I meet veterans just like this man every day with claims that have gone on for years.

Thanks to a handful of dedicated VA employees working with my office, we have learned that these delays are an engineered disaster designed to control the VA budget in Oakland. By reducing the claim expenditures, Oakland's management has become eligible for bonuses, and received them. Withholding benefits for personal gain is perhaps the most despicable aspect of the VA scandals.

Veterans benefits are supposed to be a non-adversarial system. How can that be when employees have financial incentive not to process claims? Doesn't that explain the endless veteran claims with missing records and the staggering delays in processing? It is time to restore the VA to a veteran-centered system with real accountability.

Last Thursday, I made public the statements of whistleblowers regarding some 14,000 unprocessed claims at the Oakland office dating back to the '90s, as depicted in this poster. We have since heard that Oakland VA responded by sending a large number of these claims on a swift trip to Manila for "scanning." That is Manila, the Philippines. We don't know how many they have sent, and we don't really have an accountability for if they were actually sent at all.

After sitting untouched for years, the fastest process we have is scanning these files in the Philippines? How many of these veterans have given up on their claims or even died during this period? Were these veterans contacted to say their claims have been located?

Indeed, we hear that the budgeting in Oakland has actually gone for new desks, new furniture, and I have even heard spiffing up the director's suite with an ungraded or new restroom. We don't have money in the budget to buy a scanner so that the claims can be processed locally, we have to ship them out of the country? This is the response we get for some cases, almost 20-year-old claims sitting on a desk in a hallway at the Oakland VA. That is appalling.

On Tuesday morning, urgent phone calls came pouring into my office from Oakland employees who had been working with us who were unable to verify these files had actually been shipped. They feared that many of them had been destroyed or perhaps hidden once again in a janitor's closet or an elevator shaft somewhere.

I made repeated calls to the Oakland office that afternoon to check on this situation. Multiple calls to the interim director, Mr. Hackney, have gone unanswered, and we have yet, that I know of, to receive a response.

Every American should be appalled at this broken system. Mr. Speaker, it is time to expand our inquiries to the Veterans Administration as well to attack these problems from the bottom