

up while we have the opportunity. Remember, without a benefits rating, our veterans aren't even eligible to get on the secret waiting list at the veterans hospitals.

This isn't just about Arizona. It is almost everywhere within the system. This administration has known about this situation for at least a year, yet we hear what we hear. Only now are we really getting to the depths of the problem at the VA nationwide.

With an important national day of remembrance just behind us here in Memorial Day, and now we are coming upon the 70th anniversary of D-day, the invasion of Normandy, where our heroic troops really started the assault on taking back Europe from a regime that was evil, why can't we, the way they marshaled those resources to do that huge, huge invasion, marshal the resources in this country now to help our veterans, in honor of them just past Memorial Day and the upcoming of D-day, with missing files? Instead, let's process them.

THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

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

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, as a Member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I am honored to join with my colleagues from that committee to mark the 70th anniversary of D-day.

Nevada's heroes have played a critical role in our country's armed services throughout history, from the Air Force pilots that have been deployed from Nellis Air Force Base to our National Guard's 1st Squadron, 221st Cavalry Unit that has served in Iraq and Afghanistan. For generations, our democracy has been defended by those who have given so much.

Next week marks the 70th anniversary of the invasion of Normandy. At no other time in history has an amphibious assault occurred on that scale. On June 6, 1944, 156,000 Allied troops landed on the beaches of Normandy knowing that they may not survive, and many didn't. They were bombarded by bullets and shells and bombs, but without hesitation they marched on. In that one day, the United States lost 6,603 brave soldiers.

Nevada Senator Howard Cannon was one of the American heroes who risked his life on that fateful day. He piloted the chief troop-carrier airplane, leading 44 others from Exeter, England, across the English Channel to France. In the middle of a hot June night, at 11:50 p.m. on June 5, he took off, the plane departed, the Stoy Hora, carrying paratroopers who jumped into France just a little while later.

A few days after that, on June 17, Senator Cannon was shot down over the Netherlands and survived 42 days behind enemy lines. He is one of the he-

roes whose story is told in the book and movie "A Bridge Too Far."

I am fortunate that I was able to serve as Senator Cannon's faculty intern here in 1982. Every day in my district office, I have the unique privilege of sitting behind Senator Cannon's desk. It is a constant reminder of the many different forms that heroism takes. From the foot soldier at Normandy struggling against the waves to gain the beach to the switch operator back in the United States ensuring that the communications went through; from the admirals to the privates; from the artillerymen to the spies, there were many heroes who showed up on that day that changed history.

These brave men and women have been called "the Greatest Generation" by Tom Brokaw for a reason. Like many of you, I have family members who fought in World War II: an uncle, a father-in-law, two of my husband's uncles. Their valor and courage stand as an example to all of us as we continue to battle injustice today.

So, to all of those who risked their lives on those beaches in Normandy and beyond and to the families of those who perished on those foreign shores, fighting for democracy and freedom, I say a heartfelt thank you, and our grateful Nation owes you a debt that it can never repay.

□ 1115

LET'S STAND WITH OUR NATION'S HEROES

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

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of our Nation's veterans, the men and women who have put their lives on the line in service to our country.

I was honored to have the opportunity to spend Memorial Day with our troops stationed in Afghanistan. Sharing this most solemn holiday with members of our armed services, who go above and beyond every day, was truly a humbling experience.

It was an experience that reinforced my belief that one of the best ways Americans can pay tribute to the brave men and women who risk their lives fighting for us is to recommit ourselves to our duty to care for them when they return home. That is why I will be introducing three bills to help our troops and veterans.

Too often, we hear that our Nation's heroes, after fighting for our country, come home only to have to fight to get the care, support, and respect they so deserve. We must make sure that the brave men and women who have risked everything for our country are never forgotten or ignored, that we fight for them as they have fought for us.

For one thing, this means fully settling benefit claims in an efficient and

timely manner and making sure that those veterans receive the proper care and compensation.

Currently, the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans' Claims, or CAVC, is the court that veterans must appeal to if they were unfairly denied benefits, but it does not allow veterans access to the same judicial tools available in other Federal courts.

This court is terribly overburdened, with an appeal taking around a year on average, and that is on top of the nearly 4 years that a veteran has already waited by then. That is indefensible.

On the heels of damning reports about the VA's failing our veterans with wait lists that have even led to deaths while veterans wait for service, we must find ways to reduce the backlog and speed up the process.

That is why I have introduced a bill that would allow groups of veterans with similar claims to band together in their appeals. This would be highly efficient for both the VA and veterans by cutting costs, reducing decision times, and providing effective counsel, which many veterans lack under the current system.

This act would allow veterans to have their appeals heard in a class action, as was successfully used by veterans impacted by Agent Orange prior to the creation of the CAVC. For veterans facing disability due to the exposure to burn pits in Afghanistan, this could be an invaluable tool.

Another way to serve our Nation's heroes is by expanding educational opportunities. Veterans deserve the best training, so they don't have to fight for a job after fighting for our country.

Today, I am proposing to improve the post-9/11 GI Bill by expanding eligible expenses to include applications to college, graduate school, and law school, as well as technical and vocational schools. Applications to schools can be as high as \$300 to \$500 in out-of-pocket expenses for veterans returning from overseas.

Let's make it easier for our returning troops to pursue their educational and career goals by allowing our veterans to use the GI Bill to get reimbursed for expenses from applying to school.

Our veterans have tremendous discipline, responsibility, and leadership ability to offer businesses. By having access to educational opportunities, veterans will have the means to keep their job skills up to date and to stay competitive in today's evolving job market.

Finally, families are also impacted when their loved ones are deployed. Military spouses take on much of the burden and deserve great assistance. Currently, the Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts program provides up to a \$4,000 educational benefit while the spouse is overseas on active duty.

While we agree that this is a worthwhile benefit, it doesn't even get the

average person through a single semester. The average tour lasts about 10 months, long enough to complete a full year of school. An average year of tuition at a public university in the United States is almost \$9,000.

Let's bump up the benefit, so it actually covers the cost of tuition. The families of our servicemembers are the backbone of our military.

The bills I have introduced are commonsense solutions to do just that. This is National Military Appreciation Month. Let's stand with our Nation's servicemembers and veterans. Let's express our gratitude for their service by recognizing the struggles they face and make sure we are there for them and recognize the sacrifices they have made.

I urge my colleagues to support these bills, so that our veterans, troops, and military families get the care, benefits, and support they deserve.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 20 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

Rabbi Stephen Roth, Congregation Eitz Chaim, Passaic, New Jersey, offered the following prayer:

Our Father in Heaven, we ask that You bestow Your blessings on the Members of this House of Representatives so that their deliberations be just and with wisdom to benefit the people they represent. Guide them with Your kindness, and shower them with Your love.

This past week, we observed Memorial Day, a day set aside to remember those who gave their lives in defense of our great land and the freedoms that we enjoy. Let us remember that there are many people in the world that still do not enjoy these freedoms. We ask that these as yet oppressed people be granted the same freedoms we enjoy as a free nation, speedily in our time.

We pray for peace, not only for the citizens of this great land, but for peace among nations. May we soon see the day as prophesied by Isaiah: "No nation shall lift their swords against another, and may we learn of war no more."

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's pro-

ceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Montana (Mr. DAINES) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. DAINES led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

WELCOMING RABBI STEPHEN ROTH

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from New Jersey is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank my friend, Rabbi Stephen Roth, a resident of the Ninth Congressional District of New Jersey, for offering the opening prayer before the House of Representatives.

Rabbi Roth hails from Brooklyn, New York City, and was ordained in 1972 by the Brooklyn Rabbinical Seminary. For 20 years, he served as the founding rabbi of Congregation Eitz Chaim in Passaic, New Jersey, inspiring and guiding countless members of his congregation.

In addition to his work as a teacher, mentor, and counselor in his community, Rabbi Roth also served as the softball coach for the Torah Academy of Bergen County, as well as the Kushner Yeshiva High School. Rabbi Roth has, no doubt, served his community so well, thanks to the loving support of his wife of nearly 35 years, Fern, who is with us today, as well as his three children and 13 grandchildren.

So on behalf of the United States Congress and my constituents in New Jersey, I want to thank my friend Rabbi Roth for serving as guest chaplain in the House of Representatives today.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

IRAN IS DETERMINED TO HAVE NUKES

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, in a changing world full of danger, the greatest threat to the United States and the rest of the world remains the same—the Iranian regime.

This was once again demonstrated through the words of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. In a speech recently, he said that the Iranians who wish to negotiate with the United States are committing treason. He made it clear that the jihad battle will continue endlessly until they "get rid of the oppressors" with "America at the head of it."

Mr. Speaker, the Iranian regime believes their battle will not be over until America is destroyed. The blissful, unrealistic, and naive hope to the contrary, Iran has no plans to stop its development of nukes. The Supreme Leader said: "The accelerated scientific advancement of the last 12 years cannot stop under any circumstances."

Iran has time and time again lied about its nuclear weapons capability and development. America should realize that the ruler of Iran wants to destroy us in the name of religion by any means necessary. The United States should tighten sanctions against Iran, not relax them.

And that's just the way it is.

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

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

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, there are nearly 70 foster youth here today on Capitol Hill recognizing National Foster Care Month and to advocate for positive reforms that will better serve our Nation's kids.

I applaud my friend from California, Congresswoman BASS, who, when she was speaker of the assembly, led the effort in California to extend the foster care age to 21 and is now leading the charge here in Congress to help strengthen the foster care system.

Today, Joel, a 22-year-old student from Wilmington, California, who spent 3 years in the California foster care system, is spending the day with me to share his experience in foster care.

Due to unfortunate circumstances, Joel was separated from his parents and found himself living on the streets of Los Angeles before being placed in a foster home. Joel didn't let these challenges keep him from completing high school at Banning High School and attending college at Cal Poly Pomona.

Today, Joel is an inspiring young political science student and a testament to the importance of investing in foster youth programs. But we must do more. There are nearly 400,000 youth in the foster care system like Joel. These are all of our children, and we must take care of them.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF LANCE CORPORAL STEVEN HANCOCK OF GOOSE LAKE, ILLINOIS

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