

from my congressional district, and to the many bases across the State of Texas that have amongst their ranks veterans who have served in Active Duty and who are still pressing forward in spite of conditions that they face, this is the bill that provides the answer and the love and affection for the veterans and military personnel who have put on the uniform every day and who have never—never once—shied away from their duty and decided that their lives and their ills were greater than their commitment to this Nation.

We owe them this. This is a “God bless America” bill. I thank the proponents of it.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would like to inquire of the ranking member how many speakers she has left.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. The last speaker just finished. I have no additional speakers.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. We have no additional speakers either, so we are prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

It is unacceptable that 22 veterans are dying by suicide every day. We need to pull all stakeholders together to work as a group to solve the problem. There is not one cause and not one answer. There are a multitude of answers and a multitude of causes and solutions.

The Department of Defense, the VA, and the veterans service organizations need to work together to come up with many solutions that will meet the needs. There is not one solution but many. I pledge to work with my colleague from Minnesota and Chairman MILLER to address the issues in the upcoming session.

Access to mental health care and benefits for our veterans is an issue I plan to focus on in the months ahead, and I look forward to working with all of my colleagues to ensure that veterans are given the benefits and services that they have earned.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON).

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the ranking member, and certainly, I want to thank the chairman. I won’t take the 2 minutes, but I want to thank them for their incredible cooperation on this most important of issues.

Derek Denfeld, from my district, lost his life. There has been sadness and the coming together of the community. Our hearts go out to his wife, Heather; to his son, Felix; and certainly to his parents, Deb and Chris, whom I know personally.

I thank the ranking member. I thank the sergeant major for his sponsorship

of this bill, and I thank the ranking member and the chairman for what is an important piece of legislation.

As noted, we can’t wait another day for this to take effect.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I appreciate the comments from both sides of the aisle, and I look forward to working with all of our colleagues on future issues as they relate to the Department of Veterans Affairs and, in particular, the SAV Act.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I was pleased that my colleagues unanimously agreed during the 113th Congress that we must act to combat Veteran suicide and I am grateful that we are acting quickly in the first days of the 114th Congress to address this critical unfinished business. The statistics are heartbreaking. An average of 22 Veterans commit suicide every day. So each day that we delay action is a day we cannot afford. I was proud to help introduce HR. 5059, Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act with Chairman JEFF MILLER and Representative TIM WALZ. While there is no bill that will completely end Veteran suicide, this comprehensive measure is a step in the right direction. It will remove barriers that prevent our nation’s heroes from getting the quality, timely mental health care that they deserve. It is my sincere hope that my colleagues in the Senate will take note of the momentum in the House and bring this legislation to the Senate Floor as soon as possible.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 203.

The question was taken.

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

Ms. BROWN of Florida. 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.

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 33) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 33

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 “Protecting Volunteer Firefighters and Emergency Responders Act”.

SEC. 2. EMERGENCY SERVICES, GOVERNMENT, AND CERTAIN NONPROFIT VOLUNTEERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 4980H(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by redesignating paragraphs (5), (6), and (7) as paragraphs (6), (7), and (8), respectively, and by inserting after paragraph (4) the following new paragraph:

“(5) SPECIAL RULES FOR CERTAIN EMERGENCY SERVICES, GOVERNMENT, AND NONPROFIT VOLUNTEERS.—

“(A) EMERGENCY SERVICES VOLUNTEERS.—Qualified services rendered as a bona fide volunteer to an eligible employer shall not be taken into account under this section as service provided by an employee. For purposes of the preceding sentence, the terms ‘qualified services’, ‘bona fide volunteer’, and ‘eligible employer’ shall have the respective meanings given such terms under section 457(e).

“(B) CERTAIN OTHER GOVERNMENT AND NONPROFIT VOLUNTEERS.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—Services rendered as a bona fide volunteer to a specified employer shall not be taken into account under this section as service provided by an employee.

“(ii) BONA FIDE VOLUNTEER.—For purposes of this subparagraph, the term ‘bona fide volunteer’ means an employee of a specified employer whose only compensation from such employer is in the form of—

“(I) reimbursement for (or reasonable allowance for) reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of services by volunteers, or

“(II) reasonable benefits (including length of service awards), and nominal fees, customarily paid by similar entities in connection with the performance of services by volunteers.

“(iii) SPECIFIED EMPLOYER.—For purposes of this subparagraph, the term ‘specified employer’ means—

“(I) any government entity, and

“(II) any organization described in section 501(c) and exempt from tax under section 501(a).

“(iv) COORDINATION WITH SUBPARAGRAPH (A).—This subparagraph shall not fail to apply with respect to services merely because such services are qualified services (as defined in section 457(e)(11)(C)).”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to months beginning after December 31, 2013.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 33, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am here bringing forward Mr. BARLETTA’s bill, and it is really simple. One of the cornerstones of our civil society—one of the great pieces of the American story—is volunteerism but, in particular, volunteerism among our first responders.

So many of us represent congressional districts that thrive on and exist on and preserve their safety on volunteer firefighters and first responders. Unfortunately, in the Affordable Care Act, there is a huge glitch. Under ObamaCare, volunteer firefighters and first responders are counted in many ways as if they were full-time equivalent employees, and therefore, volunteer fire departments are getting hit with enormous fines, mandates, and taxes.

It shouldn't be that way. It is causing a huge paperwork burden, not to mention a fiscal drain on the budgets of these small fire departments and emergency responding agencies in our communities and in rural areas all across America. This legislation fixes this.

I want to thank Congressman BARLETTA for introducing this because he clearly understands as a former mayor and as someone who represents Pennsylvania, which I know has a lot of volunteer firefighters just like we do in rural Wisconsin, that these are the lifeblood of our communities.

The last thing that they need to do when they are so concerned about preserving public safety and health is to worry about all of these ObamaCare mandates. Mr. BARLETTA's bill preserves the freedom to operate for our 780,000 public service volunteer firefighters. It removes this mandate and exempts them from this onerous mandate, so they can continue providing the public service that they have been right now.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA), the author of this legislation.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 33, the Protecting Volunteer Firefighters and Emergency Responders Act.

This is a good, truly bipartisan bill that protects our first responders, our volunteer firefighters, and emergency services personnel. It protects them by ensuring that they are not considered employees under the employer mandate provision of ObamaCare.

If they were, some fire companies would be forced to pay for the volunteers' health insurance or pay a fine, driving many fire departments out of business. As a former mayor, I know how important volunteer fire companies are to the health and safety of a community. Simply put, this is a public safety issue.

I first learned about this issue from a volunteer firefighter, Bob Timko, back home, and I began a crusade to clear this up for volunteer firefighters and localities and the residents of Pennsylvania and every other State.

As you know, the employer mandate of ObamaCare kicks in for employers with 50 or more employees. Now, some fire companies may hear about this and immediately think, "Well, we only have 25 volunteers, so we are safe. We don't have 50."

That may not necessarily be the case. Some fire companies are considered part of their local government. If you take the number of firefighters, paid and unpaid, and add them to the number of other public employees, such as highway workers, police, code enforcement officers, health officers, and clerical workers, you can easily reach 50, even in a small town.

This would be a very big deal in my home State of Pennsylvania, where 97 percent of our fire companies are either completely or mostly volunteers. Nationally, almost 92 percent of fire companies use at least some volunteers, and over 86 percent depend on all or mostly volunteers.

Those numbers come from the 2012 National Fire Department Census conducted by the United States Fire Administration. If your district is like mine, then volunteer firefighters are ingrained in your community.

We won an initial battle on this issue. After I raised it with the IRS and brought pressure to bear through this legislation, they finally relented and changed their rules regarding the Federal tax status of volunteer firefighters.

However, this is too important of a public safety issue to be left to the changing positions of unelected Federal bureaucrats at the IRS. Their arbitrary regulatory guidance could easily be changed back.

Our people back home deserve better. We owe our emergency service volunteers, who risk their lives every day, rock-solid certainty. This legislation says, once and for all, that volunteer firefighters are just that—volunteers—and should not be subjected to the employer mandate. It takes away the power of the IRS to change the rules.

I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their continued support. Last year, this bill passed the Ways and Means Committee by a strong bipartisan vote of 37–0, and it passed the House by a very rare unanimous vote of 410–0. Not one single Member, Republican or Democrat, opposed it.

I want to thank Speaker BOEHNER, Majority Leader McCARTHY, Majority Whip SCALISE, the Ways and Means Committee, and their staffs. We all recognize that my bill is a simple, bipartisan solution to an unforeseen consequence of the President's health care law.

This bill has the strong support of the National Volunteer Fire Council, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, and the Congressional Fire Services Institute. I want to thank my partners, as well as the men and women they represent, for their help.

To be clear, forcing volunteer fire companies to comply with ObamaCare will not extend health insurance to the uninsured; rather, it will close firehouses, placing people at risk.

I strongly urge the passage of this bill.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to start off by certainly extending congratulations to Representative BARLETTA for his persistency in continuing to bring this legislation forward. As he has pointed out, it has been bipartisanly supported, and it deserves passage. It passed unanimously, as he indicated, in both the Ways and Means Committee and also unanimously on this floor, which is no small order.

Of course, it comes in the midst of controversy. I say "controversy" because—well, our distinguished chairman is to be congratulated as well for not only bringing this bill forward, but also for the great victory that was won by the Green Bay Packers yesterday.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. In a moment, because I do want to continue my praise of the Aaron Rodgers look-alike.

Today, our distinguished chairman announced that he is not running for President. We think that it is so that his look-alike, Aaron Rodgers, may fill that void. I know that it was an outstanding victory by the Packers yesterday, but it was not without controversy on our own committee.

I know that KENNY MARCHANT, KEVIN BRADY, and SAM JOHNSON are very concerned about this, but as the chairman said, "The rules are the rules," and we should proceed from there.

□ 1745

But I also want to thank all of those, and especially the chairman, who raised the point about volunteer firefighters. All of us have that visual in our minds, of course, of those going up the stairs so that people can come down the stairs. And since September 11, and noting that volunteer firefighters cover more than 70 percent of this country, this clearly is a bill that was worthy of the unanimous approval and consent that it received and, as I indicated, is bipartisanly supported by our entire delegation.

I want to commend the gentleman from Connecticut, Representative COURTNEY, who will speak later, and also the gentlewoman from Connecticut, Representative ESTY, and also the National Volunteer Fire Council, which has been 1,000 percent behind this and also other tax issues that are going to be coming before our committee that have been bipartisanly supported as well by Representative REICHERT, Tom Latham, and others. And I know that we share the bipartisan spirit in this.

I also would like to say that, along with firefighters, the many people who are emergency medical volunteers could benefit from a number of volunteer tax breaks that we could provide as well. I look forward to working with our distinguished chairman and, again, commend the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Representative BARLETTA.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds to say that I

appreciate the kind words from the gentleman from Connecticut.

This is bipartisan. It is wonderful when we can work together and find common ground to get things done and find common ground where the completion of a pass is the completion of a pass, it is a rule.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I yield to the gentleman from Connecticut.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. We are especially gratified, though, in a true show of compassionate conservatism that you reached out to the chief fan of the Jersey Cowboys—excuse me—the Dallas Cowboys, Chris Christie, to provide him with both a hug and a sincere gesture from Wisconsin.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Reclaiming my time, all in good jest.

With that, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY), a member of the full committee.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise in very strong support of H.R. 33, and I want to thank Speaker BOEHNER and Majority Leader MCCARTHY for allowing this legislation to come forward so early in this Congress.

I agree with the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON). People always say: I wish you guys could get along; just get something done. This is something that we overwhelmingly believe in and we are going to get done.

I think that the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) has explained very clearly that it has to become statute. It can't be left to be some nebulous fact that is rolling around out there.

Now, these people who do this work—and in Pennsylvania, 97 percent, almost eight out of every 10 firefighters come from the volunteer aspect of it; they are not paid. Yet because of some type of allowance they are given, they fall under the Affordable Care Act, and this would destroy volunteer fire departments as we know them. So what Mr. BARLETTA has very thoughtfully done is he has put forth a piece of legislation that would guarantee that these folks don't have to worry about that.

Now, I have got to tell you, in the little town that I grew up in and live in, Butler, Pennsylvania, so many people volunteer their time to do the volunteer fire fighting. They are also the EMS. They are the first responders.

Last spring, one of our volunteer firemen by the name of Ryan Sekerski, on his way home from work, he heard over his scanner that a fuel truck had overturned. The driver was trapped inside that truck. He then went to the scene of the accident, got his equipment that was in the trunk of his car, got out, and saved that driver's life. These are the people that we are talking about.

When you come to the people's House, America's House, America's Congress, we look at the things that we can do together, things that just make sense. While we may disagree on some

other aspects of what it is that we try to get done, on this, we are solid. This just makes sense for America. This makes sense for all those that lay their life on the line anytime there is an emergency or a fire. They do it voluntarily.

Hundreds and thousands of hours in training go into this. They spend time away from their families. They take time away from personal time, where they could be doing other things, to get trained so that they can help other Americans who may need their help. It is absolutely incredible. It is so American. It is something we look at with a great sense of pride.

And we went to the IRS and said: Listen, what we really need now is a statute that guarantees that these volunteer fire departments will not be put under pressure, where they would have to go out of business.

This is not a health care issue, not as far as it is supplying health care or paying a fine for those that volunteer; but this is a health care issue for every single American for whom these people supply necessary services on a voluntary basis to save their lives and their property.

So I think the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) is a champion on this issue. He was in the last Congress and the fact that it has come forward again—it is so overwhelmingly supported by both sides of our House that it truly is America's Congress. It truly is America's issue. It truly is an issue that makes sense for all of us. It is maybe our small way of thanking all those folks that do that every day without any pay, just because of the greatness in their hearts.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I really deeply appreciate the words of my colleague and fellow member of the Ways and Means Committee. Again, I want to commend the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA).

I want to submit for the RECORD a letter from the Department of the Treasury that, at the bequest of a number of Members bipartisanly submitted and they made the changes to the rules.

B. EXCLUSIONS FROM DEFINITION OF HOUR OF SERVICE

Commenters requested that hours of service performed in certain capacities not be counted as an hour of service. The final regulations adopt the following changes in response to these comments.

1. VOLUNTEER EMPLOYEES

Commenters requested that hours of service performed in the capacity of a volunteer for a government entity or tax-exempt organization not be counted as hours of service for purposes of section 4980H. Under the definition of hour of service outlined in these regulations, an hour of service is generally defined as an hour for which an employee is paid or entitled to payment. Accordingly, hours worked by a volunteer who does not receive (and is not entitled to receive) compensation in exchange for the performance of services are not treated as hours of service for purposes of section 4980H.

Commenters noted, however, that some volunteers receive compensation in the form

of expense reimbursements, stipends, contributions to employee benefit plans, or nominal wages. Local governments, for instance, noted that many volunteer firefighters or other emergency responders are paid a salary or an hourly wage, generally at a rate lower than the rate paid to non-volunteers performing services in a similar capacity. Other volunteer firefighters or emergency responders may receive expense reimbursements or other fees each time they respond to a call. Commenters generally expressed concern that volunteer service would be discouraged if volunteer hours were required to be counted when determining whether the individual is a full-time employee for purposes of section 4980H.

In response to these concerns, the final regulations provide that hours of service do not include hours worked as a "bona fide volunteer." For this purpose, the definition of "bona fide volunteer" is generally based on the definition of that term for purposes of section 457(e)(11)(B)(i), which provides special rules for length of service awards offered to certain volunteer firefighters and emergency medical providers under a municipal deferred compensation plan. For purposes of section 4980H, however, bona fide volunteers are not limited to volunteer firefighters and emergency medical providers. Rather, bona fide volunteers include any volunteer who is an employee of a government entity or an organization described in section 501(c) that is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) whose only compensation from that entity or organization is in the form of (i) reimbursement for (or reasonable allowance for) reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of services by volunteers, or (ii) reasonable benefits (including length of service awards), and nominal fees, customarily paid by similar entities in connection with the performance of services by volunteers.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I think it is both appropriate and right that we codify this and put it into a law.

With that, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut, JOE COURTNEY, one of the chief sponsors who, along with ELIZABETH ESTY, helped engineer this bill.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to congratulate the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) for his leadership on this legislation, which has been noted.

As we are standing here today, there are probably thousands of calls happening all across the country for fire suppression, for medical emergencies, for people with all types of difficulties that volunteers—people who don't have to step up and train and spend all the hours and be available at the expense of their family time and their work time—will respond to these calls.

And for a lot of communities that rely on volunteers, the issue of recruitment and retention and just trying to make the environment conducive for people to make that act of volunteering is a challenge that I think all of us hear about from our volunteer fire departments and first responders all across the Nation.

So when this issue of the Affordable Care Act being possibly a requirement for the shared responsibilities of employers was out there, again, I applaud Mr. BARLETTA for stepping up, introducing this legislation, and following

up with mail to the IRS Commissioner. They did respond almost exactly a year ago, saying that the regulations would not count bona fide volunteers in terms of the 50-employee count. But as was noted, I think it is always better to have it in statute rather than rely on the whims of administrative agencies that can change with the change of administration. So again, I think this is an example of how the country really wants us to operate.

Again, if you look at the Affordable Care Act, since its passage, we have worked together to eliminate the 1099 filing requirement; we have worked together to make sure that our military families, through TRICARE, would have age 26 coverage, which was left out when the bill was initially filed; and here today, we are following up again with an example of commonsense fixes to the legislation, which is what I think the country really is looking for.

I would also note that the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) has legislation to restore tax exclusions which were on the books a number of years ago to help volunteer fire departments use property tax exemptions and equipment donations that had been treated as income by the IRS in past years.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. I yield the gentleman an additional minute.

Mr. COURTNEY. Unfortunately, those tax exemptions expired. And I know, again, the gentleman—and I am sure with bipartisan support—is going to introduce measures to bring those back and, again, allow these departments that are struggling to retain and recruit to have the tools so that they can make it easier, rather than having to file 1040s and drive people crazy around tax filing time for things like boots and coats and a property tax exemption being treated as taxable income.

So again, I look forward to the passage of this legislation with the huge bipartisan margin that we saw last year; and given the administration's response to our entreaties, again, I fully expect that there will be a bill signing ceremony at the White House, assuming it gets through the Senate. Again, with that, I would urge passage.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time other than to close.

May I inquire of the gentleman from Connecticut?

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. I have no further requests for time.

JOE COURTNEY said, "Don't forget to mention the Patriots," so I would be remiss if I didn't.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank Representative COURTNEY also for recognizing the Volunteer Responder Incentive Protection Reauthorization Act, as I mentioned

earlier, which is something that has been bipartisanly cosponsored in the past by Representatives REICHERT, Latham, myself, and others.

The distinguished chairman and I, who are classmates, who came into this Congress together—he has also been a great proponent and advocate for making sure that these volunteers, who never were intended in both the case of Mr. BARLETTA and also in the case of the IRS, something that is administratively burdening for the IRS, this is, as Mr. KELLY so passionately said, something that is common sense, that we ought to work on together, and that we ought to provide the relief for, those who provide more than 70 percent of the volunteer aid across this country, especially when it comes to fighting fires. And our National Volunteer Fire Council is supportive of this as is the Fire Chiefs Association. I am looking forward to working with my colleagues across the aisle to ensure this.

Again, with that, I commend and congratulate the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) and thank him for his fine work in this area, and I look forward to supporting him on future endeavors.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself just a few moments to say to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON), I appreciate him for his comity, for the bipartisan nature of this.

I would say to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY), first, they have to get through some tough luck—Andrew Luck, in particular—in order to make it to where they want to go.

With that, for the purpose of closing on his own bill, I would like to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA).

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues on both sides. There are very few times when you have a vote here that is unanimous, and it is for a simple reason. It is that everyone here understands and appreciates what these men and women in our communities are willing to do to make the community safe.

You know, as a mayor, I have come to appreciate the volunteer firefighters more than I could ever imagine. Many times, I have watched them stand out in the middle of a road with a boot, trying to raise money so that they could buy gear or equipment or get more training. The volunteers ask very little of their community compared to what they are willing to give, and that is the ultimate sacrifice. They are willing to give their lives for people that they don't even know. They are willing to walk into a burning fire.

I can remember one night, our local fire department in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, they ran in, and they came out with a little baby whose life they saved. And I also remember a day when

they couldn't save a life and how it affected every one of those men and women as if it were their own child. They have a lot to worry about, and what they shouldn't worry about is where they are going to get money to provide health insurance or pay a fine. I am sure this was an unintended consequence, and we here recognize that.

So again, I want to thank the chairman and my colleagues for standing with me and saluting the real American heroes, the men and women who volunteer to save us, our first responders.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 33.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. 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.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 6 p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BYRNE) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Suspending the rules and passing H.R. 203;

Suspending the rules and passing H.R. 33;

Agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

CLAY HUNT SUICIDE PREVENTION FOR AMERICAN VETERANS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the