

conditions of pain, depression, and PTSD.

□ 1015

At the very least, we ought to allow the Veterans Administration doctors to work with their patients on this matter. That is why I will again be introducing my amendment that would make it clear that VA doctors in States where it is legal can work with their patients on medical marijuana.

Since I first introduced this legislation, I have watched growing support on the floor of the House for an amendment that would accomplish this. There has been interest in the Senate. Veterans groups are aware of this discrimination and the Veterans Administration's sorry record when it comes to helping our veterans with these chronic conditions by using conventional painkillers that lead to addiction and death.

Medical marijuana appears safer, effective, and is a low-cost way to deal with chronic pain. Nobody dies from an overdose of medical marijuana. Let's add this to our discussion, promote more effective research, and let VA doctors meet with their patients to talk about this as an alternative.

SUPPORTING THE RIGHTS OF THE WOMEN AIRFORCE SERVICE PILOTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, as the author of legislation that awarded the Congressional Gold Medal to the Women Airforce Service Pilots, better known as the WASP, I rise in strong support of this bill, H.R. 4336, the Women Airforce Service Pilots Arlington Inurnment Restoration Act, presented by the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY), my great friend and colleague. This legislation seeks to restore eligibility to these brave women pioneers for burial at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors.

The WASP were the first women in U.S. history to fly our military aircraft. During World War II, a time of great global conflict, these courageous women volunteered to fly noncombat missions so that every available male pilot could be deployed in combat.

The WASP served our Nation without hesitation and with no expectation of recognition or praise. More than 25,000 women applied for the program, but only 1,074 selected women earned their wings. Between the years 1942 and 1944, the WASP logged more than 60 million miles. With the exception of direct combat missions, the WASP flew the same aircraft as male pilots.

Although they took the military oath, the WASP were not recognized as military personnel for their time in service. Their patriotic contributions went unrecognized for many decades. It

wasn't until 1977 that Congress granted them veteran status; and then in 2002, the Arlington National Cemetery decided to allow the WASP, among others listed as Active Duty designees, to receive benefits consistent with the status that they had so rightfully earned. Unfortunately, last year, the Department of the Army rescinded this decision and ruled that the WASP were ineligible for burial at that site, citing a lack of space.

This is simply unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. These women deserve to be treated honorably, and our military branch should allocate the necessary space to accommodate these courageous women who sacrificed so much for our country.

We cannot just consider these women to be ineligible. These honorable women answered the call to serve during World War II. They did not turn their backs on the American people nor on their fellow servicemen. Their rights at Arlington National must be restored. We have to do this for the present and future generations to come.

Today, women in our military fly every type of aircraft, from the F-15 to the space shuttle, and I know this because my daughter-in-law, Lindsay Nelson Lehtinen, has flown combat missions both in Iraq and Afghanistan for the Marines. This opportunity was afforded to Lindsay thanks to the service of the Women Airforce Service Pilots. They were the trailblazers. They set the stage for women in the military.

I have been fortunate enough to personally meet some of these heroic women. As pictured in this poster, I presented south Florida WASP Ruth Shafer Fleisher and Frances Sargent with copies of the bill that I introduced and passed in Congress with the help of SUSAN DAVIS, and which was signed by the President, that honored the invaluable contributions of these heroic female pilots. We had this celebration at the Wings Over Miami Air Museum, which has served as the foundation for our community to learn more about veterans and aviators, including our proud WASP.

Throughout my years in Congress, I have also had the pleasure of meeting other south Florida WASP, including Shirley Kruse, pictured here, Bee Haydu, and Helen Wyatt Snapp. Although Frances and Helen are no longer with us, they still live in our hearts and in our minds, and they are embedded in the rich history of our great Nation.

Mr. Speaker, we need to do what is right for our valiant, patriotic women and their wonderful families. The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs will bring up Congresswoman MCSALLY's bill tomorrow, Thursday, during a markup. I encourage all of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support and pass this important and necessary bill so that we can continue to honor these women pioneers.

These women must receive the recognition that they are due. We must give them back the right that they earned, to be buried at Arlington. Thank you very much to these brave patriots.

REAUTHORIZATION OF CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

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

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of efforts to reauthorize child nutrition programs.

Last year the House and the Senate worked together in a bipartisan fashion to reauthorize our elementary and secondary education programs. I rise today to urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to carry forward that momentum to complete a much-needed review and renewal of Federal child nutrition programs. In doing so, Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to employ similar goals and objectives: simplify, streamline, and empower State and local education agencies when reauthorizing these programs.

In particular, this approach can benefit our students and families by finding a path forward to simplify and streamline existing Federal nutrition and meal requirements without sacrificing the beneficial dietary value that school meals bring to students' daily lives. Much like we empowered our teachers to establish the curriculum and standards to best teach students they know so well, we likewise should empower those who know what our students will actually eat: the school professionals who work with the goal of making sure our children are able to enjoy healthy, nutritious meals.

Likewise, we can use this opportunity to continue efforts to ensure that our existing Federal nutrition programs are providing adequate and appropriate training to school professionals, as well as the resources necessary to improve and enhance our school meal delivery system.

Mr. Speaker, this opportunity will allow us to strengthen existing programs that strive to get nutritious meals to children year-round, and at earlier ages. Existing programs like the Summer Food Service Program can be enhanced and made more efficient to make sure they effectively reach those children who are most in need of quality, healthy meals. We can collaborate with Head Start, afterschool, and early childhood programs to better engage them in existing Federal programs that offer nutritious meals to young children most in need.

We have a strong infrastructure in place to provide children and families with quality, healthy meals, and we have an excellent opportunity to improve these programs. I respectfully call on my colleagues on both sides of

the aisle to work together to accomplish this effort before another school year comes to a close.

LEVERAGING AND ENERGIZING AMERICA'S
APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS ACT

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Leveraging and Energizing America's Apprenticeship Programs Act, legislation that I have cosponsored.

In the midst of a slow economic recovery, one of the issues plaguing both our workforce and our job creators is a persistent mismatch of employer needs and employee skills. Right now, 10 million unemployed Americans are seeking work, while 4 million jobs remain unfilled. Fortunately, this problem can be solved with a bipartisan commitment to commonsense workforce development initiatives, as demonstrated by the Leveraging and Energizing America's Apprenticeship Programs bill.

By promoting apprenticeship programs, this legislation creates opportunities for highly motivated workers to earn a salary, while gaining the skills they need to succeed in high-demand fields.

I am proud to say that employers in my congressional district in southeastern Pennsylvania have already recognized the value of apprenticeship programs by making hundreds of these opportunities available to those looking to build their job training and skills.

I commend Congressman RODNEY DAVIS for his efforts on this legislation, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support it.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE OLDER AMERICANS
ACT

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of reauthorizing the Older Americans Act.

The Older Americans Act provides social and nutritional support to members of our senior population and their caregivers. Enacted in 1965, this legislation has improved health outcomes, independence, and quality of life by offering meal delivery, respite care, and other essential services to the most vulnerable members of our population.

Reauthorization of this legislation gives Congress an opportunity to modernize multipurpose senior centers; improve falls prevention and chronic disease self-management training; strengthen laws to combat abuse, neglect, and exploitation; and support our local Area Agencies on Aging.

Mr. Speaker, I offer my support to work with my colleagues to review and advance the legislation passed by the United States Senate last year, as it is an effort that will not only help protect seniors across my district and the U.S., but will ensure that our existing Federal support programs are appropriately tailored to meet the present-day needs of our senior citizens.

PENTAGON WASTEFULNESS IN
AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I have been coming to the floor for weeks and months to complain about the waste of money and life in Afghanistan. In the last couple weeks, I had an opportunity to read two articles. The first is titled, "This is How the Pentagon Wasted \$17 Billion in Afghanistan," by Emily Leayman. I would like to quote a couple of examples of the Pentagon's waste that she describes in her article.

The Pentagon spent "\$8 billion for a failed drug war: Despite a 14-year effort, Afghanistan now leads the world in heroin production." The Pentagon also spent "\$486 million for useless aircraft: Speaking of planes, 20 planes could not be flown, and most were sold for scrap . . . Legislators like Senators John McCain and James Lankford are fed up with the lack of accountability in spending."

Senators MCCAIN and LANKFORD have joined me in bringing to the public's attention the lack of accountability in Afghanistan. It is astounding, to say the least.

Mr. Speaker, last month John Sopko, the Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, testified before the Senate Committee on Armed Services about a recent report he wrote on the waste in Afghanistan. In that report, he exposed that the Pentagon paid \$6 million to buy nine male Italian goats—the reason they bought the goats from Italy was because they are blond in color—to send to western Afghanistan to set up a farm and try to boost the cashmere industry there in Afghanistan. Now, the Pentagon doesn't even know where the goats are. And the sad thing is, as Mr. Sopko said to the Senate, "We don't know where the goats are. They might have been eaten"—\$6 million. Mr. Speaker, American people could do a lot with \$6 million, I assure you. And they wouldn't be spending \$6 million for nine goats, that I am certain.

The report that Mr. Sopko made reference to is titled, "Report Cites Wasted Pentagon Money in Afghanistan." Mr. Speaker, the waste goes on and on and on, and yet we in the House every year will send more and more money to Afghanistan. We have already been there 14 years. We are going to be there another 8 years because President Obama signed an agreement with Mr. Ghani to be there for 9 more years. We have already been there 1 year, and that means 8 more years. That is 22 years.

□ 1030

General Campbell, who has been the leader in Afghanistan, but is leaving, says that we need more years to train the Afghans to have a security force. I guess we are going to be there 30 years. I will be dead and gone, for sure, by then.

What a waste of life and money in Afghanistan. It is time for this Congress to meet its responsibility and put pres-

sure on the administration and stop funding Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, I have a poster here. The reason I bring this poster to the floor is to show the sad tragedy of war. There is a wife and a little girl. The husband and daddy is in a flag-draped casket.

The reason I bring this matter to the floor is that I have signed over 11,000 letters to families and extended families who died in Afghanistan and Iraq. Last Sunday I signed one letter for an Army sergeant who died in Afghanistan. Mr. Speaker, I thought: How sad. How sad it is for that family. It is just so sad.

It doesn't have to happen. We need to debate bringing our troops home from Afghanistan, and we need to debate stopping the funding for the war in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, before closing, I want to remind the House that this is the longest war in the history of America. I don't know who said it, but they said it right: Afghanistan is the graveyard of empires.

I know there is going to be a headstone that says that the empire known as America spent so much blood and money in Afghanistan. It is financially broke. We are \$19.1 trillion in debt right now.

Let's bring our troops out of Afghanistan. Let them fight the civil war themselves and decide what they want for Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform, bless the families of our men in uniform. And, God, please continue to bless America.

STOP ACT

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

Mr. JOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about an important congressional reform initiative that I have introduced in this body.

I have had the opportunity to study Congress from virtually every angle. I graduated from college as a young intern who drove up here having never been north of Tennessee. As my predecessor said and I shared: I never thought I would meet a Member of Congress, much less have the great opportunity and honor to be one.

Through virtually every staff role over the past 15 or 20 years, I have had a chance to study this body. There are a few experiences now, as a sitting Member of Congress, that I simply cannot accept.

One of them—the most pressing one—is the amount of time that Members of Congress are expected or, in some cases, directed to spend on raising money.

We all know it. Every Member of Congress understands that you arrive with great expectations only to learn the obligation to spend time raising money. There is a quiet anger among many Members about that.