

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNIZING THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE "JAMES H. MEREDITH MARCH AGAINST FEAR"

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 488, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 488) recognizing the historical significance and the 50th anniversary of the "James H. Meredith March Against Fear," a 220-mile walk down Highway 51 from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 488) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I think this is a very appropriate time to recognize the Meredith March Against Fear. On June 5, 1966, 4 years after becoming the first African-American student to enroll at the University of Mississippi, James Meredith began his historic Meredith March Against Fear. The march began at the Peabody Hotel in downtown Memphis and would conclude some 3 weeks later at the Mississippi State Capitol in Jackson.

On June 6, Mr. Meredith and his small band of supporters encountered gunshots about 1 mile south of Hernando, MS. James Meredith was shot three times on that day and was taken to a hospital. Although he would recover, Meredith was unable to complete his March Against Fear, and the leadership was taken over by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Floyd McKissick, and Stokely Carmichael. By the time the march reached the city limits of Canton, the number of marchers had doubled to 250. By the time it concluded in Jackson, there were 15,000 people in attendance. This overwhelming turnout made it the largest civil rights demonstration in the history of the State of Mississippi. More than 4,000 African Americans were registered to vote from rallies and drives during the march along U.S. Highway 51.

Mr. Meredith still lives in Jackson, where he is frequently seen wearing his Ole Miss cap and attending Ole Miss

athletic events in Oxford. He will turn 83 1 day before the 50th anniversary of the march's conclusion.

Today, the Senate recognizes the courageous leadership of James Meredith. I think it is appropriate that this resolution is sponsored by the three current Members of the Senate who are graduates of the University of Mississippi—Senator COCHRAN, Senator SHAHEEN, and this Senator.

I commend the Senate on its recognition of this important individual and this significant milestone in the history of the civil rights movement.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017—Continued

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, as we move forward with cloture, I wish to make a clarification for the record.

There has been a lot of conversation about this issue of the role of women as far as Selective Service is concerned. At the time the amendments were filed, there was no amendment, except one, from the Senator from Utah, who is on the floor.

As soon as we began consideration of the bill, I said to the Senator from Utah: When do you want to do your amendment on women in the Selective Service?

His response was that he wanted to do another amendment first.

I said: Look, the way things work, you may have great difficulty getting that up. Nor has the Senator from Utah or anyone else raised the amendment for a vote.

So I am sorry to say that out there, there seems to be some conversation that Senator MCCAIN was blocking a vote on women in the Selective Service. I am not. Right now, if it were germane—and I don't know if it is germane or not—I have repeatedly said that if that amendment is up for consideration, I would be glad to have that amendment considered and to have it voted on.

So I want to clarify that for the record. I did not block any amendment concerning women being eligible for Selective Service. I want the record to be very clear.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO THOMAS GALYON

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, today I recognize Thomas Galyon of Rogers, AR, as this week's Arkansan of the Week for his advocacy work with the Arkansas chapter of the national ALS Association.

Tom was diagnosed with ALS in 2014 and has been a tireless advocate ever since. Tom isn't one to let ALS hold him back. In fact, after spending 33 successful years in the tourism industry, Tom decided retirement wasn't for him and went back to work as the property manager for the Center for Nonprofits at St. Mary's in northwest Arkansas. As luck would have it, the ALS Association is headquartered in the very building Tom manages, making his commitment to their organization that much stronger.

Recently I had the opportunity to meet with Tom when he came to Washington to advocate on behalf of the ALS Association. We had a long discussion, where I learned about Tom's story and the struggle of nearly 20,000 other Americans who are currently living with ALS. During our meeting, Tom asked me to address the problem that persons with ALS face when seeking disability insurance.

I was proud to work with my colleague Senator WHITEHOUSE to become the lead Republican sponsor of the ALS Disability Insurance Access Act, a bill that would waive the 5-month waiting period to receive disability insurance program benefits for those living with ALS. While the waiting period may be prudent in many cases, for ALS it consumes a lot of the remaining life expectancy once you get a diagnosis of ALS.

We now have nine sponsors. As we gain more support, I am hopeful this bill will move forward and eventually become law.

In a testimony about his journey with ALS, Tom writes: "Until there is a treatment or a cure for ALS I will continue to be an avid advocate for change in government policies and procedures that affect all ALS patients in a negative way."

I encourage all Arkansans to take a lesson from Tom's words: Advocacy works. If there is a bill or regulatory matter that impacts your life, I want to hear about it. To become an advocate, contact my office and tell me your story. It is part of my job to represent you in the Senate.

Tom's journey is a remarkable one. He has not let the unexpected discourage him. In fact, he has used his diagnosis to teach others about ALS and

bring us closer to a cure. As Tom himself always says, "Blue skies always." I think that is a mantra everyone in the Senate and Arkansas could adopt, too. It is my honor to recognize Thomas Galyon as this week's Arkansan of the Week.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I rise to speak in support of the Fiscal Year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act, a bill upon which we have fortunately invoked cloture today and which I hope will allow us to proceed to finish this vitally important legislation.

I wish to commend both Chairman MCCAIN and Ranking Member REED for their leadership as they worked together. Their bill puts us on a path toward addressing the myriad threats we face today. In fact, in my years in the Senate, it is difficult to think of a time in which we have faced more threats from more different adversaries around the world. These national security challenges include the challenges posed by ISIS, as it continues to control territory and key cities in Syria and Iraq and spreads to other countries, such as Libya and Nigeria; Al Qaeda and other Islamic extremist terrorist groups determined to attack our country and our allies; Russia's aggressive operations in Ukraine, the Baltics, and Syria; and China's aggressive military activities in the South China Sea.

This bill funds programs that ensure our Nation's continued presence and deterrence missions, including \$271 million to help complete the construction of two DDG-1000 Destroyers. These ships provide capabilities including stealth technology, electric propulsion, and a smaller crew size. The Navy recently accepted delivery of the first DDG-1000, the Zumwalt—a major milestone for this revolutionary program. Given the ship's cutting-edge technology, unique hull, and advanced combat systems, the shipbuilders at Bath Iron Works in my State should be commended for their exceptional work and dedication in building the largest naval destroyer and the most advanced naval destroyer in history.

The bill before us also includes \$3.2 billion for the procurement of two Arleigh Burke-Class Destroyers as part of a multiyear procurement contract, as well as incremental funding for a third fiscal year 2016 Flight Three Destroyer. This much needed additional destroyer, which ranks No. 2 on the

Navy's unfunded priorities list, will be built at Bath Iron Works. As the workhorses of the Navy, these destroyers help ensure that our Navy's capabilities remain unrivaled in delivering power and presence across the globe. From freedom of navigation missions in the South China Sea to addressing Iranian aggression in the Strait of Hormuz, these ships signal to enemies and allies alike that the U.S. Navy is ready to respond wherever and whenever it is needed.

After years of advocacy, I am pleased this legislation also includes an important provision that requires the Department of Defense to finally comply with the Berry amendment by outfitting new recruits with high-quality athletic shoes made in America by skilled American workers. This amendment, sponsored by my colleague Senator KING, is based upon stand-alone legislation that I introduced with my colleague from Maine. It is good not only for our troops but also for American manufacturing. It is time to stop relying on goods manufactured in foreign countries to outfit those who wear the uniform of our Nation. It is past time for the Department's circumvention of the Berry amendment to be ended when it comes to athletic footwear.

This bill also provides for investments in our public shipyards, which are strategic assets for our national security. For Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, ME, almost \$75 million is authorized for necessary upgrades, including \$18 million for unaccompanied housing, \$30 million for utility improvements for nuclear platforms, and \$27 million to construct a replacement for a medical and dental unit that is in a building that is 100 years old and does not meet current safety standards.

As the senior member of the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, I am pleased these authorizations match the funding included in our Military Construction and VA spending bill that passed the Senate overwhelmingly a few weeks ago. These investments at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard will result in the high-quality facilities that shipyard personnel deserve as they maintain, repair, and modernize our nuclear submarine fleet.

The bill also provides the resources necessary to help our allies and partners around the world. I am pleased it would authorize \$50 million for the U.S.-Israel Anti-Tunneling Cooperation Program. The terrorist organization Hamas continues to construct tunnels from Gaza to Israel, which have been used by terrorists to sneak across the border and carry out attacks on Israeli citizens.

Meanwhile, we have the problem of Iran, which has continued to defy a U.N. Security Council resolution on its ballistic missile program by conducting flight testing of missiles that

are inherently capable of delivering nuclear weapons that could someday reach the United States. They already are capable of reaching Israel, which is why this bill's continued support for the U.S.-Israeli cooperative missile defense programs is so important.

I am pleased to note that the National Defense Authorization Act contains several measures supporting our servicemembers, who perform the important missions we assign them. These provisions include a 1.6-percent pay raise and reauthorization of bonuses and special pay to help encourage retention. I know this has been a real problem, for example, for the Air Force in retaining the pilots it needs, who oftentimes can make so much more money and have far easier missions and hours in the private sector.

I filed an amendment, as I did last year, to strike a provision in this bill that would unfairly discriminate against women servicemembers. The provision mandates that if two or more servicemembers live in the same house, the amount of the basic allowance for housing payable to each member would be divided by the total number of members in the house. That means, in cases where a servicemember resides with his or her Active-Duty spouse or if a member resides with military roommates, each would proportionately lose his or her stipend for housing under this bill. This disproportionately affects female servicemembers because 20 percent of them are married to another servicemember. In contrast, less than 4 percent of Active-Duty men are married to Active-Duty women servicemembers. I hope we can change this provision.

Other provisions of this bill would provide additional protections for survivors of sexual assault to move closer to the goal of translating the military's stated policy of zero tolerance into reality. Specifically, the bill would create a new punitive article in the Uniform Code of Military Justice that criminalizes acts of retaliation. The article would hold servicemembers accountable if they threaten or take adverse personnel action against those who report or plan to report retaliation.

Finally, this bill would direct the Pentagon to rein in unnecessary and wasteful spending by reducing the number of general and flag officers by 25 percent. This is an issue that I have been working on with Chairman MCCAIN since 2012, and I am pleased to see the continued focus on ending the practice of rank inflation.

I should mention that I have the greatest respect for the high-ranking officials as well as for all who serve in our military. But this is an issue that we do need to deal with, and I believe this bill strikes the appropriate balance. We owe it to taxpayers to assess every efficiency and use every cost-saving measure while also ensuring the security of our Nation.

I thank the Presiding Officer for her patience. I know the Senate is soon to