

Greenville and Hunt County and the entire northeast Texas area reap the benefits of this training with better recovery rates for stolen property, as well as more perpetrators being taken off of our streets.

□ 1630

Don is like thousands of detectives and prosecutors and judges across the country who because of their NCFI training are better able to serve their communities and do their law enforcement jobs in an ever-increasing digital world.

Mr. Speaker, the need for this bill could not be more clear. Cybercrime has surpassed drug trafficking as the most profitable criminal enterprise in the world. Today, let's vote to help fight cybercrime by passing this commonsense legislation to support our law enforcement and give our officers a leg up on the criminals who are increasingly using digital means in cyberspace to evade justice.

I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 1616. I once again thank Chairman GOODLATTE and my Senate colleagues for their support.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN).

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me time. Just to close, I want to echo Congressman RATCLIFFE in observing it is National Police Week, so we have the opportunity to highlight the successful efforts that have already taken place to combat cybercrime.

As the operator of the National Computer Forensics Institute, the Secret Service has demonstrated its excellence and diligence in pursuing cybercrime both domestically and internationally. Its investigations have produced more than 4,000 arrests, involving more than a billion dollars in fraud, and saving the public billions of dollars more in potential fraud that would have taken place absent their intervention.

H.R. 1616 will strengthen these efforts in continuing to combat cyber and electronic crime.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. PALMER).

Mr. PALMER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman RATCLIFFE and the committee for their work on this bill.

The internet is an ever-increasing medium for criminals to carry out crimes, such as sex trafficking, credit card theft, and identity theft. We are currently witnessing an unprecedented global cyber attack. Attacks such as this threaten our economy and our national security. This highlights the need for law enforcement to be trained at local, State, and national levels to recognize and combat this activity.

Prior to 2008, training for State and local law enforcement and cybercrimes was difficult to find. Recognizing this

problem in 2007, the State of Alabama offered the Secret Service and the Department of Homeland Security property and funds to construct a state-of-the-art facility if the Federal Government would fund the training and allow the Secret Service to operate it. I am proud to say this facility is located in my district in the city of Hoover.

The National Computer Forensics Institute, NCFI, opened its doors in May of 2008. State and local law enforcement officers come from all across the Nation to be trained at this one-of-a-kind facility, where they are trained by Secret Service agents on the same equipment and same software that our Secret Service agents use.

NCFI has trained law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges from all 50 States, and its graduates represent over 500 agencies. They are not only trained in solving crimes but also in prosecution.

I am pleased that the work that NCFI does is being recognized, and I am proud to be an original cosponsor of H.R. 1616. I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this good legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1616, as amended.

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. GOODLATTE. 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.

HONORING HOMETOWN HEROES ACT

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1892) to amend title 4, United States Code, to provide for the flying of the flag at half-staff in the event of the death of a first responder in the line of duty.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1892

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 "Honoring Hometown Heroes Act".

SEC. 2. PERMITTING THE FLAG TO BE FLOWN AT HALF-STAFF IN THE EVENT OF THE DEATH OF A FIRST RESPONDER SERVING IN THE LINE OF DUTY.

(a) AMENDMENT.—The sixth sentence of section 7(m) of title 4, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking "or" after "possession of the United States" and inserting a comma;

(2) by inserting "or the death of a first responder working in any State, territory, or possession who dies while serving in the line of duty," after "while serving on active duty,";

(3) by striking "and" after "former officials of the District of Columbia" and inserting a comma; and

(4) by inserting before the period the following: ", and first responders working in the District of Columbia".

(b) FIRST RESPONDER DEFINED.—Such subsection is further amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking "United States Code; and" and inserting a semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking the period at the end and inserting "and"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(4) the term 'first responder' means a 'public safety officer' as defined in section 1204 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796b)."

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this Act shall apply with respect to deaths of first responders occurring on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. 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 materials on H.R. 1892, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

On June 14, 1777, the Second Continental Congress passed a resolution establishing an official flag for the new American Nation. The resolution, now known as the Flag Act of 1777, stated that the flag would be "thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new Constellation."

For the last 240 years, the American people have celebrated Flag Day every June 14, and, over that time, the flag has evolved. As we all know, changes have been made to its design, shape, and arrangement. The Flag Act of 1794 changed the design from 13 to 15 stars to accommodate the admission of Vermont and Kentucky into the Union. The Flag Act of 1818 mandated that the 13 stripes represented the Thirteen Original Colonies, the number of stars matched the number of States, and provided that subsequent changes in the number of stars would be made on the 4th of July.

What has remained rock solid over that quarter millennium, however, is what our flag represents. It represents one nation, freedom, and justice for all, and the sacrifices made in pursuit of those core American values.

Current law provides guidance for displaying and handling the flag so it is afforded the respect it deserves and has earned. In abiding by these guidelines, we all commemorate the value and love we hold for what our flag represents. That is why the legislation before us today, H.R. 1892, the Honoring Hometown Heroes Act, is not only appropriate but necessary.

This bill amends Federal law to permit State and Territorial Governors and the Mayor of Washington, D.C., to order that the flag be flown at halfstaff in the event that a public safety officer dies in the line of duty. For purposes of this legislation, "public safety officers" include local police officers, firefighters, and EMS professionals. These are individuals who make great sacrifices so we all can live in a free country. These men and women work long hours, separated from their loved ones, and consistently place themselves in harm's way so we as Americans can enjoy our freedom and our way of life. These sacrifices often go unappreciated.

When an officer dies in the line of duty, he or she is making the ultimate sacrifice for their community, their family, and for their country. H.R. 1892 allows the American people to show their appreciation to these men and women, who are truly the bulwark between order and chaos. They represent the values the Founders held so dear nearly 250 years ago, and their sacrifices must be publicly acknowledged so they are not taken for granted.

I thank the lead sponsor of this bill, Congressman JOHN LARSON. On May 3, the House Committee on the Judiciary approved the Honoring Hometown Heroes Act with unanimous, bipartisan support. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and the other bills before the House today to honor the men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice to ensure the safety of our Nation.

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

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise also in support of H.R. 1892, the Honoring Hometown Heroes Act. I want to begin by saluting the distinguished author of this legislation, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON), who has navigated the twists and turns of the legislative process to bring this legislation to the floor with the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 1892 would bestow one of the highest honors that can be given in America to our first responders who have died in the line of duty by allowing the U.S. flag to be lowered in their respective jurisdictions. The bill amends the U.S. Flag Code to allow the Governor of a State, Territory or possession, and the Mayor of the District of Columbia to order the flag be lowered to halfstaff if a first responder in the jurisdiction dies while serving in the line of duty.

Our first responders put their lives on the line every day for the greater

good of the people that they have taken an oath to serve and protect. Every year, some first responders make the ultimate sacrifice and lose their lives while serving and protecting their communities in the line of duty.

Currently, under the U.S. Flag Code, a Governor or the Mayor of the District of Columbia can order that the flag be lowered to halfstaff after the death of a President or former government official or after the death of a member of the Armed Forces from the jurisdiction. It is only fitting that, given the hard work and sacrifices and crucial role of first responders, we honor these brave men and women in the same way that we honor government officials and members of the Armed Forces when they make the ultimate sacrifice. Accordingly, I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 1892.

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

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

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON).

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished Member from Maryland and our distinguished chairman from Virginia for taking up this legislation.

Let me start by thanking so many cosponsors, starting with PETER KING and BILL PASCRELL, the co-chairs of our Congressional Fire Services Caucus, for their extraordinary work; the sheriff, as I like to refer to DAVID REICHERT, who I serve with on the Committee on Ways and Means; and TIM WALZ, the chairman of the Congressional Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Caucus and ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Amongst the Members who are cosponsors of the bill, many are former first responders as well: DUTCH RUPERSBERGER, former police officer; JOHN RUTHERFORD, former sheriff of Duval County, Florida; BRIAN FITZPATRICK, former FBI special agent; JIM RENACCI, former volunteer firefighter from Ohio.

Special thanks to the Committee on the Judiciary for recognizing, however simple a solution, how powerful the meaning for those who have lost a member of their community and their family who, as Lincoln would say, have given the full measure of their devotion. I thank Chairman GOODLATTE and Ranking Member CONYERS, STEVE KING, and STEVE COHEN also for their work on this. I deeply appreciate it.

I especially thank and single out Jim McLoughlin, a veteran firefighter from Connecticut. He is the founder of the National Honor Guard Commanders Association, and it was he who first came to me with endorsing this concept.

I also thank the strong support of Harold Schaitberger of the International Association of Firefighters, the Fraternal Order of Police, Ser-

geants Benevolent Association, International Association of Fire Chiefs, and the National Volunteer Fire Council, among others.

As has been said on the floor already today, a number of people have mentioned that this week we come together during National Police Week to recognize first responders. In fact, the White House was lit in blue last night. It is those who put their lives on the line every day to protect us and our communities, as the chairman noted, who often get forgotten in terms of their line of duty.

I am the son of a proud firefighter. I think in every firefighter's memory and every memory of the Nation will be permanently seared that vision of firefighters rushing up the steps of the World Trade Center as people were coming down.

□ 1645

Whether it is a national emergency or a medical emergency, these brave men and women are the first to answer the call, and they deserve our respect.

Scripture tells us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves, but only a few are willing to step into harm's way for others. When everyone else flees from danger, our law enforcement officers, firefighters, and EMTs heroically place their lives in jeopardy to help people that they have never met.

These jobs are inherently dangerous. The reminders are too common. And as any family of a first responder can tell you, they oftentimes do not return home to their families. JOE CROWLEY has spoken eloquently of that on this very floor.

This bill has been reviewed by the chairman, and I thank Mr. RASKIN for his comments as well. But I think we can all agree that these courageous men and women deserve what is a simple tribute but a very powerful message when the American flag and all that it stands for is lowered to halfstaff when they have given the full measure of their devotion to their community, their State, and this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge its passage and am thankful for the bipartisan support that we have received on this very important week for these incredibly remarkable and important people who serve their country.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support this wonderful legislation, and I take the occasion of National Police Week to restate everyone in this body's appreciation for the hard work that our responders and our officers do.

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. 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 Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1892.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. 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.

AMERICAN LAW ENFORCEMENT HEROES ACT OF 2017

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1428) to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to authorize COPS grantees to use grant funds to hire veterans as career law enforcement officers, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1428

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 “American Law Enforcement Heroes Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. PRIORITIZING HIRING AND TRAINING OF VETERANS.

Section 1701(b)(2) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd(b)(2)) is amended by inserting “, including by prioritizing the hiring and training of veterans (as defined in section 101 of title 38, United States Code)” after “Nation”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. RASKIN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 1428, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Police officers and military veterans have much in common: Both wear uniforms, both protect and serve, and both face great physical risk in executing their duties. It is understandable, then, that many military servicemen and -women seek employment as police officers upon returning to civilian life.

Similarly, police departments are seeking men and women who are physically and mentally fit to assume these roles, who are used to working in teams, and who have experience making quick decisions under stress. To a police department, a military veteran may be a perfect fit.

In recent years, we have strived for community-oriented approaches to po-

licing. A community-oriented approach requires officers not just to enforce laws, but to wear many other hats, like first aid provider, social worker, counselor, crisis manager, and peacemaker. If there is a problem, we expect the police to solve it. The knowledge, skill, and abilities military veterans bring to police departments enhance the departments' problem-solving mission.

H.R. 1428, the American Law Enforcement Heroes Act of 2017, is good legislation introduced by our colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD). The bill authorizes grantees who receive grants under the Community Oriented Policing Services program at the Department of Justice, commonly known as COPS, to use them for prioritizing the hiring and training of military veterans.

When military veterans return from deployment and enter civilian life, it is important we recognize their sacrifices by assuring they can obtain employment and support their families. This bill helps to ensure veterans can do just that.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. HURD for introducing this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

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

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of H.R. 1428, the American Law Enforcement Heroes Act of 2017. I want to thank the author of the bill, Mr. HURD, for bringing it forward.

This measure has the laudable goal of recognizing our brave men and women who have served in the armed services, but it also helps to protect our communities through community-oriented policing.

I support H.R. 1428 for several reasons. To begin with, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, also known as the COPS Office, is responsible for advancing community policing by law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

The COPS Office promotes community policing with a commitment to building trust and mutual respect between police and the people in the communities they serve by awarding grants to law enforcement agencies for the hiring of law enforcement officers for community policing.

Through the COPS Hiring Program, funds are provided directly to law enforcement agencies to hire or rehire career law enforcement officers to increase their community policing capacity and crime prevention activities. To date, more than 129,000 officers for over 13,000 agencies have been funded via the COPS Hiring Program, which was first established 23 years ago under President Bill Clinton in 1994.

The COPS Office began supporting military veterans through the COPS Hiring Program and currently gives additional consideration to law enforcement agencies that commit to hiring

our veterans. Although we have not had hearings to discuss the import of providing incentives through this program for the hiring of veterans as new law enforcement officers by State and local law enforcement, we believe the bill is well designed and well intentioned.

The bill prioritizes grant applications of law enforcement agencies that will use grant funds from the COPS Office to hire veterans, thereby giving preference to those agencies when applying for grant funds. The intent is to assist law enforcement agencies in attracting well-qualified, service-oriented people who have already served America through their military service.

Another positive purpose of this legislation is to provide our brave veterans the opportunity to continue to serve their country and respective communities upon completion of their military service. Military service provides vital leadership traits that can be valuable in assisting military veterans in their effort to succeed in law enforcement careers, and we need to take advantage of that.

Veterans with combat experience have obtained skill sets that relate to law enforcement work, such as discipline, loyalty, ethical standards, and integrity; physical fitness; firearms and tactical skills; the ability to respond appropriately under stress; and experience working with diverse populations.

Those who have served in the military often have a desire to continue to serve others, and a career as a law enforcement officer allows veterans to continue serving others through community policing, where we need them so much. A career in law enforcement also provides veterans with long-term stability, gives a sense of accomplishment and pride, and offers a career where their dedication to protecting and serving the public can be applied.

Finally, measures such as H.R. 1428 will help ensure our communities are protected through community-oriented policing.

Accordingly, we support passage of H.R. 1428, the American Law Enforcement Heroes Act.

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

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD), the chief author of this legislation.

Mr. HURD. Mr. Speaker, the veteran unemployment rate is currently 5 percent in Texas, higher than the national average of 3.7. While the national average has steadily declined in recent years, the unemployment rate for young veterans ages 18 to 24 has skyrocketed to 13 percent, more than double the rate it was at this time last year.

We need to do more for the men and women who have sacrificed so much for our freedom and our safety. That is why I introduced the American Law