

been made citizens, 11,000 of whom, 11,000 of whom were criminals.

Now, I would say to my colleagues that, first of all, the real answer ought to be let us overhaul the Immigration and Naturalization Service so it does its job effectively, let us make sure the Social Security system has a computer that works, and then let us allow a State—what are we asking a State to do? It is not complicated. We are saying to a State to make sure that the only people participating in their elections are legal American citizens. That is the only criteria here.

People get up and make all these comments as though somehow, if they yell racist long enough, if they scream diversity long enough, if they somehow come in here and pretend this is about something else—this is a very narrow bill. Members who vote against this bill are saying they do not want to know if illegal immigrants are voting. They do not want to know if noncitizens are voting, many of whom, by the way, may be here legally, may have been told they could register even though they were not citizens and may be innocent.

All we are saying is an American citizen's right to vote is one of their most precious rights. How can we cancel out an American citizen with a non-citizen and not feel that we are somehow cheating the essence of freedom in America? This bill is about citizenship, it is about citizens being allowed to vote.

I want to repeat: If a person is an African American and a citizen, they can vote; if they are Asian American and a citizen, they can vote; if they are a Hispanic American and a citizen, they can vote; if they are a European American and a citizen, they can vote; if they are Native Americans and a citizen, they can vote. And, frankly, if their ancestors come from all five categories and they are a citizen, they can vote.

This is not about diversity, it is about enforcing the law. And I think to try to vote this down with the sham argument of racism is, in effect, a way of covering up the fact that some Members, in fact, favor allowing noncitizens to vote, allowing people who have no right to vote, and that means canceling out the legal vote of a legal citizen who should have that vote protected as one of the hallmarks of democracy.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PEASE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1428, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 210, nays 200, not voting 21, as follows:

[Roll No. 17]

YEAS—210

Aderholt	Gilchrist	Norwood
Archer	Gillmor	Nussle
Army	Gilman	Packard
Bachus	Gingrich	Pappas
Baker	Goode	Parker
Ballenger	Goodlatte	Paxon
Barr	Goodling	Pease
Barrett (NE)	Goss	Peterson (PA)
Bartlett	Graham	Petri
Barton	Granger	Pickering
Bass	Greenwood	Pickett
Bateman	Gutknecht	Pitts
Bereuter	Hall (TX)	Pombo
Billbray	Hansen	Porter
Bilirakis	Hastert	Portman
Bliley	Hastings (WA)	Pryce (OH)
Blunt	Hayworth	Quinn
Boehner	Hefley	Radanovich
Bonilla	Herger	Ramstad
Brady	Hill	Redmond
Bryant	Hilleary	Regula
Bunning	Hobson	Riley
Burr	Hoekstra	Rogan
Burton	Horn	Rogers
Calvert	Hostettler	Rohrabacher
Camp	Hulshof	Roukema
Campbell	Hunter	Royce
Canady	Hyde	Ryun
Cannon	Inglis	Salmon
Castle	Istook	Sanford
Chambliss	Jenkins	Saxton
Chenoweth	Johnson (CT)	Scarborough
Christensen	Johnson, Sam	Schaefer, Dan
Coble	Jones	Sensenbrenner
Coburn	Kasich	Sessions
Collins	Kelly	Shaw
Combest	Kim	Shimkus
Cook	King (NY)	Shuster
Cooksey	Kingston	Skeen
Cox	Klug	Smith (MI)
Crane	Knollenberg	Smith (NJ)
Crapo	Kolbe	Smith (TX)
Cubin	LaHood	Snowbarger
Cunningham	Latham	Solomon
Davis (VA)	LaTourette	Souder
Deal	Lazio	Spence
DeLay	Leach	Stearns
Deutsch	Lewis (CA)	Stump
Dickey	Lewis (KY)	Sununu
Doolittle	Linder	Talent
Dreier	Lipinski	Tauzin
Duncan	Livingston	Taylor (MS)
Dunn	LoBiondo	Taylor (NC)
Ehlers	Lucas	Thomas
Ehrlich	Manzullo	Thornberry
Emerson	McCollum	Thune
English	McCrery	Tiahrt
Ensign	McDade	Turner
Ewing	McHugh	Upton
Fawell	McInnis	Wamp
Foley	McIntosh	Watkins
Fossella	McKeon	Watts (OK)
Fowler	Metcalf	Weldon (FL)
Fox	Mica	Weldon (PA)
Franks (NJ)	Moran (KS)	Weller
Frelinghuysen	Myrick	White
Galleghy	Nethercutt	Whitfield
Ganske	Neumann	Wicker
Gekas	Ney	Wolf
Gibbons	Northup	Young (FL)

NAYS—200

Abercrombie	Boyd	DeGette
Ackerman	Brown (CA)	Delahunt
Allen	Brown (FL)	DeLauro
Andrews	Brown (OH)	Diaz-Balart
Baessler	Cardin	Dicks
Baldacci	Carson	Dingell
Barcia	Chabot	Dixon
Barrett (WI)	Clay	Doggett
Becerra	Clayton	Dooley
Bentsen	Clyburn	Doyle
Berman	Condit	Edwards
Berry	Conyers	Engel
Bishop	Costello	Etheridge
Blagojevich	Coyne	Evans
Blumenauer	Cramer	Farr
Boehlent	Cummings	Fattah
Bonior	Danner	Fazio
Borski	Davis (FL)	Filner
Boswell	Davis (IL)	Forbes
Boucher	DeFazio	Ford

Frank (MA)	Matsui	Rush
Frost	McCarthy (MO)	Sabo
Gejdenson	McCarthy (NY)	Sanchez
Gephardt	McDermott	Sanders
Gordon	McGovern	Sandlin
Green	McHale	Sawyer
Gutierrez	McIntyre	Schaffer, Bob
Hall (OH)	McKinney	Schumer
Hamilton	McNulty	Scott
Hastings (FL)	Meehan	Serrano
Hefner	Meek (FL)	Shays
Hilliard	Meeks (NY)	Sherman
Hinchey	Menendez	Siskis
Hinojosa	Millender	Skaggs
Holden	McDonald	Skelton
Hookey	Miller (CA)	Slaughter
Houghton	Minge	Smith, Adam
Hoyer	Moakley	Smith, Linda
Hutchinson	Mollohan	Snyder
Jackson (IL)	Moran (VA)	Spratt
Jackson-Lee	Morella	Stabenow
(TX)	Murtha	Stark
John	Nadler	Stenholm
Johnson, E.B.	Neal	Stokes
Kanjorski	Oberstar	Strickland
Kaptur	Obey	Stupak
Kennedy (MA)	Olver	Tanner
Kennedy (RI)	Ortiz	Tauscher
Kennelly	Owens	Thompson
Kildee	Pallone	Thurman
Kilpatrick	Pascrell	Tierney
Kind (WI)	Pastor	Torres
Klecza	Paul	Trafficant
Klink	Payne	Velazquez
Kucinich	Pelosi	Vento
LaFalce	Peterson (MN)	Visclosky
Lampson	Pomeroy	Walsh
Levin	Poshard	Waters
Lewis (GA)	Price (NC)	Watt (NC)
Lofgren	Rahall	Waxman
Lowey	Rangel	Wexler
Luther	Reyes	Weygand
Maloney (CT)	Rivers	Wise
Maloney (NY)	Rodriguez	Woolsey
Manton	Roemer	Wynn
Markey	Ros-Lehtinen	Yates
Martinez	Rothman	
Mascara	Roybal-Allard	

NOT VOTING—21

Buyer	Harman	Oxley
Callahan	Jefferson	Riggs
Clement	Johnson (WI)	Schiff
Eshoo	Lantos	Shadegg
Everett	Largent	Smith (OR)
Furse	Miller (FL)	Towns
Gonzalez	Mink	Young (AK)

□ 1412

Ms. BROWN of Florida, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD and Mr. BECERRA changed their vote from "yea" to "nay."

Mr. GILMAN and Mr. LEACH changed their vote from "nay" to "yea."

So (two-thirds not having voted in favor thereof) the motion was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

□ 1415

RECOGNIZING AND CALLING ON ALL AMERICANS TO RECOGNIZE THE COURAGE AND SACRIFICE OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES HELD AS PRISONERS OF WAR DURING THE VIETNAM CONFLICT

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on National Security be discharged from further consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 360), recognizing and calling on all Americans to recognize, the courage and sacrifice of the members of the Armed Forces held as prisoners of war during the Vietnam conflict and stating that the House of

Representatives will not forget that more than 2,000 members of the United States Armed Forces remain unaccounted for from the Vietnam conflict and will continue to press for a final accounting for all such servicemembers whose fate is unknown, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATHAM). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oklahoma?

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 360

Whereas participation by United States Armed Forces in combat operations in Southeast Asia during the period from 1964 through 1972 resulted in as many as 8,000 United States servicemen being taken prisoner by enemy forces;

Whereas the first such United States serviceman taken as a prisoner of war, Navy Lt. Commander Everett Alvarez, was captured on August 5, 1964;

Whereas following the Paris Peace Accords of January 1973, 591 United States prisoners of war were released from captivity;

Whereas the return of these prisoners of war to United States control and to their families and comrades was designated Operation Homecoming;

Whereas many United States servicemen who were taken prisoner as a result of ground or aerial combat in Southeast Asia have not returned to their loved ones and their fate remains unknown;

Whereas United States prisoners of war in Southeast Asia were routinely subjected to brutal mistreatment, including beatings, torture, starvation, and denial of medical attention;

Whereas United States prisoners of war were held in a number of facilities, the most notorious of which was Hoa Loa Prison in downtown Hanoi, dubbed the "Hanoi Hilton" by the prisoners held there;

Whereas the hundreds of American prisoners held in the Hanoi Hilton and other facilities persevered under terrible conditions;

Whereas the prisoners were frequently isolated from each other and prohibited from speaking to each other;

Whereas the prisoners nevertheless, at great personal risk, devised a means to communicate with each other through a code transmitted by tapping on cell walls;

Whereas then-Commander James B. Stockdale, United States Navy, who upon his capture on September 9, 1965, became the senior POW officer present in the Hanoi Hilton, delivered to his men a message that was to sustain them during their ordeal, as follows: Remember, you are Americans. With faith in God, trust in one another, and devotion to your country, you will overcome. You will triumph;

Whereas among the prisoners held in the Hanoi Hilton was then-Major Sam Johnson, United States Air Force, now a Representative in Congress from Texas, who was shot down on April 16, 1966, while flying his 25th mission over North Vietnam and while a prisoner conducted himself with such valor as to be labeled by the enemy as a die-hard resister and, notwithstanding the tremendous suffering inflicted upon him, continually demonstrated an unflinching devotion to duty, honor, and country, and who during his military career was awarded two Silver Stars, two Legions of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, one Bronze Star with

Valor, two Purple Hearts, four Air Medals, and three Outstanding Unit awards, who retired from active duty in 1979 in the grade of colonel, and who personifies the verse in Isaiah 40:31, "They shall mount with wings as eagles";

Whereas among the prisoners held in the Hanoi Hilton was then-Captain Pete Peterson, United States Air Force, a former Representative in Congress from Florida who is now serving, in a distinguished manner, as the United States Ambassador to Vietnam, who was shot down on September 10, 1966, and while a prisoner conducted himself with valor and, notwithstanding the tremendous suffering inflicted upon him, continually demonstrated an unflinching devotion to duty, honor, and country, and who during his military career was awarded two Silver Stars, one Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, three Bronze Stars with V Devices, two Purple Hearts, six Air Medals, one Air Force Commendation Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with eight devices, and one Meritorious Service Medal, and who retired from active duty in 1981 in the grade of colonel;

Whereas the men held as prisoners of war during the Vietnam conflict truly represent all that is best about America;

Whereas the 25th anniversary of Operation Homecoming begins on February 12, 1998; and

Whereas the Nation owes a debt of gratitude to these patriots for their courage and exemplary service: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its gratitude for, and calls upon all Americans to reflect upon and show their gratitude for, the courage and sacrifice of the brave men, including particularly Sam Johnson of Texas and Pete Peterson of Florida, who were held as prisoners of war during the Vietnam conflict;

(2) urges States and localities to honor the courage and sacrifice of those brave men with appropriate ceremonies and activities; and

(3) acting on behalf of all Americans, will not forget that more than 2,000 members of the United States Armed Forces remain unaccounted for from the Vietnam conflict and will continue to press for a final accounting for all such servicemembers whose fate is unknown.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON).

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma for yielding this time to me.

Let me just say that anybody who serves this country in the armed services and fights and lays their life on the line for all of us deserves everything that we can give them. Honor. Respect. Everything.

But those who spend time in prison camps, prisoner-of-war camps, and have had to endure the hardships and the torture and pain of that are special to me and should be to every American because they pay a price even above those that give their lives because they have to go through daily torture for long periods of time. And so my heart goes out to them and their families who have had to pay that sacrifice over the years and during the Vietnam war.

Today I want to specifically talk about my good friend, the gentleman

from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON), who is a Member of this body, who spent 7 years, 7 years in a POW camp in Vietnam during the Vietnam war.

Mr. Speaker, our good friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) was shot down on April 16, 1966, while flying on his 25th mission over North Vietnam, and as I said, he spent 7 years in POW camps and 2 years in the infamous Hanoi Hilton. And during the time he was in the Hanoi Hilton along with his colleagues, I think there were 11 or 12 of them, he lived in leg irons, suffered malnutrition and lived in appallingly primitive conditions. And they were mistreated, they were tortured, and yet the gentleman from Texas never, never gave in. He was a real patriot under very difficult conditions.

And here he is 25 years later, now a Member of the Congress of the United States, and the resoluteness he showed during his incarceration in Hanoi and the Hanoi Hilton is just as strong today as it was back then. He is a patriot whose spirit was never broken, and I am very proud he is a Member of the Congress of the United States, and I am very, very proud that he is my friend.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, for the purposes of debate only, I yield 30 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES).

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and, Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS) for yielding this time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored today to rise in support of this important resolution which honors the U.S. military personnel who were held as prisoners of war during the Vietnam conflict. I am equally honored to serve in this House with my good friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) and another colleague, Mr. PETERSON, who is also being honored in this resolution.

Acknowledging the courage and sacrifice of this Nation's POWs and reinforcing the commitment to continuing to press for a final accounting of those servicemen who remain missing in action is very appropriate, and I am pleased that we are considering this resolution on this 25th anniversary of the release of many of Vietnam's POWs.

As a Vietnam veteran myself, I understand the horror of that war and the great sacrifices that were made by my comrades in arms from throughout this Nation, but I, like most in this body and in this country, can never understand the nightmare experienced by our POWs. While we are all subject to terrible living conditions, missing loved ones, fear of losing our lives to the Vietcong hostile fire, we were, however, the fortunate ones.

The POWs and the MIAs had so much more to deal with. They were routinely subjected to brutal mistreatment, including beatings, torture, starvation, the denial of medical attention. That

they were also kept apart for many, many years from seeing another American was an added hardship.

Let us not forget their families. Their families suffered equally, and families today suffer not knowing the final outcome of those men and women missing in action. Many loved ones do not know the fate of their soldiers still living today. I think that we should reflect today on the sacrifice of these families.

We also should acknowledge the continued suffering of the families of those, as I mentioned, who are missing in action. We must continue to seek information about these missing men for the families and because the United States military is loathe to leave behind any of its soldiers, sailors, airmen or Marines. We in the House of Representatives must help the families in the military continue seeking information about these 2,000 service members who remain unaccounted for.

It has been said many times, all gave some and some gave all, as well as blessed are the peacekeepers. Blessed truly are our POWs and MIAs.

I stand here in the people's House saying, God bless our POWs, our MIAs and everyone whose lives they have touched.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to my colleague, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. BOSWELL).

(Mr. BOSWELL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOSWELL. Mr. Speaker, I too rise to salute the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON). I had a couple of tours in Vietnam, and I can say very openly that one of the things I did not want to happen to me is what happened to him. I did not want to burn in one of those helicopters, and I did not want to be a prisoner, and I thought about it many, many days.

I was privileged that an associate of mine that I went through flight school with, name was JOHNSON, he and I had the mission to go after James Roe in the Delta. Remember Roe? And 5 years that he had been subjected to the conditions of a prisoner and the Delta and so on, and we alternated days. We had other missions to run, so we alternated days; and I cannot tell my colleagues our thrill the day that we got him. We almost shot him, but we got him, and I wish I could share some of the things he had to say.

Anyway, I am very appreciative that we take the time. I occasionally will go down to The Wall and recognize some names there, and I have to thank my good fellow upstairs that mine's not there too, and I am sure the gentleman from Texas thought that more than a few times. And I also have go through my mind different times about those that are missing in action, and I cannot think of a worse thing than to be an American citizen, have carried the flag and gone into conflict at the behest of this country and then circumstances would come that because

of a prisoner and time and so on, to have it in mind, to have it in one's mind, is everything being done, is everything being done to get that person out? And that would be tough.

I just cannot think of a worse thought to go through somebody's mind in that condition than to think, I wonder if they are really trying to get me; and so I hope that we do remember those folks and those families.

Too often we go off to war, different ones, and left the little children behind, and I left little children behind when I went for my second tour. I will never forget the look in the eyes of my middle daughter, and she said, "Daddy, do you really have to go?" Television, battlefields all the time, every day, and I said, "Cindy, yes, I have to go." And it was pretty tough.

So I appreciate the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES) making the comment that he has about the families, and we cannot do enough to remember those not only in that conflict but others that made that sacrifice. And families should be included. So to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON), again I thank him, welcome him home and God bless him and all those that have served as he did.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY), the majority leader.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS) for yielding this time to me, and let me say from the outset, I will not use the entire 5 minutes because we have so many people who want to speak on this.

I was reading about the stay of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) in North Vietnam and thinking about it as he and I have talked about it and thinking about others that stayed there, and we are going to hear all the details so many times about how he was shot down on April 16, 1966, and how he was released on February 13, 1973. But there is one detail I think that tells me that the SAM JOHNSON held captive with the Vietnamese all those years ago is the same SAM JOHNSON I know today in the House of Representatives.

See, the Vietnamese concluded, as I have concluded, that he is a stubborn man. They called him a diehard. They thought, even as a prisoner of war, this stubborn man was a threat to their victory, and they took him and nine others that were particularly stubborn and put them in isolation in a prison that was particularly vicious called by the Americans "Alcatraz." For 2½ years SAM JOHNSON remained in that prison in isolation from all the others, and he remained a stubborn man.

Then, as now, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) was stubborn about his love for this country and his faith in God, and it brought him home. I thank him.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to my good friend, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER).

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor and pride that I am here today with my colleagues to honor the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) and the other prisoners of war from the Vietnam war. As a former Marine and a Vietnam veteran, I think our hearts go out to everyone who served in that war and particularly to the 591 folks that came home as former POWs.

□ 1430

I particularly like the way the wording of this resolution read. We could talk about the thousands of prisoners of war, we could talk about the 591 that came home, but when we read one man's story, it means a whole lot more to the American public and to those folks that really did not follow the events of that period, or perhaps are too young to remember the events of that period. The old story about one person is a story and 1,000 is a statistic, and we know that SAM JOHNSON is not a statistic, but is a very honored man in his home country and in his State.

So we are proud of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON), we are proud of all of the men and women that have served in Vietnam, and I am proud to add my name to this resolution today.

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the majority whip.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I too rise to pay tribute to a great American, SAM JOHNSON. He is a dear friend, and certainly a true profile in courage. Tomorrow marks, as has already been said, the 25th anniversary of Operation Homecoming, when the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) and 738 other American prisoners of war returned to the United States from imprisonment by the North Vietnamese.

On this day in 1973, SAM JOHNSON boarded a plane in Hanoi's airport and returned home after having spent 7 years as a prisoner of war at the hands of the North Vietnamese. He endured unspeakable torture, lived in primitive conditions and suffered from malnutrition, and when one shakes SAM's hands, one can feel the torture in his hands. Two things helped him survive those awful years in North Vietnam: a very, very strong faith in God, and a deep, deep love of his wife, Shirley.

For 2 of those 7 years SAM JOHNSON was imprisoned in that infamous Hanoi Hilton. It was there that he endured the worst of his torture. Communications between the prisoners as a well-known story was forbidden, but that did not stop the Americans from developing an intricate tap code that helped the prisoners maintain their sanity. Once, when JOHNSON and Commander James Stockdale were caught using this tap code, the Vietnamese retaliated with the worst kind of punishment. They put SAM in a cell about 2½ feet wide by 8 feet long. The Americans derisively called that cell "The Mint"

after a Las Vegas hotel. It was in The Mint where SAM JOHNSON was set in stocks so tight he could not even move.

The Vietnamese kept SAM in that cell in those stocks for 72 days, and on the 72nd day, a typhoon struck Hanoi Hilton. Water flooded SAM's cell. He thought he was going to drown. So he prayed, and he prayed that night like he had never prayed before, and when he awoke the next morning, he discovered that he had actually survived, thanks to God. Not only had he survived, but the typhoon had blown the boards off his cell and he saw the sun for the first time in 72 days.

SAM JOHNSON serves as an inspiration of every Member of this House. He endured that pain of imprisonment fighting for his country. Nobody knows the value of freedom more than the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON).

We are all honored by his presence in this House, and I am honored and very proud to call SAM JOHNSON a friend of mine.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR), my friend and colleague.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Texas (Mr. REYES) for yielding me this time.

I want to rise in support of this resolution. I want to thank those, including the Speaker and the leadership on the other side of the aisle, for offering it, and I want to commend, as my colleagues have, the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON), for his service to this country.

I came here almost 22 years ago and one of the first things that I involved myself in in this body was putting together a group of Members, Vietnam era veterans. There were 11 of us at that time. The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURTHA), to my right, was one of them; the gentleman from Vermont, Mr. JEFFORDS was another one, Vice President GORE, and there were others as well. And at that time it was very clear that Vietnam veterans were receiving a very short end of the legislative pie in this Congress. Their education benefits were not adequate, their health care benefits were not adequate, their readjustment counseling benefits were almost nonexistent; and so together, Republicans and Democrats, we put together a program, and little by little, it got enacted over a period of 2 or 3 years. We even had difficulty getting recognition for Vietnam veterans back then.

I remember a bunch of us had a tree planted over near Constitution Gardens about 22 years ago to commemorate Vietnam veterans before the wall was even conceived, and then of course Jay Scruggs and a few others came along and we put together a group and we worked very hard to get the Vietnam Veterans Memorial that has meant so much to so many in this country.

It has been a long road, but I think on this issue we have seen Republicans and Democrats come together, and

they have come together because of the courage of Mr. JOHNSON from Texas, and the courage of people like Pete Peterson from Florida, our Ambassador to Vietnam today. These people gave an enormous amount for their country. We owe them the deepest sense of gratitude, as we owe all people who serve in our Armed Forces.

So it is with that that I want to commend the gentlemen who have introduced this legislation, to thank those who have served in our Armed Forces, especially our Vietnam veterans whom we specifically honor today, and of course those who are missing and who have been prisoners of war. We deeply feel and understand their pain, and we particularly appreciate their sacrifices.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today, as a member of the House Committee on National Security, I rise to pay tribute to the many thousands of Americans who have been held as prisoners of war and the many thousands of Americans who are still missing in action. Today marks the 25th anniversary of the release of the first American POWs from North Vietnam, and accordingly, I urge my colleagues here today to support this resolution which honors those 591 American POWs who were reunited with their families 25 years ago today in a mission known as Operation Homecoming.

Today, Mr. Speaker, there are still 8,100 American soldiers who fought valiantly in the Korean War and still have yet to return home. We have yet to locate their whereabouts. Today, there are still some 2,500 American men and women who battled in the streets and jungles of Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War and still have yet to return home. We have yet to determine their whereabouts.

Let me tell my colleagues a story to illustrate the sacrifices that America's soldiers have made to secure freedom in our land. I want to tell my colleagues about Captain Bruce Johnson, a soldier from Michigan. On May 25, 1965, Captain Johnson was being airlifted with 6 other soldiers to a location in South Vietnam where they were needed to offer assistance to a Special Forces unit in trouble.

While the relief helicopter carrying Captain Johnson was landing, it came under heavy mortar and small arms fire. In an attempt to avoid furious assault, the aircraft took off and tried to gain altitude, only to lose control and crash into some nearby parked vehicles.

An American pilot circling the area soon established contact with Captain Johnson and Captain Johnson reported sadly that he was the lone survivor. Captain Johnson also reported that the situation around him was grim and that he was under heavy fire and that no more American personnel should be sent to this location. It was just too dangerous. Shortly thereafter, contact was lost with Captain Johnson.

One week later, when our military finally secured the area, a search was conducted of the crash site, but Captain Johnson was nowhere to be found. Residents of the nearby town said that an American soldier had been taken prisoner and had been seen recently in this particular town. However, these residents were either unable or unwilling to provide further information. To this day, no further information regarding Captain Johnson has surfaced. No one has stepped forward to account for his whereabouts.

Captain Johnson is an American hero. He risked his life to safeguard his fellow soldiers and he risked his life to protect our freedom. It is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker, that the whereabouts of Captain Johnson and other valiant Americans are yet to be determined. We must resolve in Congress to do whatever we can to get a full accounting of what happened to Captain Johnson and every one of the other men and women who have been taken prisoner or are still missing in action.

I would also like to recognize two POWs who, thank God, returned from their pain and suffering and are even today still making contributions to our great Nation. The honorable Pete Peterson, one of our former members and a distinguished member of the House Committee on National Security, was also a prisoner of war. He now serves admirably as the United States Ambassador to Vietnam, and he is working hard to find out what has happened to our men and women who are still missing in Southeast Asia. Today, Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize Pete Peterson for his valor and dedication to protecting America's freedom.

I would also like to recognize a gentleman who is currently serving in the United States House of Representatives, and again, still making contributions to our great Nation and the great State of Texas. Our colleague, SAM JOHNSON of Texas was a POW in Vietnam for almost 7 years. He refused to cooperate when the enemy demanded that he give them important information.

Mr. Speaker, SAM JOHNSON is an American hero and all of us today salute his patriotism and his dedication to protecting his country's freedom. Mr. Speaker, in Oklahoma there is an old saying that we have: "You don't call them cowboy until you see them ride." And for the last 3 years I have worked with SAM JOHNSON and I have seen him operate and I have seen him work, and I say to my friend from Texas, SAM, we call you cowboy in Oklahoma.

I will say it again. Over 8,100 American men and women who fought in Korea are unaccounted for. Over 2,500 American men and women who fought in Vietnam are still unaccounted for. Mr. Speaker, we must not rest until we account for every single one of these brave men and women. They deserve no less, and their families deserve no less.

Mr. Speaker, I call for all of my colleagues to recognize the sacrifices of

America's POWs and MIAs by supporting this resolution.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATHAM). Without objection, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) will manage the time on his side of the aisle.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) is recognized.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BOYD).

Mr. BOYD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) for yielding me this time. I also want to thank the sponsors of this resolution and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) for including the honorable Pete Peterson as a part of this resolution.

It is with a certain great amount of pride and humility that I am here today, not just as a Member of this distinguished body, but also as a fellow Vietnam veteran who has served alongside many brave men who did not have the fortune to return home to their family and friends, as I did.

Today, on this 25th anniversary of Operation Homecoming, I would especially like to pay my respects to two men. One, a brave fallen soldier who served by my side as my radio telephone operator, the second of the 506 101st Airborne Division in the Republic of Vietnam, Gilbert Ruff, Jr., from St. Louis, Missouri; and the other, the honorable gentleman who served as a Member of this Chamber, a war hero and former POW, a man whose seat I now hold, a man who now, after so many years, returned to Vietnam to serve as our Ambassador to that country, the Honorable Pete Peterson.

There is no doubt that this Nation owes a great debt of gratitude to those who sacrificed their lives, who fought and persevered, whose courage and service prevailed during this difficult conflict in Vietnam.

□ 1445

It is men like Gilbert and Pete that truly represent all that is good and honorable and is the best in America.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER).

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to an authentic American hero, Congressman SAM JOHNSON.

Mr. Speaker, on April 16, 1966, U.S. Air Force Colonel SAM JOHNSON was shot down while flying his 25th mission over North Vietnam. And as we heard today, for the next 7 years he experienced unimaginable amounts of threats and torment and, yes, torture.

He was kept in solitary confinement. He withstood malnutrition and endured leg irons and suffered unconscionable humiliation. But though he was beaten, he was never broken. While others

might have given in, he stood firm. His faith in his God was never surrendered, it was fortified.

So what do we say to a soldier who gave so much of himself to his country? And what do we say to a man who endured unthinkable torture and refused to think of giving in? What do we say to an American hero who kept the faith, stood his ground, and defended his country?

What do we say to this very special person? There is only one thing I can think of to say and that is "Thank you." SAM, we thank you for your commitment to freedom and your courage to fight. To most Americans you are more than a soldier, you are a peacemaker. To me and to the rest of us who know you, you are a respected colleague and a very cherished friend.

So, Mr. Speaker, to all of those who keep the peace and who preserve freedom, but especially to our friend, SAM JOHNSON, I want to say God bless you and thank you very much.

Today I rise to pay tribute to an authentic American hero, Congressman SAM JOHNSON.

On April 6, 1966, U.S. Air Force Colonel JOHNSON was shot down while flying his 25th mission over North Vietnam. For the next seven years, Colonel JOHNSON experienced an unimaginable amount of threats, torment—and yes—torture.

He was kept in solitary confinement. He withstood malnutrition. He endured leg irons. And he suffered unconscionable humiliation.

But though he was beaten, he was never broken. Where others might have given in, SAM simply stood firm.

Through it all, his love for his country never wavered, it strengthened. His faith in his God was never surrendered, it was fortified.

What do you say to a soldier who gave so much of himself for his country?

What do you say to a man who endured unthinkable torture and refused to think of giving in?

And what do you say to an American hero who kept the faith, stood his ground, and defended his country?

What do you say to this very special person? There's only one thing you can say—thank you.

SAM, we thank you for your commitment to freedom and your courage to fight.

To most Americans you are more than a soldier, you are a peacemaker. And to me, you are more than a respected colleague, you are a cherished friend.

God bless SAM JOHNSON. And God bless all of America's warriors who keep the peace and preserve our freedom.

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

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the sponsors of this resolution which calls for all Americans to recognize the courage and sacrifice of members of the Armed Forces held as prisons of war during the Vietnam conflict. Especially singled out is our friend from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON).

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman is an example of courage and is one for the history books, and SAM JOHNSON, we all salute you and there is no way for us to adequately empathize with what you

went through. But we can say a sincere word of gratitude to you as an American and as you continue to serve our country in these halls.

Mr. Speaker, also being honored in this resolution is a gentleman who served ably and well as well as on the committee on which I now serve, Pete Peterson from Florida, who not only endured the hardships of being a prisoner of war during the Vietnam conflict, but returned and completed a successful Air Force career, was elected to Congress, and now presently serves as the United States Ambassador to that sad country. To his credit, he went back in another capacity to help heal those wounds that were so open and so sore from those many years ago.

This resolution also makes reference, excellent reference to Admiral James B. Stockdale, who I know and have great admiration for. All three of these gentlemen should be remembered and properly doing so in this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, it was 1978. I was a freshman in this body. Mississippi Congressman Sonny Montgomery asked me as the only freshman to go to Vietnam to help bring back remains of those who had died in that conflict. It was a very difficult trip. A very difficult trip.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURTHA) was a member of that delegation, and we did. We met with various Vietnamese officials and we were given the remains and returned them honorably and correctly to a ceremony at the air base in Honolulu, Hawaii, a memory that I shall long remember.

This resolution calls for remembering those who sacrificed, like SAM JOHNSON, like Pete Peterson, like Admiral Stockdale. But we should also pay tribute to those who fought in that war, who wore the American uniform, who did well and returned home to work and live and experience the freedoms of our country. To them, too, we say a heartfelt thanks.

We should also, Mr. Speaker, well remember those in previous conflicts. Now, this is the 25th anniversary of the release of the prisoners, Operation Homecoming, 1973 from the Vietnam conflict. But there were previous conflicts in which Americans were held captive, were mistreated, and were able to come home to an American welcome.

I have a neighbor down the street in Lexington, Missouri, on Franklin Street, a longtime friend, George Stier, who was shot down as a pilot, a lieutenant in the United States Army Air Corps at the time, and spent many, many, many months in a stalag in Germany.

I went to a wake just a few weeks ago for another friend who more recently was mayor of Higginsville, Missouri, in Lafayette County, who was captured on Corregidor in May of 1942. He served as a marine, and he endured the hardships of the Japanese prisoner experience. Buford Thurmon, as his remains lay in the casket at that funeral home,

Buford Thurmon was wearing his beloved United States Marine uniform.

So it is to all of those today in the Vietnam conflict, and in my mind, in the other conflicts in which Americans have suffered because they were Americans, because they had courage, because they believed in this country, to them I say a heartfelt thanks and words of gratitude.

And SAM, a special thanks to you not only for what you have done, but for your work here in the Congress of the United States.

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

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS) for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this resolution. Today we honor a man who withstood the agony of war and the horrors of imprisonment. SAM JOHNSON's courage is an inspiration to all Americans as we salute him on the 25th anniversary of his release from Vietnam captivity.

One of the requirements I have in my office for summer interns is to write two reports on a select number of books. One of those books was written by our colleague, SAM JOHNSON. It is called "Captive Warriors" and it is required reading in my office.

For many of my interns, the Vietnam War is as distant as the Civil War. After reading the book, though, they come away with a new sense of patriotism and humility because of the sacrifices that SAM JOHNSON and thousands of others made for our country.

But what makes the greatest impression on many of us is that SAM JOHNSON was held captive for nearly 7 years. Half of those years were spent in solitary confinement, yet during his years in captivity, his faith in God and country was unwavering.

Mr. Speaker, to paraphrase President John F. Kennedy, I think that a gathering of prisoners of war from Vietnam would be a most extraordinary collection of courage ever assembled since George Washington faced the British since the Revolutionary War.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I urge my colleagues to support this resolution in honor of my friend and colleague, SAM JOHNSON.

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

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER), the dean of the Texas delegation and the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS) for yielding me this time and for managing what I believe is a very, very important moment for the House of Representatives and for the people of this country.

Mr. Speaker, the individual that we honor today is a man who walks

amongst us day by day here in the House of Representatives, and many do not know about what he has been through in his life because he is so down to earth. He has got it so put together. He has such resolve and commitment for the benefit of all the people in this country. His word is his bond. He will never vary from it.

Mr. Speaker, he is an individual, as we heard from the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) who went to Vietnam because it was the right thing to do. And it was an honorable cause. Politicians let him down and let down the rest of our military personnel who made the great sacrifice in Vietnam.

But we owe him a great debt of gratitude. He knew the risk. He knew the danger. And unfortunately it befell him and his body was shattered. He endured pain and deprivation beyond anything that Americans can have any idea of.

Mr. Speaker, I hope every American can read his book. I read it and I could not put it down. I lived for 2 weeks with him and his experiences in Vietnam. But he emerged from that a man that can be an idol for all of us. Young people today can aspire to be the individual, to have the character and the attributes of this man, SAM JOHNSON.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to call him my friend. I would follow him anywhere and know that trust, faith, hope, resolve, patriotism would be leading me.

SAM, I am honored to be your friend. I am honored to serve with you and I love you.

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

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MCINTOSH).

Mr. MCINTOSH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS) for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, SAM JOHNSON is my hero and today politicians give out that honor much too easily. But SAM JOHNSON is a real hero in every sense of the word.

There are few Members of this House who have given so much of themselves to this country and we have heard about that today. Few have earned the right to be called a patriot. He has answered every call to serve this country, in wartime and in peace. He has been a warrior and a public servant, and on both occasions he has fought for the same cause: freedom at home and abroad.

Mr. Speaker, when the United States asked SAM to serve to battle communism in Asia, he did not hesitate. He was in the Air Force for 29 years. He was a hero in Korea and then served again in Vietnam, as we have heard about.

□ 1500

On that day in 1966 when his F-4 was shot down over North Vietnam, an event occurred that would change his life forever, serving 7 years as a prisoner of war, three of them in solitary

confinement because he would never allow the torture to break his will, his love of America and his faith in God.

In recognition of his service, the military has given him two Silver Stars, two Legions of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, one Bronze Star with Valor, two Purple Hearts, four Air Medals and three Outstanding Unit Awards.

Everyone in this House talks about patriotism and sacrifice. SAM JOHNSON embodies patriotism and sacrifice.

Today he continues to fight for freedom. He has been fighting for individual liberty since he came here to Congress in 1991. It has been my high honor to be able to join him in that struggle since I arrived here in 1995. He has done it effectively and without rancor.

SAM's selfless devotion to America and freedom is evident every day. He never mentions the awards or his bravery in action. He never mentions the exploits of or the horrors of his captivity. That is just not SAM's way. He is humble. He is kind. He bears no ill will. Every time I see his smile or shake his hand, I am reminded, here stands a man who sacrificed more for this country than I can ever imagine.

It is fitting that we honor him today.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS).

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma for yielding me the time.

I rise today to give thanks also to my good friend, SAM JOHNSON, my friend and colleague, a man who has been a mentor for me politically for many years. But I want to admit that as we give great admiration to SAM JOHNSON, I want you to know that he has a family. He has a lovely wife, Shirley, who is with us today, who is here in the gallery, who has stood by her husband for years and years, a woman who has faith in God and faith in our country, to SAM's 3 children and 10 grandchildren.

We give thanks to SAM JOHNSON because he is a hero, a captive warrior who came home, who gave his very best for America, but who gives it every single day today.

SAM, we love you. We respect you. We appreciate you. Let the day never, never get too far away from us here. We can say not only thank you but thank you also to the men and women who did not come home who I know you live with in your heart every day. We are proud of you. And to you and Shirley we say, God bless you.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAPPAS).

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, America needs heroes. We have one of them within our midst. Prior to my coming to Congress, I would tune in to C-SPAN every once in a while, and SAM JOHNSON is one of the Members that I would see and listen to and admire. Since I have had the good fortune to work with him, that admiration has only increased incredibly.

My father served in World War II. Fortunately, he never had to be a prisoner of war. For you, SAM, and for so many other Americans that had that indignity thrust upon them, words can never be used, we could never find the words to express how humbling that must be for all of us to see the sacrifices that people like you have made for each of us here. And for so many Americans that means so much.

SAM, you are to be commended for your willingness to continue to serve your country and it is my great honor to serve with you. God bless you and your family.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EWING).

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I have a very special place in my heart for all Vietnam veterans. SAM JOHNSON only makes that a greater and bigger place in my heart. We came into this body a few days apart. He was just ahead of me, so he always gets the office I want and I am right behind him. But we are kind of a class of our own.

Just two little stories that make me know what SAM JOHNSON and Shirley Johnson are all about. When I talk to SAM, and he does not talk much about it, he says when they stand you up and blindfold you and they are going to shoot you and then they do not, he says, you never fear again.

And then when I talk with Shirley, and she is a great friend of Connie's and mine, she takes it so lightly. Well, he ran off while I was raising the children.

I think they are a great couple.

You certainly do love your country, your family and your God. It shows every day in that great big smile. God bless you, SAM.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS).

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

After I was drafted into the Army and served 2 years during the Korean conflict, I could not wait to get out and tell my friends and family how much I had suffered when I was in the Army, the great contributions and sacrifices that I made. The truth was that I never saw combat. I was in a tank once at Fort Knox, and I did go through basic training, was trained to be a tank commander; but I was lucky and never did really have to do anything that would put me in harm's way.

But then I met JOHN MCCAIN and SAM JOHNSON and others in similar circumstances, and all of a sudden, I made a plea to myself and promise to myself that I would never say that I suffered while I was in the Army. I was glad I served, and I am happy that I did my duty. But it paled in comparison to those sacrifices made by the likes of SAM JOHNSON and JOHN MCCAIN.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

It is interesting that we have used the word "hero" here in this Chamber

today. I think in 1998 America we ought not to confuse heroes with celebrities, and there is a real difference. Celebrities are known for being known. But heroes are known for the values, the principles, their character, their integrity, and the love for this great country and the love for their wonderful God.

SAM JOHNSON is a real hero. His book has been mentioned today. SAM, I can say for all of our colleagues that you have been a wonderful book, your life has been a wonderful book for us to read on a daily basis here in the Chamber. We appreciate your heart and your patriotism.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) is recognized for 6½ minutes.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. J.C., you are terrible. You are great. You are perfect. I thank you for bringing this to the floor. And IKE, you, and all the other Democrats I know, respect and admire our veterans and those who are in the service today. This Nation would not be the great Nation it is were it not for the veterans from the Revolutionary days right on up until today.

I hope we will remember those who are in the service in places of harm's way today and who might be put in harm's way and hope that we will not have to put them there. Those are the guys that down through the years have made this country great, have made it free. I can assure you, until you have had freedom taken away from you, you never can understand exactly what the beauty of it is.

This Nation represents that. America is and will be the greatest nation in the world. All you have to do is step across the border in any direction and you know you want to come back.

I salute the veterans of this Nation who have made it great. I think, with you, we should honor those who are in the service of our Nation today, respect and honor them. Let me just tell you, there was a quote left on the wall in Vietnam, in one of those prisons when we left, which I think says it all: Freedom has a taste to those who fight and almost die that the protected will never know.

God bless you all. It is pleasure to be in this body with each and every one of you.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues to honor a decorated fighter pilot, a former POW, a distinguished Congressman and a good friend, SAM JOHNSON.

The Hallmark of SAM's life has been service—service to the Air Force, to this House, to the citizens of the Third Congressional District of Texas, and to the country. His record of sacrifice and dedication to duty is unmatched in this House. I know he would be uncomfortable with the term "hero"—but in a time when American youth are looking for true heroes, they would do well to look to SAM JOHNSON for their inspiration.

I join with my colleagues today in honoring SAM JOHNSON. I want to add my personal thanks for selfless devotion to duty, his hard work, his sacrifice, and his friendship.

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a real American hero, Congressman SAM JOHNSON, and to all his fellow POWs who so bravely and valiantly served this country. As you well know, SAM was shot down over North Vietnam and imprisoned for almost seven years under horrifying conditions.

What strikes me most about SAM's story is his unshakeable faith in the Lord. On the evening of his 72nd day in leg stocks, SAM was ready to give up. For months he had not been able to move from his shackles. For months he had not seen the sun or sky through the boarded-up windows of his tiny cell. As he fell asleep that evening, SAM thought to himself: "It would be okay if I never woke up again." That night, a powerful typhoon struck Hanoi. As SAM's cell filled with water, he began to pray as never before. He knew then more than ever that the Lord was his hope and his salvation. As SAM later recounted, "When I woke up the next morning, I realized the storm has blown the covers off the window, and that morning I saw the sun rise for the first time in 72 days. That was God in all His glory coming up out there. And it's good to know He's there; it certainly helps to put your mind at rest. It helps you to get through those tough times."

God bless you SAM JOHNSON. God bless our POWs. And God bless America.

CONGRESSMAN SAM JOHNSON
(Testimonial as told to Northwest Bible Church)

Listen, I want you to know that we've been doing a little bible study up there in Washington, DC, believe it or not. . . . My goodness, the Lord is directing you and, you know, it goes to show you the faith and the grace and the failures that make our lives worth living. Let me tell you a little bit about what happened to me in Vietnam. I was shot down in an F-4 and ejected to get out. Our air speed was about 650 knots, which is kind of slow I guess. I broke my left arm in two places and dislocated my left shoulder and broke my back. When I landed the bad guys were on me in about 30 seconds. We were right in the middle of a division of the enemy troops, and I was caught pretty quickly.

They threw me around and they took over a house and just kicked the people out. The guards and I were thrown in there. My back-seater also got out, fortunately, and was put in another house where they threw people out. We stayed there for just one night and then went to a place called "Dong Hui" which was in North Vietnam. There they accused us of being air pirates and took me out and put me in front of a firing squad. Even though you've been trained in the Air Force Survival School and you know or think they are not really going to hurt you, when you're standing there with six guys facing you with rifles, and you see them pull a clip out of their pockets, jam it in the gun, and charge the weapon, you know you can't really tell whether there's a bullet going in or not. And they pull them up and the officer gives the signal to fire and they all go click, click. . . . You're facing them and you wonder about that. They tried again later, and the second time I laughed at them. They threw me in a pit. You know, in retrospect, that was the Lord being with me. I followed him by praying as hard as I could at that

time, but the real faith you know, the Lord really being with you, doesn't come home until you stop and think how he provided.

Later they put a cast on my arm. They dressed up some guards like doctors (which is how you become a doctor in Vietnam). They pulled it down to the extreme (that it broke it in two places) and then they folded it up and put a cast on it. That was their medical deal. They broke it again in route to Hanoi during the travel which took us about 25 days. And when we got to Hanoi nearly everybody was treated the same, it was a week of torture, while they were trying to get military information. And you know, they never found out that I ran the Fighter Weapons School of the Air Force.

My back seat pilot Larry Chesley and I made up a couple of stories. Like, "I had just gotten there, I didn't know anything about the airplane, they just put me in it and told me to fly over, and they put bombs and napalm on it, but I didn't know what was on the airplane. And the back-seater got in the plane there, so I didn't know him. He was new to Vietnam and he didn't know a thing about radar." They told me when I got up over N. Vietnam push that button. We told them that story and they gave up after awhile.

I was put into an empty dirty room. When they came in to interrogate you they brought a table in so the interrogators can sit behind it and start asking questions. You were without food and water for about a week. But, it was one of those trials that you go through. They took this broken arm of mine and broke it again and twisted it right on around and tore it out the other side, trying to make me talk to them. And really, the Lord was protecting me as I look back on it. It was very painful. So we didn't change our story and apparently my backseater told the same thing. Later (five years later) the commander, who was the colonel, walked in and said "You lied to us." I said no, what are you talking about. He said when you first got shot down you didn't tell us the truth. I said, "No, you must be mistaken, Americans never lie."

I later was put with a guy named Jim Stockdale who is now in California. We were in a place where they kept bringing men who had just been shot down. I tried to talk to them and tell them how they could guard themselves and how to react and respond to the Vietnamese so they wouldn't get into too much trouble. They knew we were doing it but they couldn't catch us. If they had caught us they would have really punished us. I don't understand that mentality, but they would punish us and it would be in communist ways.

One of the most serious incidents involved Stockdale and I. We were caught communicating with other prisoners and the guard busted in the door of our cell. Stockdale tried to fight him and he knocked him to the floor. Our punishment for this was the worst of my entire time in prison.

They put me in a little cell that was about two and a half foot wide by eight foot long that we called the Mint, we named everything after a Las Vegas hotel. So, there's one other guy in an adjoining cell with me, and at the same time they put me in leg stocks. I don't know if you know what that is but it's kind of like the pilgrims when they used to punish people they put them in the middle of the town square. They set me in those stocks and locked my legs down so I couldn't move for 72 days. I didn't get up for anything.

But, on the 72nd day an amazing thing happened. My cell was on the corner, so I had windows, but they were all boarded up. I hadn't seen the sun or anything for 72 days. That night a typhoon came through Hanoi.

It was a terrible storm and my cell started to flood. The water was rising fast and since I couldn't move because of stocks I had no way to escape the water. I had nothing else to turn to but my faith. I began to pray. I prayed like I had never prayed before, because I knew that the Lord was my only salvation at this point. It ends up that the Lord was with me that night. When I woke up the next morning I realized the storm had blown the covers off the window and that morning I saw the sun rise for the first time in 72 days. That was God in all his glory coming up out there. And it's good to know He's there, it certainly helps to put your mind at rest. It helps you to get through those tough times.

That very day they came and took me out of the stocks. I could not walk, obviously. Two guards carried me over to an interrogation office and set me down on a three-legged stool, and this guy says "We're going to kill you." They threatened to do that fairly often. But, they said they had this confession from Stockdale and obviously you're involved. I said, let me see it because I don't think he'd write one. And he, of course, wouldn't let me look at it. So I told him that he was lying, I knew Stockdale didn't write anything. He got mad and said just go back.

Well, that month they took 11 of us to a place we called Alcatraz. Jim Stockdale was one of them with us, and Jeremiah Denton from Alabama, ex-senator. He was in the same camps with me practically the whole time, he taught me the tap code. This was a code where we took the letters of the alphabet and put them into five rows of five letters each and eliminated the "k" and used the "c" for "k" for a while, but later tucked it back in where it belongs. And a "b" would be tap—tap, tap (1st row second letter) and we became pretty adept at doing that. In Alcatraz we were all in 11 different cells, side by side, and kind of in an "L" shape, and we could talk to each other pretty rapidly with that code. We then decided we weren't talking fast enough, so we developed a "cough, hack, spit code." And I said, "you know Jerry, we're going to get caught for this and the Vietnamese are going to really clamp down on us and we're going to be in trouble." But, he said, "no, we're going to try it."

It was around 1968, I guess, when they started letting us out for exercise, first time ever. And about 15 minutes a day. So Jerry got out of his cell and he was walking around and he was talking and having the prisoners communicate with him. We used a clearing of the throat for one, two clears for two, a cough for three, a hack for four, and a spit for five. We talked for three years with that code and the Vietnamese never caught on. Their population over there must think Americans have a respiratory problem. We always signed off in the evening with "God bless you."

Every Sunday, we would pray together, somebody would know it was Sunday, and the Vietnamese took about half a day off. Some guy would stomp on the floor and we'd all get on our knees and pray together. We could feel the power of prayer when we were together, everybody praying, even though we weren't side by side, separated by walls. We did that for as long as I can remember.

And then one day they had the Son Tay raid and I don't know if ya'll remember that or not, but it was an effort to try to rescue the guys out of the camp at Vietnam. They failed in that effort because they had moved about 30 days earlier. And it was unfortunate because they were going to move them back, but it scared them enough that they moved us all together for the first time. And when we moved together we decided to have a church service and I'll never forget because Jerry said "Sam you sing for us and lead," and I said "I can't sing," but I did.

Well, it happened to be New Year's Eve when we moved together so we sang Christmas carols and that was just a great time. But when you're in a communist world like that, the Vietnamese think that it's a demonstration so they came charging in and said "Stop, you are not authorized to do that." We didn't care, we were going to have a church service every Sunday regardless. And we did, they took 3 senior officers out and put them in solitary and in irons, and we kept doing it and they came in one night and they took about 40 more of the seniors out and put them in solitary and in fact doubled them up in bunks and really made them uncomfortable. We got in the windows and started singing "Battle Hymn of the Republic," "God Bless America," all the good songs that you know, in our room. There were about 370 of us in that camp and every room got up in the window and started joining in with us.

The North Vietnamese came running in with their guards in full battle dress with gas masks on, and we thought they were going to try to throw tear gas in, but they didn't. We could peek through the walls where we had but holes and we noticed that the whole town of Hanoi had come out to see what the commotion was. Well that died out that night and the next day the camp commander came on the loud speaker and said "the camp authorizes you to have church services." You know that only God could make that happen, and I'll tell you what, the Lord was with us. I think each and every one of us is stronger from that experience.

I never really thought about being involved in the Congress, which has brought me here to talk to you today. Jerry Denton and Jim Stockdale and all of us talked about how badly managed our government was and decided that when would we get involved when we got back to the U.S. and do something about it, instead of just complaining. So, I got involved in the State Legislature and when Steve Bartlett resigned to run for mayor of Dallas, I decided to try for the House. And I think the Lord led the way and prompted me to do that and hopefully, I can be there for you and represent you and our beliefs up there.

I do know that this is one nation under God, our founding fathers wrote this Constitution under the precepts of the Bible. The Supreme Court needs to use the Bible as a guide, as a Law book. We have been drifting, as a country, far from these founding principles. And I'm hoping that we can get more people up in D.C. to turn that around. Thank you so much for letting me share my story with you today, and I hope you will share with me. My office is always open. God bless you and God bless America.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, with great respect and tribute to our friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON), we sincerely hope that this resolution passes unanimously. I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma for his efforts in this regard, as well as the other cosponsors.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATHAM). Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the resolution.

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all Members that it is not in order in debate to refer to any occupant in the gallery.

AUTHORIZING THE SPEAKER TO
APPOINT MEMBERS TO REPRESENT THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AT CEREMONIES FOR OBSERVANCE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it shall be in order for the Speaker to appoint two Members of the House, one upon the recommendation of the minority leader, to represent the House of Representatives at appropriate ceremonies for the observance of George Washington's birthday to be held on Monday, February 23, 1998.

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

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR
WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1998

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday, February 25, 1998.

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

There was no objection.

AUTHORIZING THE SPEAKER, MAJORITY LEADER AND THE MINORITY LEADER TO ACCEPT RESIGNATIONS AND MAKE APPOINTMENTS AUTHORIZED BY LAW OR THE HOUSE, NOTWITHSTANDING ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that, notwithstanding any adjournment of the House until Tuesday, February 24, 1998, the Speaker, majority leader and minority leader be authorized to accept resignations and to make appointments authorized by law or by the House.

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

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

THE 189TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
BIRTH OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise in honor of our country's greatest president whose birthday we celebrate today.

We Republicans honor Lincoln as a founder of our great political party and the first Republican president. We are right to this. But this is not the source of Lincoln's greatness.

Lincoln used the Republican party and the presidency as vehicles to achieve three magnificent things. He preserved this great union of ours. He ended slavery on this continent. He extended to the American entrepreneurial spirit to millions of people of all walks of life. We have a word for that on a subcommittee I chair. We call it "empowerment."

Without a strong union, the United States would not have become the economic power it is today. Because of Lincoln's work, this nation produced the highest standard of living of any in the history of the world. And because the United States remained one nation, it was able to assemble the moral military might that liberated millions this century from three of the worst tyrannies in all of history: nazi Germany, imperial Japan, and the Stalinist "evil empire."

Throughout the world, the name "Lincoln" connotes compassion—and for good reason. Slavery sickened him. "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong" he said. He worked to restrict its expansion before the civil war; used that military emergency to end it; and forced through the thirteenth amendment to the constitution to prevent its re-instatement.

As Commander in Chief, he made merciful use of his pardoning powers. He was particularly sympathetic to young offenders. "Must I shoot a simple-minded soldier boy, who deserts, while I must not touch a hair of a wily agitator who induces him to desert?" he said, " * * * to silence the agitator and save the boy is not only constitutional, but withal a great mercy."

There was one group of lawbreaker, however, to whom he showed no mercy, slave traders. In one celebrated instance, he refused to commute to life in prison the sentence of person who had committed that hideous crime. Before Lincoln's presidency, that law had gone enforced. After it, there was no need to have it at all.

It was also during Lincoln's administration that homestead legislation became federal policy and land grants to states for the establishment of colleges became law. These measures, along with the example of Lincoln's life story, came to characterize the American entrepreneurial spirit.

As the "empowerment subcommittee" continues to explore ways to assist individuals and communities achieve their full potential, we will carry Lincoln's spirit with us. Lincoln was the personification of "empowerment" in America. Here is how he described it:

"The prudent penniless beginner in the world labors for wages for a while, saves a surplus with which to buy tools or land for himself, then labors on his own account for another while, and at length hires another new beginner to help him."

I urge all Americans to pause on this day and all through the year to reflect upon the words and deeds of this extraordinary human being. They do this by visiting the Lincoln Memorial and Ford's Theater, here in Washington, and the Lincoln Museum in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The March issue of Civil War Times

contains an article about that museum's fascinating exhibits. It is my pleasure to submit it for publication in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

[From the Civil War Times, March 1998]

A NEW LINCOLN MEMORIAL

(By Al Sandner)

In Fort Wayne, Indiana, one man's admiration gave birth to the largest private collection of Lincoln-related materials in the world. The two-year-old museum that houses the collection combines modern technology with 19th-century artifacts to create a hands-on, in-depth examination of "Lincoln and the American Experiment."

For generations the people of Fort Wayne, Indiana, have cherished the legend that Abraham Lincoln stopped here on the fateful trip that catapulted him into the race for the presidency. They've cherished it and hoped it was true, but couldn't be sure.

Legend had it that Lincoln changed trains here on his way to deliver a speech at the Cooper Institute in New York, where his son, Robert, was a student. The speech made a deep impression on the audience and caught the attention of Northeastern power brokers, vaulting him into the elite company of men regarded as potential presidential candidates. On his journey eastward, he was a regionally known lawyer, soldier, surveyor, and politician. On the return trip his name was being whispered in the halls of power as a contender for the highest office in the land. The Fort Wayne train switch—if it really happened—was related closely enough to a pivotal moment in American history to make any city proud.

Recent research has laid the legend to rest and replaced it with historical fact. "We have determined that on February 23, 1860, Abraham Lincoln did change trains in Fort Wayne while on his way to the Cooper Institute speech," said Gerald Prokopowicz, Lincoln scholar and director of programs for the Lincoln Museum in Fort Wayne.

In the years since 1860, working on faith and dedication alone, one local businessman and Lincoln admirer created in this mid-sized northeastern Indiana town (closer to Knute Rockne country than to what is usually thought of as the land of Lincoln) what was to become the largest private collection of Lincoln materials in the world, housed in a \$6 million, 30,000-square-foot museum that is both a tribute to Lincoln and an interactive multimedia essay on his impact on America as we know it.

Fort Wayne, a 203-year-old city also known as the final resting place of Johnny Appleseed, doesn't really need an excuse for housing the Lincoln Museum. The institution stands on its own merits, combining relics and reconstructions, videos and period documents, the deadly serious (for example, a slave's manacle) and the whimsical (the tail end of a 1970s Lincoln Versailles with its trademark wheel on the trunk lid and a collection of bands from "Lincoln" brand cigars).

The museum's 11 exhibit galleries ingeniously incorporate hundreds of Lincoln-era artifacts and art works—including the inkwell Lincoln used in signing the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln family photos and handwritten documents, the president's legal wallet, and his pocket knife. Its research library, with 18,000 volumes and 5,000 photographs, draws Lincoln scholars from across the country.

Traveling exhibits have included one of the few surviving signed copies of the Emancipation Proclamation (the Leland-Boker Edition, which was sold during the Civil War to benefit war relief work) and one of 13 copies of the resolution for the 13th Amendment, which banned slavery. More recently, an exhibit called "White House Style" displayed 9