

clear that any progress toward peace must require that Palestinians first recognize Israel; second, renounce terrorism; and, third, dismantle the infrastructure of murder within their midst. Then and only then can our Nation ask our ally Israel to make the concessions necessary for the advancement of peace.

REGARDING THE LATEST TAX CUT

(Mr. MORAN of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, last week President Bush signed the new tax cut law. That law is going to give \$93,500 per year to the 200,000 taxpayers making over \$1 million a year while the majority of all taxpayers would get less than \$100 under this new Republican tax plan.

But to rub salt into wounds, there was a deliberate decision to deny every family whose income is under \$26,625 a year the child tax credit. That includes most of the working class in this country. It includes nearly all men and women in combat. Their earned income is not \$26,625, so they do not even qualify for the child tax credit and here they are putting their lives on the line for our country.

This is unbelievable. The fact is, the families of the 12 million children denied this credit do pay taxes. Millions of them pay into the Social Security trust fund. That is the money we are having to borrow to pay for this tax cut.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 32 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1302

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BASS) at 1 o'clock and 2 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any RECORD vote on postponed questions will be taken later today.

RECOGNIZING AND COMMENDING ALL WHO PARTICIPATED IN AND SUPPORTED OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM IN AFGHANISTAN AND OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM IN IRAQ

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 177) recognizing and commending the members of the United States Armed Forces and their leaders, and the allies of the United States and their armed forces, who participated in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq and recognizing the continuing dedication of military families and employers and defense civilians and contractors and the countless communities and patriotic organizations that lent their support to the Armed Forces during those operations, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 177

Whereas the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, which killed thousands of people from the United States and other countries in New York, Virginia, and Pennsylvania, inaugurated the Global War on Terrorism;

Whereas the intelligence community quickly identified Al Qaeda as a terrorist organization with global reach and the President determined that United States national security required the elimination of the Al Qaeda terrorist organization;

Whereas the Taliban regime of Afghanistan had long harbored Al Qaeda, providing members of that organization a safe haven from which to attack the United States and its friends and allies, and the refusal of that regime to discontinue its support for international terrorism and surrender Al Qaeda's leaders to the United States made it a threat to international peace and security;

Whereas Saddam Hussein and his regime's longstanding sponsorship of international terrorism, active pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, use of such weapons against Iraq's own citizens and neighboring countries, aggression against Iraq's neighbors, and brutal repression of Iraq's population made Saddam Hussein and his regime a threat to international peace and security;

Whereas the United States pursued sustained diplomatic, political, and economic efforts to remove those threats peacefully;

Whereas on October 7, 2001, the Armed Forces of the United States and its coalition allies launched military operations in Afghanistan, designated as Operation Enduring Freedom, that quickly caused the collapse of the Taliban regime, the elimination of Afghanistan's terrorist infrastructure, and the capture of significant and numerous members of Al Qaeda;

Whereas on March 19, 2003, the Armed Forces of the United States and its coalition allies launched military operations, designated as Operation Iraqi Freedom, that quickly caused the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime, the elimination of Iraq's terrorist infrastructure, the end of Iraq's illicit and illegal programs to acquire weapons of mass destruction, and the capture of significant international terrorists;

Whereas in those two campaigns in the Global War on Terrorism, as of May 1, 2003, nearly 330,000 members of the United States Armed Forces, comprised of active, reserve, and National Guard members and units, had deployed for Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom;

Whereas as of May 1, 2003, some 224,500 Reserve and National Guard members of the Armed Forces had been called to active duty in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom;

Whereas in the conduct of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, as of May 1, 2003, 67 military servicemembers and other United States personnel had given their lives in Afghanistan and 140 had been lost in Iraq, while over 700 had been wounded and 8 were held as prisoners of war;

Whereas success in those two campaigns in the Global War on Terrorism would not have been possible without the dedication, courage, and service of the members of the United States Armed Forces and the military and irregular forces of the friends and allies of the United States;

Whereas the support, love, and commitment from the families of United States service personnel participating in those two operations, as well as that of the communities and patriotic organizations which provided support through the United Services Organization (USO), Operation Dear Abby, and Operation UpLink, helped to sustain those service personnel and enabled them to eliminate significant threats to United States national security while liberating oppressed peoples from dictatorial regimes;

Whereas the civilian employees of the Department of Defense, through their hard work and dedication, enabled United States military forces to quickly and effectively achieve the United States military missions in Afghanistan and Iraq;

Whereas the commitment of companies making their employees available for military service, the creativity and initiative of contractors equipping the Nation's Armed Forces with the best and most modern equipment, and the ingenuity of service companies assisting with the global overseas deployment of the Armed Forces demonstrates that the entrepreneurial spirit of the United States is an extraordinarily valuable defense asset; and

Whereas the Nation should pause to recognize with appropriate tributes and days of remembrance the sacrifice of those members of the Armed Forces who died or were wounded in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, as well as all who served in or supported either of those operations: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) conveys its deepest sympathy and condolences to the families and friends of the members of United States and coalition forces who have been injured, wounded, or killed during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom;

(2) commends President George W. Bush, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, and United States Central Command commander General Tommy Franks, United States Army, for their planning and execution of enormously successful military campaigns in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom;

(3) expresses its highest commendation and most sincere appreciation to the members of the United States Armed Forces who participated in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, including the members of the organizational elements specified in section 2 of this resolution;

(4) commends the Department of Defense civilian employees and the defense contractor personnel whose skills made possible the equipping of the greatest Armed Force in the annals of modern military endeavor;

(5) calls upon communities across the Nation—

(A) to prepare appropriate homecoming ceremonies to honor and welcome home the members of the Armed Forces participating in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom and to recognize their contributions to United States homeland security and to the Global War on Terrorism; and

(B) to prepare appropriate ceremonies to commemorate with tributes and days of remembrance the service and sacrifice of those servicemembers killed or wounded during either of those operations;

(6) expresses the deep gratitude of the Nation to the 21 steadfast allies in Operation Enduring Freedom and to the 49 coalition members in Operation Iraqi Freedom, especially the United Kingdom, Australia, and Poland, whose forces, support, and contributions were invaluable and unforgettable; and

(7) recommitments the United States to ensuring the safety of the United States homeland, to preventing weapons of mass destruction from reaching the hands of terrorists, and to helping the people of Iraq and Afghanistan build free and vibrant democratic societies.

SEC. 2. (a) OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM.—The organizational elements of the Armed Forces referred to in paragraph (3) of the first section of this resolution members of which participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom are the following:

(1) From the Army—
(A) Army Forces Central Command—3rd United States Army.

(B) V Corps Command Element.
(C) 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized).
(D) 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).
(E) 82nd Airborne Division.
(F) 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized).
(G) Elements of the 1st Infantry Division, 10th Mountain Division, and 1st Armored Division.

(H) 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment.
(I) 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment.
(J) 173rd Airborne Brigade (Sep).
(K) 11th Aviation Group.
(2) From the Marine Corps—
(A) Marine Forces Central Command.
(B) 1st Marine Expeditionary Brigade.
(C) 1st Marine Division.
(D) 3rd Marine Air Wing.
(E) 1st Force Service Support Group.
(F) 2nd Force Service Support Group/Marine Logistics Command.

(G) 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade (Task Force Tarawa).

(H) The following Marine expeditionary units:

(i) 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit.
(ii) 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit.
(iii) 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit.
(3) From the Navy—
(A) Naval Forces Central Command—United States 5th Fleet.

(B) Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Force.

(C) Nimitz Carrier Strike Force.
(D) Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Force.
(E) Constellation Carrier Strike Force.
(F) Kitty Hawk Carrier Strike Force.
(G) Harry S Truman Carrier Strike Force.
(H) Amphibious Task Force East.
(I) Amphibious Task Force West.
(J) Nassau Amphibious Ready Group.
(K) Tarawa Amphibious Ready Group.
(L) Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group.
(M) Amphibious Group 3.

(N) The following maritime prepositioning squadrons:

(i) Maritime Prepositioning Squadron 1.
(ii) Maritime Prepositioning Squadron 2.
(iii) Maritime Prepositioning Squadron 4.
(4) From the Air Force—
(A) Air Forces Central Command—9th Air Force.

(B) The following air expeditionary task forces:

(i) 9th Air Expeditionary Task Force.
(ii) 16th Air Expeditionary Task Force.
(C) The following air expeditionary wings:
(i) 39th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(ii) 40th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(iii) 64th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(iv) 320th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(v) 321st Air Expeditionary Wing.
(vi) 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing.
(vii) 363rd Air Expeditionary Wing.
(viii) 376th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(ix) 379th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(x) 380th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(xi) 384th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(xii) 386th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(xiii) 401st Air Expeditionary Wing.
(xiv) 405th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(xv) 410th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(xvi) 484th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(xvii) 485th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(xviii) 486th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(xix) 487th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(D) The following air expeditionary groups:

(i) 387th Air Expeditionary Group.
(ii) 398th Air Expeditionary Group.
(iii) 407th Air Expeditionary Group.
(iv) 409th Air Expeditionary Group.
(v) 444th Air Expeditionary Group.
(vi) 447th Air Expeditionary Group.
(vii) 449th Air Expeditionary Group.
(viii) 457th Air Expeditionary Group.
(ix) 458th Air Expeditionary Group.
(x) 506th Air Expeditionary Group.

(E) The following expeditionary air support operations groups:

(i) 3rd Expeditionary Air Support Operations Group.
(ii) 4th Expeditionary Air Support Operations Group.
(iii) 18th Expeditionary Air Support Operations Group.

(F) 1st Expeditionary RED HORSE Group.
(G) 86th Contingency Response Group.
(H) 15th Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron.

(5) From the United States Special Operations Command—

(A) Special Operations Command Central.
(B) From the Army Special Operations Command—
(i) 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne).
(ii) 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne).
(iii) 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne).
(iv) 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment.

(v) 75th Ranger Regiment.
(vi) 350th Civil Affairs Command.
(vii) 352nd Civil Affairs Command.
(viii) 304th, 308th, and 358th Civil Affairs Brigades.

(C) From the Naval Special Warfare Command—

(i) Naval Special Warfare Group One.
(ii) Naval Special Warfare Group Three.
(D) From the Air Force Special Operations Command—

(i) 16th Special Operations Wing.
(ii) 193rd Special Operations Wing.
(iii) 919th Special Operations Wing.
(iv) 352nd Special Operations Group.
(v) 720th Special Operations Group.
(vi) 123rd Special Tactics Squadron.
(vii) 280th Command Control Squadron.

(6) From the Coast Guard—

(A) The following vessels:
(i) USCGC Boutwell.
(ii) USCGC Dallas.
(iii) USCGC Walnut.
(iv) USCGC Aquidneck.
(v) USCGC Adak.
(vi) USCGC Wrangell.
(vii) USCGC Baranof.
(viii) USCGC Bainbridge Island.
(ix) USCGC Grande Isle.
(x) USCGC Knight Island.
(xi) USCGC Pea Island.

(xii) USCGC Sapelo.

(B) Mobile Support Unit.

(C) The following port security units:

(i) Port Security Unit 313.
(ii) Port Security Unit 311.
(iii) Port Security Unit 309.
(iv) Port Security Unit 305.
(D) Law Enforcement Detachments (101, 202, 204, 205, 404, 406, 411).

(E) Atlantic Strike Team Detachment.

(F) Law Enforcement Attachment (augmenting PCs).

(G) The following Harbor Defense Command units:

(i) Harbor Defense Command Unit 114.
(ii) Harbor Defense Command Unit 206.

(b) OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM.—The organizational elements of the Armed Forces referred to in paragraph (3) of the first section of this resolution members of which participated in Operation Enduring Freedom are the following:

(1) From the Army—

(A) Army Forces Central Command.
(B) Combined Joint Task Force 180.
(C) 10th Mountain Division.
(D) 101st Airborne Division.
(E) 82nd Airborne Division.

(2) From the Marine Corps—

(A) Marine Forces Central Command.
(B) Commander Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa.

(C) Combined Joint Task Force 58.

(D) The following Marine expeditionary units:

(i) 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit.
(ii) 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit.
(iii) 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit.
(iv) 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit.
(v) 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit.
(E) Detachments, 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (Anti-Terrorism).

(3) From the Navy—

(A) Navy Forces Central Command—United States 5th Fleet.
(B) Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Force.

(C) Kitty Hawk Carrier Strike Force.
(D) Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Force.
(E) Enterprise Carrier Strike Force.
(F) Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Force.
(G) John C. Stennis Carrier Strike Force.
(H) John F. Kennedy Carrier Strike Force.
(I) George Washington Carrier Strike Force.

(J) Bonhomme Richard Amphibious Ready Group.

(K) Bataan Amphibious Ready Group.

(L) Peleliu Amphibious Ready Group.

(M) Wasp Amphibious Ready Group.

(4) From the Air Force—

(A) Air Forces Central Command—9th Air Force.

(B) The following air expeditionary task forces:

(i) 9th Air Expeditionary Task Force.
(ii) 13th Air Expeditionary Task Force.

(C) The following air expeditionary wings:

(i) 28th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(ii) 40th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(iii) 64th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(iv) 320th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(v) 321st Air Expeditionary Wing.
(vi) 322nd Air Expeditionary Wing.
(vii) 363rd Air Expeditionary Wing.
(viii) 366th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(ix) 376th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(x) 379th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(xi) 380th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(xii) 384th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(xiii) 386th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(xiv) 405th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(xv) 455th Air Expeditionary Wing.
(D) The following air expeditionary groups:

(i) 416th Air Expeditionary Group.
(ii) 438th Air Expeditionary Group.
(iii) 451st Air Expeditionary Group.
(E) 1st Expeditionary RED HORSE Group.

(5) From the United States Special Operations Command—

(A) Special Operations Command Central.

(B) From the Army Special Operations Command—

(i) 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne).

(ii) 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne).

(iii) 19th Special Forces Group (Airborne).

(iv) 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne).

(v) 2nd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne).

(vi) 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment.

(vii) 75th Ranger Regiment.

(viii) 350th Civil Affairs Command.

(ix) 354th, 360th, and 403rd Civil Affairs Brigades.

(x) 310th Psychological Operations Brigade.

(C) From the Naval Special Warfare Command—

(i) Naval Special Warfare Group One.

(ii) Naval Special Warfare Group Three.

(D) From the Air Force Special Operations Command—

(i) 16th Special Operations Wing.

(ii) 352nd Special Operations Group.

(iii) 193rd Special Operations Wing.

(iv) 919th Special Operations Wing.

(v) 720th Special Operations Group.

(vi) 123rd Special Tactics Squadron.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Con. Res. 177, the concurrent resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 177, a resolution commending the members of the Armed Forces and our allies, their armed forces and all those who were involved in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

As we stand here today, U.S. forces are deployed around the world engaged in the global war on terrorism. The first two campaigns in that war, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, proved our resolve in taking the fight to anyone, anywhere, who wishes to do us harm. The results showed that the United States military remains the most powerful and effective military in the history of mankind.

The after-action reports will show many reasons for our success. However, I believe that the most important factor is the simplest one: our people. The United States is blessed to have the most highly trained, equipped and motivated force in the world. It is through the dedication, creativity and ability of our young men and women in uniform that we were able to prevail. I, and all my colleagues, commend them for their service.

Through both these operations, our forces stood shoulder to shoulder with 21 allied nations in Afghanistan and 49 coalition members in Iraq. And I might mention specifically the 40,000-plus troops of Great Britain and the 2,000-plus troops from Australia and the 200 Special Operators from Poland, who aided us in this fight. And without the help of these allies who contributed so much, we would not have enjoyed the success that we have had at this point.

Neither could we have succeeded without the support of the civilian employees of the DOD, industry employees and leadership. Of course, we had lots of contractors working our systems, helping out in that operation and, of course, we had community organizations and employers. Very importantly, Mr. Speaker, employers who made their Guardsmen and Reservists available for these endeavors and those employers who accommodated their absence to go out and defend our country. Their support to the men and women in the field made these operations possible.

H. Con. Res. 177 commends the bravery, dedication and resolve of all those who contributed to the success of these two operations. In particular, however, I want to express the condolences and thanks of a grateful Nation and a grateful Congress to the families of those American service personnel who made the ultimate sacrifice during these operations. Nothing we do here today can adequately express our sorrow at the loss of these brave men and women. The sole consolation that we can offer is that it is our conviction that they did not die in vain. Our country and the entire world is safer and freer today because of their sacrifice. We honor their service and we mourn their loss.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, just one last point. I was in Iraq a couple of days ago. And in talking at our last visit in Kirkuk, in getting our briefings from the commander of the 4th Infantry Division, I asked him the inevitable question. That is, of the 26,000 folks you have in theater right now, how many incidents have you had of mistreatment of Iraqi citizens? Of course, these things happen when you have hundreds of thousands of people deployed, you now and again have incidents like that. But he looked surprised when I asked the question, and he answered not one, not one incident of mistreatment of Iraqi civilians by our military forces.

Mr. Speaker, that reflection on the professionalism and the goodness of our people during this occupation following the war is itself another reason for us to commend our troops and commend their service to our country.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

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

As a stalwart supporter of our troops and as cosponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 177, I am pleased to join my colleague and my friend, the chairman of the Committee on Armed Services, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), in support of this bill.

This resolution commends and expresses the Nation's sincere appreciation to the men and women in uniform and our allies who served and are serving in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. It also recognizes the outstanding contributions of the Department of Defense civilian employees and civil and defense contractors who have contributed tremendously to the success of these operations. And it urges communities across the country to honor and welcome home these brave and courageous patriots.

Today we have an all-volunteer force that proudly stands watch over the Nation's interests both here and abroad. Over 1.4 million active duty service members and an additional 875,000 citizen soldiers, National Guardsmen and Reservists, part-time volunteers, comprise the finest, best-trained fighting force the world has ever seen.

Let me say I am especially proud of the men and women in uniform from my home State of Missouri. Over 289,000 Guardsmen and Reservists have been activated since September 11, 2001, and nearly 220,000 have been called to active duty for Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. And as these fine young men and women return home, I urge my colleagues to visit an active duty base, Reserve center or National Guard armory and spend some time with these dedicated individuals to thank them and their families for their commitment and for their sacrifice. I promise you will never forget the experience of meeting these fine men and women. I know my visits to bases in Missouri always make a lasting impression on me.

When we send our fathers and our mothers and our sons and daughters, sisters and brothers, aunts, uncles, cousins in defense of this Nation, we are reminded that the price of freedom is not free.

I would also like to commend our Nation's civil servants and contractors who provide support to our service members. Americans may be surprised to learn that there are also civil service and civilian contractors serving overseas in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Our Nation also calls upon its dedicated and committed civil service personnel and contractors to support those serving in a combat zone. Their contributions were also important to the success of these operations, and they too deserve our recognition and our respect for their service to our Nation's security.

While those in uniform volunteer to make these sacrifices, their families are the ones that must shoulder these burdens as well. Anxiety, frustration,

sadness, anger, pride, happiness, satisfaction, understanding, and reassurance are all feelings that military families must face during the months of separation. Hundreds of babies have been born while a parent was deployed to Afghanistan or to Iraq. Tragically, some will never know their parent who died while serving.

Yet, time continues on, missed birthdays, proms, graduations, holidays; the loss of a loved one is normal hardship that military families endure. Military families endure much hardship and sacrifice, and to that end, they too serve.

Reservists and National Guardsmen and their families often face similar problems when called to active duty. But Reservists and National guardsmen are also dependent on support from their employer. Thousands of employers across the country have gone the extra step and provided additional support in a number of ways. That includes paying the difference between civilian pay and military pay when an employee is activated, and continuing health care coverage for families that are left behind. Without the support of our Nation's employers, Reservists and National Guardsmen would not be able to volunteer to defend this Nation.

I believe that it is of paramount importance to support the troops, the men and women in uniform who are literally putting their lives on the line for our country. More than 200 service members have died since the global war on terrorism began, and over 700 have been wounded or injured, and eight were held as prisoners of war. These individuals and their families have sacrificed for our freedom, and our thoughts and our prayers are truly with them. The Nation will not forget the price they paid to defend our country and the freedoms we all enjoy.

While there are no words that can adequately express the Nation's appreciation for their sacrifice, our sympathies and our prayers go out to these families.

It does not take too many hours of watching our troops in action on television to know that they are demonstrating acts of personal sacrifice and heroism on a daily basis. We have an obligation to let them know that we appreciate and admire their contribution to our national security.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. MCINNIS).

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) for sponsoring this resolution. I thank the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) for also co-sponsoring it.

□ 1315

This resolution, I think, covers the ground of a way for us to say thanks to those people who answered the call to arms.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). The gentleman will suspend.

Will the conversations in the gallery please terminate.

The gentleman may proceed.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious resolution, and I think it demands appropriate attention. Every generation is concerned about the generation behind them, will they answer to the call of arms, will they be able to protect this country, will they have this feeling of patriotism; and this resolution is going to pass unanimously because we can all say with a great deal of pride that generation did rise, they were prepared and they have responded and they have delivered.

I am so proud of those young men and women who did rise and were willing to serve this country and unfortunately in some cases were killed in action defending the principles and the people of this country.

As the chairman has pointed out, there is a lot of thanks not only to the people who are on the front line of combat but for the families across this country that support and believed in the American flag and the symbolism and the pride of this Nation and the history of this Nation, and also a special thanks as my colleague pointed out and as the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) has pointed out, thanks to all the civilian employees and all the defense employees and the people in the armed services that were not on the front line, but also participated in this nationwide effort and a big thanks to our communities. I know in Colorado, where I come from, all the small towns, it is a big parade. They are welcoming these people back, those brave men and women that have come home. They are coming home with open arms.

This is a Nation that strongly supports its military. This is a Nation that sends a message out to the rest of the world, and that is, when the call comes, this Nation will respond. This Nation has principles, and it is willing to defend those principles. It has friends, and it is willing to defend those friends; and it will defend freedom.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), the chairman; and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), the ranking member, for bringing this important resolution to the floor today. Like all Members, I will strongly support this resolution; but let none of us forget, while the battle of Baghdad has been won, the peace that all of us hope for in Iraq is yet to be achieved and our brave men and women in uniform and our allies are still in harm's way.

Today, The Washington Post reports that another American soldier died on Tuesday after being attacked by a small arms fire and rocket-propelled grenade at an Army checkpoint 50 miles north of Baghdad. May God bless his soul and provide comfort to his family. Our grateful Nation will forever be indebted to his service and sacrifice, as it is to the service and sacrifice of those comrades mentioned by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) who also lost their lives and were injured in the defense of freedom.

Mr. Speaker, having witnessed Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq, there can be little doubt that the United States of America has the finest, best-led, best-equipped and best-educated fighting force in the history of the world. Our military is smarter, faster, and more lethal than it was 12 years ago during Desert Storm, and it was very good then. It took 250,000 troops to topple Saddam Hussein and liberate the Iraqi people. Twelve years ago, it took 500,000 troops to oust him from Kuwait. About 90 percent of our bombs and missiles were precision-guided in Operation Iraqi Freedom. In Desert Storm, that figure was 10 percent.

I want to congratulate the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER); I want to congratulate the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) and all the members of the Committee on Armed Services for giving our troops the tools to become better, better equipped, better able to defend freedom and protect themselves.

It is evident, therefore, that assertions regarding the American military being in decline, hollowed out, are not ready, are and always were patently wrong. Moreover, only an uninformed person, I think, would deny that our Commander in Chief led a fighting force which was bequeathed to him by his predecessor President Clinton and bequeathed to him by his predecessor George Bush and also by President Reagan.

As Vice President CHENEY remarked at the Air Force Academy 2 years ago, "No President ever deploys the force he builds. There is nothing quick about preparation." That is a message that we must always remain ready, that we must always support the strength of our military and the safety of our personnel.

As the Taliban or the Hussein regime could attest, the myth of a hollowed-out American military is nothing more than that, a myth. I rise with my colleagues to thank, to support and commend our brave men and women in the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Readiness.

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr.

HUNTER) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) for bringing this to us today.

After 9/11, the President stood right up there, and he said we will go anywhere we have to go to get people who would perpetrate the kind of action that occurred on September 11. We will go get him, and he meant what he said; and that is what we have been in the process of doing, and Iraq was part of that pattern. They were a threat to us, but they were a threat to the world; and we know they had weapons of mass destruction. What they have done with them we are not quite sure at this point, but we know they had those; and we know they had a hatred for the United States and would have had no compunction about giving or selling those weapons to people who would actually use them against the United States or the free world.

What we saw in 21 days of war and the aftermath that has come since then and the Afghanistan activity before that was the ultimate in professionalism and training and equipment and planning; and I think we can all be very proud of that. We do not want war, but we will defend ourselves wherever we have to go to do that. We have shown that we have the capability to get the job done.

We also have seen a tremendous dedication among these young troops that we have deployed. We are so proud of them and all the troops that we have over there that are willing to uproot their lives and leave their families and risk their lives in the pursuit of freedom.

I spend a lot of time, as the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) do, with the troops; and I have never seen a better attitude than they have today. They feel like they are doing something that is meaningful for world peace.

Our prayers and our support, of course, go to the families that have lost loved ones. We always hate that. We do not want to lose one single person, but we know in war we do lose some people and we are sorry for that, and we want to extend our appreciation to them for giving their loved ones to the cause.

So our thanks go to all of the coalition forces. What we are doing today is a small way to say thanks from a grateful Nation.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. HARMAN), who is one of the original cosponsors of this legislation together with the gentleman from California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM).

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time, and I commend him for his leadership on this issue and so many others.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, which honors our troops and calls on communities all across the Nation to warmly welcome

home the service women and men serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Such an expression is critically important. Many of us who grew up during the Vietnam War are haunted by memories of the treatment afforded returning veterans of that conflict. Painted by an unpopular policy, many who risked their lives for their country and suffered physical and emotional wounds were ignored and their courage and sacrifice dishonored and ridiculed. We must not let that happen again.

The resolution before us, like the one introduced earlier by the gentleman from California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM) and me, recognizes the service of more than 380,000 members of the United States Armed Forces, comprised of active component forces, National Guard and Reserve personnel, who were deployed thousands of miles from home as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Thirty-five service members from the Los Angeles Air Force base located in my district were sent to the Persian Gulf. Many more were local Guard and Reserve members who were required to take indefinite leave from places of employment. All left loved ones behind and faced danger. And as my colleagues have heard, our Armed Forces suffered a number of casualties, including deaths, injuries and incarceration as prisoners of war.

One of the first casualties of Operation Iraqi Freedom was Marine Corps Lance Corporal Jose Gutierrez, who came from his native Guatemala to my district in California, lived with a foster family before joining the Marines to "pay back a little of what he'd gotten from the U.S." Our condolences go out to his family and all families who lost loved ones during war.

Mr. Speaker, the homecomings have already begun. The city of Torrance, California, dedicated its May 17 Armed Forces Day parade to the returning servicemembers. Other cities have scheduled 4th of July festivities, and families throughout my district are planning neighborhood block parties and other celebrations to welcome home sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, fathers, and mothers.

I commend the Committee on Armed Services, its chair and ranking member especially, for bringing this resolution to the floor today. We must never forget the courage and selfless sacrifice of the women and men in our Armed Forces. We must always undertake efforts to protect their safety as they continue to be deployed in Iraq, Afghanistan, Korea, and other theaters in which they will continue to face danger; and we must afford them a warm welcome home.

These are important steps. This resolution does this. Again, I commend its passage and hope our vote will be unanimous.

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

I want to thank the gentlewoman and assure her that her and the gen-

tleman from California's (Mr. CUNNINGHAM) resolution is very much embodied in what the committee produced and thank her for her great efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT).

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, in a former life I worked for the military for 18 years in a number of capacities. During that time, I gained an enormous respect for our military personnel.

For the last 11 years since coming to the Congress, I have had the privilege and the honor of serving on the Committee on Armed Services where I gained even more respect for our military personnel.

I would have thought that this long association with the military would have prepared me for an event of a couple of years ago, but it really did not. This event was a paralyzed veterans reception in Cannon Caucus, and I knew what I was going to see when I went there, but I really was not prepared for the emotional response that I had.

I went to that big conference room, and there were many, many service personnel on crutches and in wheelchairs. It finally struck me that they were paralyzed, and they were there so that I could continue to live in this great free country, I and 280 million other Americans; and then I thought of those that were not so lucky, that were filling graves in foreign countries or in this country who, in Abraham Lincoln's words, gave that last full measure of devotion for their country.

Less than one person in a hundred serves in our military, but to this very small percent of our population this grateful Nation owes an enormous debt. I thank my colleagues for bringing this resolution to the floor today.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT).

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, how very timely is the old warning of Abraham Lincoln about those "trusting to escape [the] scrutiny [of war] by fixing the public gaze upon the exceeding brightness of military glory." Our troops deserve our fullest support for their tremendous sacrifices, and they certainly have mine. Let us truly honor American sons and daughters in uniform, not with mere words, but with adequate health care and a thriving economy, not an Everest of public debt for their children. Let our nation-building begin here at home with adequate schools, jobs, and opportunity.

What this Administration calls a "coalition" is, in fact, the U.S., the UK, and hefty advertising. No war in American history has been better marketed.

□ 1330

The very weakness of our new "first strike," "security through attack" policy and the repeated failure to connect Iraq with the outrage of 9/11 necessitates resolutions like this that must

borrow strength from the bold courage of our troops. Surely the thousands combing Iraq today for weapons of mass destruction will find at least a trace, but an honest assessment requires asking whether this second-rate tyrant, unable to effectively defend himself, really ever had the capability to endanger our families.

Americans continue to do most of the dying and will do almost all of the paying for this indefinite engagement. Let us guard against it becoming a war without end. With unlimited dollars, we have mastered so well the terrible technology of death, but true security demands wisdom as well as strength.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute to say to my colleague who just spoke, and I would like to get his attention, because when the gentleman gets up on these resolutions and implies that there is somehow a political agenda behind them, it tends, I think, to do a disservice to the resolutions.

This resolution came about because lots of Members, like the gentlewoman from the party of the gentleman who just spoke, have asked to put resolutions forward commending our troops and recognizing their sacrifice. The Committee on Armed Services, seeing all these resolutions being put out, with Members on the Democrat and Republican side wanting to commend this unit or that unit coming back to their country, we took all of those and we looked at them and we decided to do one large resolution that commended everyone in these operations. And we have, literally, at the end of this resolution, we have named every single American unit that participated in the operation.

There is no political agenda here. This is a consolidating of all of the efforts and the input from Members of this body, Democrat and Republican, some of them for the war, presumably some against the war, who wanted to commend the people who participated in it. It is that and it is nothing more. And by implying a political agenda, the gentleman, in fact, injects a political agenda into the debate.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to my friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM), who is so closely associated with that great aircraft carrier which steamed into San Diego a couple of days ago at the end of its career, the Constellation, America's Navy, along with Willy Driscoll from the Vietnam War.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, a few weeks back, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. HARMAN) came to me with an idea for this resolution. It was not my idea, Mr. Speaker; I am just flying wing on the gentlewoman from California at this time, and I thank her for her foresight in bringing this forward.

Many of the words that the gentlewoman and myself placed in it are supported both by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) and the gen-

tleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) in this resolution, and I thank them both.

The gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) spent his life supporting our troops, and what better person to bring a resolution. His father was a Marine, he was a combat veteran in Vietnam, and his young son is in the United States Marine Corps.

And, Mr. Speaker, I owe great homage to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON). I served on the authorization committee and learned to love and support him. When we were in the minority at one time, I was just hotter than a hatter because the majority was stopping me from an amendment, and I was about ready to go to battle stations. The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) pulled me aside and he sat me there in that third row chair and started talking to me about his heritage as a descendant of Daniel Boone. After 30 minutes of speaking and calming me down, he said, "Duke, are you settled down now?" It was his way of saying "Ease up, Duke," and I will never forget that.

But many of us have tears in the well. It is difficult to send men and women to combat. And the most difficult thing is that we may have to do it again; that as long as we have an al-Qaeda, a Mujahedin, a Hamas, a Hezbollah, and people that want to hurt not only us overseas but even in our own homeland, it is a difficult choice.

I know that the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) flew out to the U.S.S. Constellation, and then I heard the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) the other day say that he also flew out to the carrier that pulled into the East Coast, and the troops really appreciate that.

I know there was a lot of heyday made when the President flew out to a carrier, but I was with Major Dan "Knuckles" Shipley, this weekend when he flew in off the Connie. And he said, "Duke, tell the President that we love him. We know that he supports us." Many of us criticized President Clinton at times, and sometimes I think we were wrong. I never did it after we got into conflict. But you need to stand behind the President, especially at a time of war, whether it is Bill Clinton or President George W. Bush.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) and the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) for this resolution.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to first say that this resolution has no political agenda. We are here merely to say "thank you."

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL).

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

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I join in the praise of the chairman, the gen-

tleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) and my dear friend, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) in bringing this to the floor. I am one of the politicians that do not find anything wrong with politics. And if it is politically right to laud the efforts of our men and women overseas that are coming home, then no matter how it is described, I want to be among those that would do it.

These young men and women are dedicated, and we have to make certain that we give them a little more than praise and a parade. Because I recall in 1952, when I came home from Korea, those medals did not get me a job; it was people reaching out, trying to help me to put my life together. And so I think this is what we have to do.

My friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM), says how difficult it is to send our young people into harm's way and that we may have to consider doing this more in the future. Well, I hope not, because if we take a good look at those that will be coming home, we will be taking a harder look at those that we sent.

Most of my colleagues know that I really truly believe that what is in the best interest of the United States of America is that we consider draft legislation, where everyone would be exposed to defending this great Republic, rather than seeing who will be coming home, and worse still who will not be coming home, those that come from our inner cities, our rural areas, and those that we are now trying to further recruit.

While patriotism is up in this House of Representatives, recruitment is not up. We are now giving mandatory extensions to those people who have volunteered, and we are bringing out the Reservists. Sure, they are dedicated, but we are asking them to serve two and three times a year, or a 2-year period, and of course, our National Guard are being called. So as we find expanded need for military, we ought to expand the pool from which they come.

So what I am saying is that I want to join in the spirit of this resolution. I will be there at the parades, I am there at the armories. But for God's sake, let us have something of substance in the legislation.

I know that most of the Members are not aware that that the tax bill that we passed on this floor excluded benefits for members of the military for extended child credits for those people that have incomes of \$26,000 or less. Let me share with my colleagues the Catch 22 that our members of the Armed Forces are in.

One, if they were under \$26,000, and we know most of them are, they were cut out of the bill. They were dropped out of the bill, and the leadership said they may not come back. For those people who served in combat and had a larger amount of their income to be tax exclusive, they would get over \$26,000 and once again lose the tax credit.

Let us pay tribute, but let us have some substance and benefits for our beloved veterans.

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

It is good to hear Members such as our friend from New York (Mr. RANGEL), the gentleman from California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM), the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER), all veterans, speaking so well today for the young men and young women in the armed services. We appreciate it and their words so very, very much.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS).

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, while I am pleased we are here to applaud our Nation's businesses and business owners for the support they have provided our troops and our military families, I am disappointed that in this resolution Congress is simply voicing thanks. We had an opportunity to do something truly meaningful when we considered the Defense authorization legislation 2 weeks ago. Rather than doing something to help our Reservists and National Guardsmen and -women, this resolution simply expresses empty thanks.

According to a survey conducted by the Pentagon, four in ten members of the Reserves or National Guard suffer a loss of salary when they are activated. For instance, Russell Wright, a father of two and a sergeant in the Marine Reserves, was activated for a year and, as a result, will lose about 50 percent of his civilian salary.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure my colleagues will agree that this is a deplorable comment on how our country treats its Reserves and National Guardsmen. Instead of merely praising the Nation's businesses for their support of our troops, we should be helping our activated men and women.

An amendment offered by my good friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BELL), and myself to require the Federal Government to pay its employees the difference between their civilian and military salaries passed unanimously by voice vote in a recent Committee on Government Reform meeting. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, that amendment was excluded from consideration of the Defense authorization bill that we passed 2 weeks ago.

It is a grave disappointment to me that instead of making up the salary loss suffered by numerous Federal employees who are also Reservists, we are only offering a meaningless tribute to our Nation's businesses for doing what we in Congress are not willing to do.

Mr. Speaker, because I support House Resolution 201, I wanted to take a moment to commend the nearly 200 conscientious businesses that have taken the initiative to pay their employees the difference between their military and civilian salaries. These companies include the Oracle Corporation, located in my own congressional district.

Mr. Speaker, when my colleagues come down to vote on this resolution, I

want them to think about the families which are suffering as a result of the pay gap, and I urge all of my colleagues to join me in rectifying this outrageous problem.

[From USA Today, May 15, 2003]

RESERVISTS UNDER ECONOMIC FIRE

(By Kathy Kiely)

WASHINGTON.—Drastic pay cuts. Bankruptcy. Foreclosed homes. They aren't exactly the kind of challenges that members of America's military reserves signed up for when they volunteered to serve their country.

But for many, the biggest threat to the home front isn't Saddam Hussein or Osama bin Laden. It's the bill collector.

Four in 10 members of the National Guard or reserves lose money when they leave their civilian jobs for active duty, according to a Pentagon survey taken in 2000. Of 1.2 million members, 223,000 are on active duty around the world.

Concern is growing in Congress, and several lawmakers in both parties have introduced legislation to ease it.

Janet Wright says she "sat down and cried" when she realized how little money she and her children, Adelia, 5, and Carolyn, 2, would have to live on when her husband was sent to the Middle East. In his civilian job with an environmental cleanup company, Russell Wright makes \$60,000 a year—twice what he'll be paid as a sergeant in the Marine Forces Reserve. Back in Hammond, LA., his wife, who doesn't have a paying job, is pouring the kids more water and less milk. She is trying to accelerate Carolyn's potty training schedule to save on diapers.

She doesn't know how long she'll have to pinch pennies. Like his fellow reservists, Russell Wright has been called up for one year. He could be sent home sooner, or the military could exercise its option to extend his tour of duty for a second year. Even so, Janet Wright considers her family lucky: She can still pay the mortgage, and the children's pediatrician accepts Tricare, the military health plan.

Ray Korizon, a 23-year veteran with the Air Force Reserve and an employee of the Federal Aviation Administration, says his income will also be cut in half if his unit ships out. Korizon, who lives in Schaumburg, Ill., knows the financial costs of doing his patriotic duty from bitter experience. Before the Persian Gulf War in 1991, he owned a Chicago construction company with 26 employees. He was sent overseas for six months and lost the business.

Still, he never considered leaving the reserve. Korizon says he enjoys the work and the camaraderie. But he worries about whether his two kids can continue to see the same doctor when he shifts to military health coverage. "It's hard to go out and do the job you want to do when you're worried about things back home" he says.

Once regarded as "weekend warriors," they have become an integral part of U.S. battle plans. Call-ups have been longer and more frequent.

"The last time you saw this type of mobilization activity was during World War II," says Maj. Charles Kohler of the Maryland National Guard. Of the Maryland Guard's 8,000 members, 3,500 are on active duty. Kohler knows several who are in serious financial trouble. One had to file for bankruptcy after a yearlong deployment, during which his take-home pay fell by two-thirds.

Stories like that are the result of a shift in military policy. Since the end of the Cold War, the ranks of the full-time military have been reduced by one-third. The Pentagon has increasingly relied on the nation's part-time

soldiers. More than 525,000 members of the Guard and reserves have been mobilized in the 12 years since the Persian Gulf War. For the previous 36 years, the figure was 199,877.

The end of fighting in Iraq isn't likely to lessen the pressure on the Guard and reserves. They'll stay on with the regular military in a peacekeeping role. Nobody knows how long, but in Bosnia, Guard members and reservists are on duty seven years after the mission began.

Korizon, who maintains avionics systems on C-130 cargo planes, has been told his Milwaukee-based reserve unit may be called up for humanitarian missions.

Some of the specialists who are in the greatest demand—physicians and experts in biological and chemical agents—command six-figure salaries in civilian life. The average pay for a midlevel officer is \$50,000 to \$55,000.

"They were prepared to be called up. They were prepared to serve their country," Sen. BARBARA MIKULSKI, D-MD, says. "They were not prepared to be part of a regular force and be away from home 200 to 300 days a year."

Concerns are growing on Capitol Hill. As the nation's reliance on the Guard and reserves has increased, "funding for training and benefits simply have not kept up," says Republican Sen. SAXBY CHAMBLISS of Georgia, a member of the Armed Services Committee.

The General Accounting Office, Congress' auditing arm, is studying pay and benefits for Guard members and reservists. A report is due in September. Meanwhile, members of Congress are pushing several bills to ease the burden:

Closing the pay gap.—Some employers make up the difference in salary for reservists on active duty. But many, including the federal government, do not. A bill sponsored by Democratic Sens. MIKULSKI, DICK DURBIN of Illinois and MARY LANDRIEU of Louisiana would require the federal government to make up lost pay. LANDRIEU is doing that for one legislative aide who has been called up for active duty.

She has also introduced a bill to give private employers a 50% tax credit if they subsidize reservists' salaries.

Closing the health gap.—Once on active duty, reservists, Guard members and their families are covered by Tricare.

But for the 75% of reserve and Guard families living more than 50 miles from military treatment facilities, finding physicians who participate in Tricare can be difficult. A measure sponsored by Sen. MIKE DEWINE, R-Ohio, would give reservists and Guard members the option of making Tricare their regular insurer or having the federal government pay premiums for their civilian health insurance while they are on active duty. Several senior Democratic Senators, including Minority Leader TOM DASCHLE and EDWARD KENNEDY of Massachusetts, support the idea.

Keeping creditors at bay.—The Soldiers and Sailors Relief Act caps interest rates on mortgages, car payments and other debts owned by military personnel at 6% while they are on active duty. But Sen. LINDSEY GRAHAM, a South Carolina Republican who is the Senate's only reservist, says the act doesn't apply to debts that are held in the name of a spouse who is not a member of the military. He plans to introduce legislation to cover spouses.

Despite a groundswell of support for troops, none of the bills is assured of passage. There's concern among some administration officials about the cost of some of the proposals. In addition, some at the Pentagon think morale would be hurt if some reservists end up with higher incomes than their counterparts in the regular ranks.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, how much time do we have left?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). The gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) has 6½ minutes remaining, and the time of the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) has expired.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I will be happy to yield some time to my colleague in a minute.

But I want to say to the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), before he leaves the floor, that he mentioned this important issue, that I know he had taken up with me and he feels is very important, to try to give what I think we could call pay parity to folks in the Guard and the Reserve. I think there is merit in his proposal. But I did want to mention that we do some meaningful things in this Defense bill in which we marked up this particular resolution.

□ 1345

Mr. Speaker, it was not just commendations that we gave our troops. We also marked up a 4.1 percent pay raise, decreased the out-of-pocket expenses for our folks, increased the amount of money for family housing, and we did a number of things that will accrue to the benefit of our troops, both active Guard and Reserve.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I thought one thing that I might do at this point is yield to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) to close, and then I wanted to read the units that participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom and put on the record the folks who participated in these operations.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), who is my partner on the Committee on Armed Services who has done so much great work.

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

Mr. Speaker, a great Roman orator once said that gratitude is the greatest of all virtues, and that is what this resolution does; no more, no less. It expresses gratitude, appreciation and thankfulness to those young men and women in uniform, to those civilian employees who back them up, as well as civilian contractors. It is our way of saying thank you from the Congress of the United States. They are the pride of our country, and we wish to express our deep and sincere appreciation to them through this means.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, let me just conclude this resolution by reciting the units that participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom. From the Army: Army Forces Central Command—3rd United States Army; V Corps Command Element; 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized); 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault); 82nd Airborne Division; 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized); Elements of the 1st Infantry Division; 10th Mountain Division, and 1st Armored

Division; 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment; 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment; 173rd Airborne Brigade (Sep); 11th Aviation Group.

From the Marine Corps: Marine Forces Central Command; 1st Marine Expeditionary Brigade; 1st Marine Division; 3rd Marine Air Wing; 1st Force Service Support Group; 2nd Force Service Support Group/Marine Logistics Command; 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade (Task Force Tarawa); 15th, 24th, and 26th Marine Expeditionary Units.

From the Navy: Naval Forces Central Command—United States 5th Fleet; Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Force; Nimitz Carrier Strike Force; Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Force; Constellation Carrier Strike Force; Kitty Hawk Carrier Strike Force; Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Force; Amphibious Task Force East; Amphibious Task Force West; Nassau Amphibious Ready Group; Tarawa Amphibious Ready Group; Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group; Amphibious Group 3; Maritime Prepositioning Squadrons 1, 2, and 4.

From the Air Force: Air Forces Central Command—9th Air Force; 9th Air Expeditionary Task Force; 16th Air Expeditionary Task Force; and the following air expeditionary wings: 39th, 40th, 64th, 320th, 321st, 332nd, 363rd, 376th, 379th, 380th, 384th, 386th, 401st, 405th, 410th, 484th, 485th, 486th, and 487th Air Expeditionary Wing. And the following Air Expeditionary groups: 387th, 398th, 407th, 409th, 444th, 447th, 449th, 457th, 449th, 457th, 458th, and 506th.

The following Expeditionary Air Support Operations Groups: 3rd, 4th, 18th, 1st Expeditionary RED HORSE Group, the 86th Contingency Response Group, 15th Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron.

From the United States Special Operations Command: Special Operations Command Central; 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne); 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne); 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne); 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment; 75th Ranger Regiment; 352nd Civil Affairs Command; 350th Civil Affairs Command; 304th, 308th, and 358th Civil Affairs Brigades.

From the Naval Special Warfare Command: Naval Special Warfare Group One; Naval Special Warfare Group Three.

From the Air Force Special Operations Command: 16th Special Operations Wing; 919th Special Operations Wing; 193rd Special Operations Wing; 720th Special Operations Group; 352nd Special Operations Group; 123rd Special Tactics Squadron; 280th Command Control Squadron.

From the Coast Guard: U.S. Coast Guard Cutters Boutwell, Dallas, Walnut, Aquidneck, Adak, Wrangell, Baranof, Bainbridge Island, Grande Isle, Knight Island, Pea Island, and Sapelo.

The following port security units: Port Security Units 313, 311, 309, 305.

Law Enforcement Detachments 101, 202, 204, 205, 404, 406, and 411; Atlantic Strike Team Detachment; Law Enforcement Attachment; Harbor Defense Command Units 114 and 206.

Operation Enduring Freedom—

From the Army: Army Forces Central Command, Combined Joint Task Force 180; 10th Mountain Division; 101st Airborne Division; and 82d Airborne Division.

From the Marine Corps: Marine Forces Central Command; Commander Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa; Combined Joint Task Force 58; and the following Marine Expeditionary Units: 11th, 13th, 15th, 22nd, 26th.

Detachments: 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade.

From the Navy: Navy Forces Central Command—U.S. 5th Fleet; Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Force; Kitty Hawk Carrier Strike Force; Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Force; Enterprise Carrier Strike Force; Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Force; John C. Stennis Carrier Strike Force; John F. Kennedy Carrier Strike Force; George Washington Carrier Strike Force; Bonhomme Richard Amphibious Ready Group; Bataan Amphibious Ready Group; Peleliu Amphibious Ready Group; Wasp Amphibious Ready Group.

From the Air Force: Air Forces Central Command—9th Air Force. The following Air Expeditionary task forces: the 9th and the 13th. The following Air Expeditionary Wings: 28th, 40th, 64th, 320th, 321st, 322nd, 363rd, 366th, 376th, 379th, 380th, 384th, 386th, 405th, and the 455th.

The following Air Expeditionary Groups: 416th, 438th, 451st, the First Expeditionary RED HORSE Group.

From the United States Special Operations Command: 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne); 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne); 19th Special Forces Group (Airborne); 20th Special Forces Group (Airborne); 2nd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne); 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment; 75th Ranger Regiment; 350th Civil Affairs Command; 354th, 360th, and 403rd Civil Affairs Brigades; 310th Psychological Operations Brigade.

From the Naval Special Warfare Command: Group 1 and Naval Special Warfare Group Three; 16th Special Operations Wing; 352nd Special Operations Group; 919th Special Operations Wing; 193rd Special Operations Wing; 720th Special Operations Group; and 123rd Special Tactics Squadron.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing us to, in the words of the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY), give this thanks from a grateful Nation to the people who carried freedom to very difficult and remote parts of the world in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. I thank the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) for his participation.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, today I choose to vote present on H. Con. Res. 177. I support our brave soldiers who served or are currently serving in the war against terrorism.

Whether they are in Iraq, In Afghanistan, or here at home, I praise our courageous men and women for risking their lives to defend our country and our freedom. However, I believe that the war on Iraq was unnecessary. I cannot vote in favor of a resolution that commends the President for putting American soldiers' lives in harm's way because of bad policy and misguided decision making.

I will continue to support efforts that support our troops, their families, and our veterans. Each one of them is an American hero and each one of them makes me proud to be an American.

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, Iowans should be proud of the tremendous accomplishments of our dedicated troops over the last couple of years, particularly those serving with Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. These men and women have risked their lives and made sacrifices to keep their country safe and secure.

We should thank each and every one of them, and welcome them home with honor.

Our thanks must also extend to the loved ones of those who serve. Family members do their best to carry on with their lives while they wait, worry, and sometimes watch, what their son, daughter, wife, husband, father or mother is facing on the other side of the world. Some families have been changed forever by tragic loss. Steve and Marilyn Korthaus of Davenport, Iowa will always miss their son Bradley, a Marine sergeant who died bravely in Iraq in March. They will also be forever proud of him. May they find comfort in knowing he died with honor, and may all of us join them in appreciating the sacrifice he made in the name of freedom.

While our men and women in uniform have accomplished so much in Iraq and in the overall war on terror, important work remains. They may not be in front of us 24 hours a day on television, but it is vital to remember and support those troops still deployed to the Persian Gulf and other areas around the world.

The Ohnesorge family of Dubuque, Iowa is keenly aware that many of our troops remain in danger. Their son, Army Specialist Abraham Ohnesorge, was seriously injured just last week by a rocket-propelled grenade in Iraq.

As members of Congress, we can show our gratitude to Brad, Abraham and the thousands of other troops serving us by providing whatever resources are necessary to defend our nation and win the continuing war against terrorism. It is an unquestioned priority for Iowans and for all Americans. Our armed forces need the newest and best tools available to meet the challenges they face. We should also provide fair and equitable pay, housing and tax policies for members of the military. As House Budget Committee chairman, I take each of these responsibilities very seriously.

The excellent work accomplished in support of both Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom by the employees of the Rock Island Arsenal also deserves our gratitude. These dedicated workers rose to the challenge.

Many members of military reserve units and the National Guard were called from the civilian world. The employers and coworkers who support their service should also be commended.

America is blessed to have such well-trained individuals of excellence who are will-

ing to serve not only our interests, but the interests of the entire world. May we see a day when all our troops deployed in the far reaches of the world are home safely with the people they love.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the members of our armed forces, who serve our country in the most difficult of circumstances. They endure terrible hardships in the course of their service: they are shipped thousands of miles across the globe for everything from border control duty to combat duty, enduring terribly long separations from their families and loved ones.

I believe it is appropriate for Congress to recognize and commend this service to our country and I join with my colleagues to do so. I am concerned, however, that legislation like H. Con. Res. 177 seeks to use our support for the troops to advance a very political and controversial message. In addition to expressing sympathy and condolences to the families of those who have lost their lives in service to our country, for example, this legislation endorses the kind of open-ended occupation and nation-building that causes me great concern. It "recommits" the United States to "helping the people of Iraq and Afghanistan build free and vibrant democratic societies." What this means is hundreds of thousands of American troops remaining in Iraq and Afghanistan for years to come, engaged in nation-building activities that the military is neither trained nor suited for. It also means tens and perhaps hundreds of billions of American tax dollars being shipped abroad at a time when our national debt is reaching unprecedented levels.

The legislation inaccurately links our military action against Afghanistan, whose government was in partnership with Al-Qaeda, with our recent attack on Iraq, claiming that these were two similar campaigns in the war on terror. In fact, some of us are more concerned that the policy of pre-emptive military action, such as was the case in Iraq, will actually increase the likelihood of terrorist attacks against the United States—a phenomenon already predicted by the CIA.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that some would politicize an issue like this. If we are to commend our troops let us commend our troops. We should not be forced to endorse the enormously expensive and counter-productive practice of nation-building and pre-emptive military strikes to do so.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support for H. Con. Res. 177, a resolution commending the members of the United States armed forces for their brave and successful actions against the Taliban in Afghanistan and the forces of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. I support this bill because I believe it is important for the U.S. Congress to express its thanks to the tireless men and women of our armed forces. I also believe Congress has an absolute duty to demand that outstanding questions be answered by the Administration about the evidence used to justify a war in Iraq that put our troops in great danger.

The valiant men and women of the U.S. armed forces left their homes and families to take up arms against two tyrannical regimes. Some members of the Reserves were activated for the war and took time away from their jobs—often taking significant cuts in their pay—to contribute to this endeavor. These men and women were given the call to duty, met it confidently, and returned as victors.

Although the United States was victorious in Iraq, our job is far from over. Indeed, some members of our military remain in Iraq, attempting to establish law and order and a true peace. I believe the Administration owes it to the brave men and women of our military and to the American people to answer difficult questions about its justifications for war.

Leading up to the Iraq war, President Bush, Vice President DICK CHENEY, and Secretary of State Colin Powell repeatedly stated that Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction and ties to Al Qaeda posed a direct threat to American national security.

On March 16, 2003, Vice President CHENEY unambiguously told Meet the Press that Iraq had "reconstituted nuclear weapons." Despite American control of Iraq, the United States has found no evidence of an Iraqi nuclear program. Even worse, some of the intelligence cited by the Administration about Iraq's nuclear program has turned out to be fraudulent.

Between January and March 2003, both President Bush and Secretary Powell linked Iraq to Al Qaeda. In the State of the Union, the President warned that Iraq was harboring members of Al Qaeda. At the United Nations, Powell claimed that Iraq was sheltering Al Qaeda lieutenant Abu Musab Zarqawi, proving a "sinister nexus between Iraq and the Al Qaeda terrorist network." No proof has been produced to verify either of these statements.

The lynchpin of the Administration's justification for war in Iraq was the presence of biological and chemical weapons of mass destruction. The President, Vice President CHENEY and Secretary Powell all repeatedly spoke of Hussein's stockpile of biological and chemical munitions. Iraq was described as having such weapons labs across the country. No evidence has been found that Hussein possessed or was producing any biological or chemical weapons, much less the stockpiles asserted by the Administration.

Congress has an obligation to ask questions about the statements made by the Administration to justify the war in Iraq and the Administration has a responsibility to answer them truthfully and honestly. The justifications for war matter. They matter to the men and women of the armed forces, whom we are saluting today, because the Administration used them to destroy a threat it maintains existed against the United States. They matter to the families and friends of those brave men and women who watched as their loved ones shipped off to war. They matter to the American people who are, after all, the final authority in this government.

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this resolution to recognize the efforts of those who have contributed to Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Today we recognize and thank those soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and all the individuals in our defense and intelligence communities whose commitment and dedication ensure our continued success. They are members of the greatest fighting force the world has known, representing not only our Nation's strength, but our bravery, skill, honor and resolve. We also thank their families, who so graciously share their loved ones with their country.

Liberty must be guarded and defended, and no nation has given more in this defense than America. Throughout our history, our Nation has been blessed to have individuals willing to

make the ultimate sacrifice in order to keep the flames of freedom and liberty burning brightly throughout the world. They selflessly dedicate their life to protecting freedom, ensuring liberty, and defending the principles of this country through great personal sacrifice. On behalf of a grateful Nation, we pay tribute to these brave men and women.

Today, as we recognize and commend the actions already taken, we also renew our commitment to ensuring the security of our homeland. We renew our commitment to destroying Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations that threaten the free world. We do not know what the future holds, however we can say with certainty that because of the men and women we honor with this resolution, we will prevail.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman HUNTER for introducing this important resolution. Today, we recognize, support, and commend our brave service men and women for their dedication, for their sacrifice, and for their supreme love of country. We thank and honor those, including our allies, who serve on behalf of liberty and freedom, and remember those who have been wounded or died in the line of duty.

Our Nation has committed our military to defend the world from grave danger and to assure the security for all nations. These men and women have risen to the highest level and have succeeded in overthrowing the Taliban in Afghanistan and the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. While they are working diligently to bring peace, stability and prosperity to the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, our men and women of our armed forces continue to face danger each and every day.

In the coming weeks and months, it will be critically important for our Nation to continue our support and pray for the safety of our troops. Their mission may not be completed for a long time, and it is important that we reiterate our strong support. At the same time, I would like to commend the military families, the employers and the communities around the United States for their sacrifices and patriotism.

Our focus must be on working with the world community to fight the war against terrorism, and to rebuild Afghanistan and Iraq following the military actions. As we move forward in Iraq, and in other crisis spots around the world, I am hopeful that the United States will continue to strengthen its unity with the international community and provide hope to those nations that have been trapped under dictatorial regimes.

Today, we stand firmly behind our armed forces and our allies. We thank the brave men and women who risk their lives to keep our Nation free and safe. We offer our respect, our utmost gratitude, and the promise that we shall not forget your bravery and your sacrifice. We are proud of you. May God bless you and keep you safe.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this resolution honoring our brave men and women of the Armed Services. Their duty and sacrifice in Iraq and Afghanistan are appreciated by all Americans.

New challenges facing our Nation demand increased vigilance on the part of our Armed Services. With these increased demands, the role of the National Guard and Reserve Forces is critical in providing the total force necessary to ensure our security. Over the past year, I have had the opportunity to meet

with many National Guard and Reserve members from western Wisconsin who have been called up for service Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq.

Over 2,300 members of the Wisconsin Air and Army National Guard are serving on active duty. The people of western Wisconsin are proud of their service and the service of all the men and women of our Armed Forces during this important time in our Nation's history.

We still have much to do in terms of peacekeeping and rebuilding in Iraq and Afghanistan. In this effort, it is important that we engage our allies to share responsibility and pursue an effective, sustained commitment to peace and stability in the region. If we can do this right, we will not have to again, sometime down the road, send our military forces over to fight.

In addition, we recognize today all of the 'round-the-clock' work put in by the military personnel and DoD civilian employees at military mobilization platforms around our Nation. In western Wisconsin, I represent Fort McCoy, one of the Army Reserves' power projection platforms. Ft. McCoy has been continuously processing and training mobilized members of the National Guard and Reserve for the past six months. Their efforts have been key in getting our forces ready for combat.

It is also important that we recognize the support and sacrifice of the families and employers of our troops. They are the backbone of our fighting forces, and we appreciate their commitment during these challenging times.

The American people and the Congress of the United States stand behind our Armed Service Members and those that support them. As our military effort continues, I and other Members of Congress will continue to work to ensure that our service men and women have all the resources necessary to fulfil their mission.

My thoughts and prayers are with those serving our Country overseas, as well as their families. America is firmly behind our troops, and we're all hoping to see them home safe, secure and soon.

May God continue to bless the United States of America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 177, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. HUNTER. 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 and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 2180

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 2180.

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

There was no objection.

SENSE OF THE HOUSE COM- MENDING NATION'S BUSINESSES AND BUSINESS OWNERS FOR SUPPORT OF OUR TROOPS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 201) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that our Nation's businesses and business owners should be commended for their support of our troops and their families as they serve our country in many ways, especially in these days of increased engagement of our military in strategic locations around our Nation and around the world.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 201

Whereas over 216,931 members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces have been called to leave their families and their jobs, in service to this country and her citizens;

Whereas businesses of every size and scope have been impacted as their employees who are members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces have been called away from their employment in local business and industry;

Whereas businesses across the Nation have been exceptionally accommodating to the unique demands on the time, resources, and responsibilities of employee spouses and families of active duty military personnel who have been deployed for service; and

Whereas business owners have made sacrifices so that they might ensure observance of the letter and the spirit of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act in many ways including: restoring employment status after military service obligation has been fulfilled, providing continuation of health benefits to active duty employees and their dependents, and committing uninterrupted pension and retirement benefits: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) the businesses that establish the backbone of our Nation in times of peace and rise to a greater standard of resolve in times of challenge do so by—

(A) carrying on the good work of commerce, industry, and innovation; and

(B) steadfastly supporting the members of our military and their families; and

(2) the business owners of our Nation deserve our commendation and sincere expression of gratitude.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GORDON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 201.

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