

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

REPEAL OF DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL

(Mr. POLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I just returned from the signing of the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell. The President spoke wisely and strongly and welcomed those who were discharged under the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy to consider reenlisting.

President Obama said:

"There will never be a full accounting of the heroism demonstrated by gay Americans in service to this country." He continued, "As the first generation to serve openly in our armed services, you will stand for all those who came before you, and you will serve as role models for all those who come after you."

Madam Speaker, today is an important day, not just for gay and lesbian members of the military, but to all of us who are gay or lesbian, to our families, to our friends, for they all know that today we hold our heads a little higher as Americans. We are closer to equal treatment under the law, which is all we've ever asked for.

Our government will no longer be an instrument of discrimination against us, and all America will see and be told of the patriotism of the gay and lesbian Americans who proudly defend a country that today is one step closer to considering us equal.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 22, 2010.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 22, 2010 at 9:41 a.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 5470.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4445.

That the Senate passed S. 3903.

That the Senate passed with amendments H.R. 6523.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

LORRAINE C. MILLER.

□ 1110

SOUTH CAROLINA GAINS A CONGRESSIONAL SEAT

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to ad-

dress the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I am grateful to welcome the addition of a new congressional seat to my home State of South Carolina, one of America's fastest growing States. The Census Bureau announced the State's population has grown enough to merit one more Representative in Congress. Our State has been enhanced by transplants from the Midwest and Northeast and from people across the world due to a mild climate and lower tax rates.

After 80 years, it appears we will regain a seventh House Member. The people of South Carolina will now have another advocate on their behalf in Washington and another electoral vote for President. Growing our representation on Capitol Hill is a key factor in achieving goals for the people of South Carolina. Our State will have another voice fighting for conservative principles with the new district on the Grand Strand with Florence.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11th in the global war on terrorism.

Godspeed to Marine Captain Ky Hunter, who has successfully accomplished her service for the people of the Second District of South Carolina, and now will be in the liaison office of the Marine Corps.

IKE SKELTON NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2011

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 6523) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2011 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, with the Senate amendments thereto, and concur in the Senate amendments.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the Senate amendments is as follows:

Senate amendments:

Strike title XVII and corresponding table of contents on page 18.

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

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, reserving the right to object, I take this moment to express great disappointment at the situation the House now finds itself. It is very unfortunate that before us is an amended version of the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011.

Last night, the other body struck title XVII of the version of the bill that this House passed last Friday, December 17. Title XVII, Madam Speaker, was the Guam World War II Loyalty Recognition Act, which the House has passed on multiple occasions with

strong bipartisan support. Several Senators objected to its inclusion in the bill. They expressed concerns over its budgetary impact, and indicated a willingness to work toward identifying an acceptable way to authorize and pay the claims.

I regret the inability to resolve this matter at this time, and I am very appreciative of the strong support from Chairman SKELTON and incoming chairman of the House Armed Services Committee Mr. MCKEON of California for their strong support of this provision. The unresolved nature of Guam war claims has serious implications for the military build-up on Guam. I appreciate the administration's strong support for this provision. The administration recognizes the connection between resolving this issue and successfully implementing the military build-up on Guam.

We will continue our work to bring closure to this matter of justice for the people of Guam, and to act on the legislative recommendations of the Federal Guam War Claims Review Commission that reported to Congress pursuant to Public Law 107-333. It was not for a lack of effort from this body, and we will continue to build on the progress we've made. The underlying bill is important for our national defense and for our men and women in uniform and their families, and therefore this body is left no other choice but than to concur with the Senate amendments at this time.

Again, I want to thank everyone who has assisted me, both the leaders and to the multiple staff members who have helped us through this process.

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, I'll keep my remarks brief as this is the third time that the House will debate and vote on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011. They say that the third time is the charm. Let it be so this morning.

I return to the floor with this bill because the Senate found it necessary to delete a portion of the House-passed bill in order to achieve the consensus needed to move the bill to final passage. The Senate amendment removes from the House bill Title 17, which dealt with Guam War Claims. I am deeply disappointed in the Senate's decision to remove this important legislation, which I strongly support and which has been so ably advocated by the delegate from Guam. However, here we are and we are out of time to engage with a back and forth with the Senate. We must move this bill to the President's desk or watch it die. That is why I ask for unanimous consent for the House to concur to the Senate amendment to H.R. 6523.

Let me briefly repeat what I said the other day. This bill is must pass legislation with many provisions that cannot become law any other way. This bill stops an increase in health care fees from hitting the families of military personnel; authorizes military families to extend TRICARE coverage to their dependent children under age 26; and adopts comprehensive legislation fighting sexual assault in the military. It creates a counter-IED database and enhances the effort to develop new, lightweight body armor. It gives DOD new