

the Moon and, instead, have failed, in many instances, to provide them with the most basic of care.

As of March 16 this year, the Columbia, South Carolina Regional Office of the Veterans Administration had over 21,927 pending cases, with an average wait time of 232 days.

Survivor benefits for veterans' spouses can take between 10 and 18 months to be disbursed, and sometimes even longer, depending on the health status of the beneficiary.

My office is currently assisting a constituent who contacted us because he has had 12 claims pending before the VA, which date all the way back to 2004. Another constituent has had her claims delayed over 18 months because she's been told by the VA that they don't have medical records. Now, this is despite the fact that she's already sent the VA her medical records twice by certified mail.

Unfortunately, claims aren't the only backlog facing the VA. Veterans are also facing delays in seeking medical attention. A lack of doctors and inefficiency in the system have forced some veterans to have to wait months to receive medical care.

Mr. Speaker, to put it simply, the VA isn't clicking and ticking. Despite the best intentions of VA personnel to deliver a high level of service and care to our veterans, too many of our former servicemen and -women are falling through the cracks.

In the Third District of South Carolina, we recently created an advisory committee composed of retired military veterans to provide insight into some of the problems that they're facing today. Their view is not that the law needs to be changed necessarily, but that the spirit of the law is not being followed. Veterans were promised certain benefits and, in too many cases, they are still waiting to receive them.

In addition to the mounting pile of problems regarding veterans services, I'm deeply concerned that veterans will be negatively impacted by the implementation of ObamaCare. The clear goal of the Obama administration's unconditional and unconstitutional health care law is to begin lumping our servicemen and -women into the bureaucracy of ObamaCare. Not only do I think that this breaks a promise made to our veterans, but I'm afraid it will make an already bad situation worse.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, we can do better; and for the sake of our living heroes, we must do better. Let us not forget the promises that we've made to our veterans, and let us not just honor our veterans with our words, but let's also honor them with our actions.

Thank you. May God bless our troops in the field, those here at home. May God bless those who have served our country in uniform, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

#### DISCRIMINATORY VOTER IDENTIFICATION LAWS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to talk about the discriminatory voter ID laws that are undemocratic and simply un-American.

The American Legislative Exchange Council, also known as ALEC, has long been a secretive collaboration between big business and conservative Tea Party Republican politicians serving in this Nation's State and Federal legislatures. ALEC's goal is to advance the special interests of large corporations and the super-rich and wealthy by any means necessary.

Yesterday, I discussed how ALEC has fiendishly and unabashedly produced legislative policy that degrades our air and water quality and wrecks our environment. Last week, I outlined how ALEC has infiltrated our criminal justice system by producing legislation that stimulates higher and higher levels of incarceration, to the benefit and to the surging profits of the private for-profit prison industry.

And if that wasn't enough, with 194 days left until the general election, ALEC has been working hard to suppress the votes of the most vulnerable in our society. ALEC has met with its corporate allies and right-wing State officials behind closed doors to promote legislation to suppress the votes of likely Democratic voters.

By making it more difficult for people to exercise their right to vote, ALEC's model voter ID act grants an electoral advantage to Republicans, while undermining the right of individuals to vote.

In addition, ALEC has worked to make it easier for corporations to participate in the political process. Their Public Safety and Elections Task Force promotes model legislation that would disenfranchise millions of voters, devastate campaign finance reform, and allow for greater corporate influence in elections.

Mr. Speaker, it has injected these corrosive laws into our States, and they have spread like untreated cancer. Bills based on ALEC's model legislation have already been introduced in 34 States and passed in many of those States.

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Voter suppression comes in many forms, from new voter ID laws to eliminating Election Day registration to restricting voter registration drives by community groups to reducing the number of days for early voting and limiting the number of days for voter registration. There is no doubt that ALEC is directly tied to the proliferation of these voter ID laws in the States' legislatures.

These policies are not about preventing fraud in the voting process. This legislation is solely about disenfranchising minorities, the elder-

ly, and other at-risk voters, such as the poor, who are unlikely to have the technical kinds of ID that these pieces of legislation demand.

After the spotlight has started to shine on ALEC, they have come out publicly and said, Okay, we're going to get out of the public policy business. They're not going to not write any more model legislation like the Florida "shoot first and ask questions later." They're not going to introduce any more of that type of legislation. They also have announced they're going to shut down their Public Safety and Elections Task Force, which is the committee that produced the voter suppression legislation.

That's a good thing. But the damage has already been done, and we're going to have to remain vigilant about this group, this shadowy group, ALEC, this unholy alliance between Tea Party Republican legislators and big business. We'll have to keep our eyes open. I'll have more to talk about in the coming days.

#### JONATHAN FRANK DAVIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I've come to the floor this morning with great sadness but also with a great sense of pride to honor the service of a Georgia hero, Private First Class Jonathan Frank Davis.

On March 29, 2012, Jonathan gave the ultimate sacrifice in Kandahar province, Afghanistan, while supporting Operation Enduring Freedom.

Jonathan was the son of Reverend and Mrs. Kerry Davis of Griffin, Georgia. His mother, Tracey, described him as tenderhearted, a tenderness that extended to both his peers and animals. His heart was so large that they now have numerous pets running around their home due to Jonathan not being able to turn away a single stray.

His nurturing and giving nature was one of the things that was loved most about him. As a child, Jonathan always stood up for his classmates who were being bullied, and many of Jonathan's peers remember that he was the first to come to their defense. He was willing to give his shirt off his back to help others and was always concerned about the well-being of everyone around him, especially those less fortunate.

Jonathan was playful and strove to make others happy, either by playing funny pranks on them or with his unforgettable smile that could light up a room. Jonathan attended Griffin High School, where he played soccer, and after graduation, he, like myself, married his high school sweetheart. Her name is Kristen.

Kristen is expecting their first child, and Jonathan talked all the time of how excited he was to become a father. He carried the sonogram of baby Benjamin in his wallet everywhere he went