

VETERANS DAY AND MERCHANT MARINERS

(Ms. HAHN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, next week, Americans will celebrate Veterans Day and honor the sacrifices of the men and women who have served this Nation, but one group of veterans has gone unrecognized far too long.

In World War II, more than 200,000 merchant mariners braved troubled seas to deliver supplies to the battlefields of Europe and the Pacific. They faced enemy attack and suffered a casualty rate higher than any other uniformed service.

Unfortunately, the World War II Merchant Marine veterans were never eligible for benefits under the GI Bill and were long excluded even from Veterans Day celebrations. Many of these merchant mariners are now well into their eighties and nineties and have yet to receive the honor and appreciation they deserve.

As Veterans Day approaches, I am calling once again on my colleagues to pass H.R. 563, legislation that will provide the fewer than 5,000 surviving World War II Merchant Marine veterans with a one-time \$25,000 payment as a token of this Nation's appreciation.

When my colleagues are home in their districts celebrating Veterans Day, I hope that what I have said today will prick their conscience. Despite their sacrifice, despite their patriotism, one group of veterans has not been celebrated. Our merchant mariners deserve so much more. It is time to pass H.R. 563.

HONORING THE LIFE OF FRED THOMPSON

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, today, I stand to remember a much-loved Tennessean.

Though Fred Thompson's roots were in Tennessee, his service spanned far past the borders of our State and into the lives and homes of all Americans. To my family and to many in middle Tennessee, Fred Thompson was a neighbor, a friend, and a trusted political voice.

His passing brings great sadness to all, especially those in his hometown of Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, a town he never forgot, a town and her people that he credited with teaching him life lessons and giving him the perspective he carried with him throughout life. Those small-town Tennessee lessons helped mold him into the incredible man that he was, with a legacy that will never be forgotten. I appreciate all he did on behalf of our State, our Nation, and the cause of freedom.

My thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Jeri, and all the Thompson family. He will be missed.

VETERANS SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I joined Lackawanna Mayor Geoff Szymanski, a United States Navy veteran, to recognize Veterans Small Business Week and promote startup workshops for veterans, hosted by the Small Business Administration.

Every year, more than 200,000 servicemembers transition to the civilian workforce, and our Nation must make that transition as smooth as possible, not only out of gratitude, but because our veterans are some of the most industrious and determined citizens, which gives them the ability to make an outsized contribution to our economy.

That is why I support Helmets to Hardhats, which connects veterans with apprenticeships in the building and construction trades; and that is why Congress must remove the expiration dates for GI Bill education benefits so that veterans can receive the career training they earned and deserve.

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

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

Mr. GUINTA. Mr. Speaker, October was Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and millions of Americans joined our fight against a disease that strikes one out of every eight women in our country.

This issue is personal to me and the thousands of Granite Staters who have family and friends suffering from breast cancer, or who suffer from it themselves. My mother is a breast cancer survivor. Her courageous battle is my inspiration in Congress.

I joined more than 180 Members to cosponsor legislation that would encourage the government and private sector to work together to find a cure. Thanks to the hard work of Nancy Ryan and the New Hampshire Breast Cancer Coalition, which recently marked its 20th anniversary, that cure is even closer today.

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of death among women in the United States. Every October, we honor and remember those who have died and those who are living with breast cancer. We acknowledge the hard work of the medical professionals and caregivers, and we recommit ourselves to finding a solution that will save lives.

APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

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

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak in recognition of the first National Apprenticeship Week. As always, it is an honor to join my good friend and colleague, Representative G.T. THOMPSON from Pennsylvania, who will be speaking next. I want to thank him for his bipartisan leadership on career and technical education issues. As co-chairs of the bipartisan Career and Technical Education Caucus, G.T. and I are committed to expanding apprenticeships so that every American has the skills necessary to succeed in their chosen career.

While apprenticeships have been slow to grow in the United States, Germany and Switzerland have long been recognized as global leaders in this field. Last month, I convened a CTE Caucus field hearing in Rhode Island, bringing experts from German industry and education to help spread the best practices of a robust apprenticeship model.

I look forward to working with my colleague from Pennsylvania and all of my colleagues in the House to expand these options for all students, not just in my home State, but across the entire country.

NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my good friend, co-chair of the Career and Technical Education Caucus, Mr. LANGEVIN from Rhode Island, for his leadership and his remarks. I also rise in recognition of National Apprenticeship Week, which runs through this Saturday.

Training and support for those looking to enter vocational fields is something that is very important to me, as co-chairman of the bipartisan Career and Technical Education Caucus. It is essential that we give our workers the training and resources that they need to secure family-supporting jobs.

Apprenticeships are a vital part of this effort to help workers prepare for the jobs of tomorrow, along with the in-demand positions that are currently going unfilled. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the industries which rely on apprenticeship training are in demand, including a huge need for certified electricians, construction workers, and those in the health technology fields. More than 430,000 Americans are currently participating in an apprenticeship program, gaining the knowledge to rise to the demands of today's workforce.

Mr. Speaker, these programs give workers hands-on experience and lead to much higher lifetime earnings for those that participate.

VOTING RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT ACT

(Mr. CLYBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1