

have 12,000 reservists that also fall in that category, and as my colleague well knows, we have reservists doing full-time duty now, and it is important for us to also recognize that. So we have soldiers that we have asked them to be weekend soldiers, but they are spending time down there all year. So it becomes real important that we move forward on this as quickly as possible, and I want to ask that my colleagues consider the motion and ask that we come because when all is said and done, if this does not occur, then the only ones we can hold responsible is both the House and the Senate and, in this case, controlled by the Republican party and the administration.

So I would ask my colleagues for serious consideration of some passage that would allow expediting the citizenship process because they have to qualify even more so. To be in the military, they have to have had a GED or high school. They have to have, as I already indicated, the leadership and loyalty to this country and demonstrated that, and so I think we have a unique opportunity to send a real positive message to both the people that are serving our military, and both the reservists as well as the active duty, because they have all been out there for us and are willing to continue to defend our country, and we ought to be willing to move forward, and if they served honorably, then we ought to see what we can do to help them out in the process of becoming citizens and to have 37,000 people in the military that are not citizens yet and have trouble as the case that I have here before on Private Escalante, then we need to see how we can make some exceptions in those cases, and I would hope that we have that flexibility in order for that to happen.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to join my colleagues in asking the House conferees of the Defense Authorization bill (H.R. 1588) to accept the Citizenship for America's troop's provision that Senator KENNEDY included in the Senate's bill.

Ever since the war against Saddam Hussein began, politicians and commentators have noted that many brave soldiers were risking their lives for America despite the fact that they are not citizens. As many have pointed out, some of these non-citizen soldiers were among the first brave men and women to fall. Some were born in Mexico before joining the U.S. military—like Pfc. Francisco Martinez Flores, Cpl. Jose Angel Garibay and Lance Cpl. Jesus Suarez del Solar. Others were born in Guatemala—like Lance Cpl. Jose Gutierrez. But all died fighting for a country where they couldn't even cast a vote.

Of course, this is not a new problem. In the last Congress—in May of 2002, to be precise—I first introduced legislation to help remove the obstacles these brave soldiers face on their path to citizenship. And I re-introduced my bill in this Congress one week before our country went to war in Iraq.

But months and months have passed, and still this Congress has not acted. So while the citizenship provision in the Senate bill is not identical to my original legislation, I fully sup-

port it. It is the quickest way to honor the brave soldiers who have shown the willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice for the country they dearly wish to be citizens of. Members of the military who risk their lives to defend this Nation deserve better than the bureaucratic and financial burdens that now stand between them and citizenship. And they deserve better than the waiting game they've had to endure since I first proposed legislation like this more than a year ago.

So, Mr. Speaker, I again urge the House managers to not play politics with this issue. Accept the Kennedy language and do the right thing for our troops.

It is the only way to get this done in a timely fashion. Our legal permanent resident troops have already waited for far too long.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Rodriguez motion to instruct the conferees on the Defense Reauthorization Act.

I support his motion because I strongly believe that we must expedite the citizenship process for immigrants that serve in the United States military.

If they wear the American flag on their uniform everyday and proudly fight for this nation then I believe offering them citizenship is the least we can do.

Thirty-seven thousand immigrants soldiers risk their lives everyday in defense of our Nation. These patriots may be of different nationalities but they share the same commitment to defend the United States.

As a Nation, we must respect and honor those who are willing to fight and die for ideals of democracy and the ideals of the United States of America, regardless of their nationality. If we trust immigrants to die protecting this Nation then we must trust them to become American citizens.

The Senate bill has provisions to allow these immigrant soldiers to become citizens after two years, rather than three and I support that.

The Senate provision also allows immigrant soldiers to fulfill citizen requirements at U.S. facilities abroad and I support that.

Currently, immigrant soldiers serving over seas are required to take leave, spend their own money and travel back to the U.S. to fulfill their citizenship requirements. The process is slow archaic, and wrong. No one should be punished for serving this Nation.

I served this Nation proudly and I am the child of immigrants. I know the love that my parents had for this Nation, and I know the love that I have for this Nation, and no one should be punished for wanting to proudly serve this country. No one should be punished simply because they were not lucky enough to be born on United States soil.

We owe anyone who is willing to fight for this Nation the opportunity to quickly and expeditiously become a United States citizen.

We are asking something simple—allow these proud immigrants to become citizens. At a time when we are fighting enemies abroad and at home, why deny those that are the most loyal their wish to become Americans.

On behalf of the 37,000 immigrant soldiers and families, I urge my colleagues to support the Rodriguez motion to instruct.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the remainder of the time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this motion to instruct.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RODRIGUEZ).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. 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 earlier order of the House of today, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

ADJOURNMENT FROM THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2003 TO MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2003

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns tomorrow, September 18, 2003, it adjourn to meet at noon on Monday next.

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

There was no objection.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2003

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns on Monday, September 22, 2003, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 23, 2003, for morning hour debates.

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

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

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

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.