

proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

VETERANS GUARANTEED BONUS
ACT OF 2007

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3793) to amend title 37, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Defense to continue to pay to a member of the Armed Forces who is retired or separated from the Armed Forces due to a combat-related injury certain bonuses that the member was entitled to before the retirement or separation and would continue to be entitled to if the member was not retired or separated, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3793

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. CONTINUATION OF ENTITLEMENT TO BONUSES AND SIMILAR BENEFITS FOR MEMBERS OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES WHO DIE, ARE SEPARATED OR RETIRED FOR DISABILITY, OR MEET OTHER CRITERIA.

(a) **DISCRETION TO PROVIDE EXCEPTION TO TERMINATION AND REPAYMENT REQUIREMENTS UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.**—Section 303a(e) of title 37, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by inserting "; TERMINATION OF ENTITLEMENT TO UNPAID AMOUNTS" after "MET";

(2) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking "A member" and inserting "(A) Except as provided in paragraph (2), a member"; and

(B) by striking "the requirements, except in certain circumstances authorized by the Secretary concerned." and inserting "the eligibility requirements and may not receive any unpaid amounts of the bonus or similar benefit after the member fails to satisfy the requirements, unless the Secretary concerned determines that the imposition of the repayment requirement and termination of the payment of unpaid amounts of the bonus or similar benefit with regard to the member would be contrary to a personnel policy or management objective, would be against equity and good conscience, or would be contrary to the best interests of the United States."; and

(3) by redesignating paragraph (2) as subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1).

(b) **MANDATORY PAYMENT OF UNPAID AMOUNTS UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES; NO REPAYMENT OF UNEARNED AMOUNTS.**—Section 303a(e) of title 37, United States Code, is amended by inserting after paragraph (1), as amended by subsection (a), the following new paragraph (2):

"(2)(A) If a member of the uniformed services dies (other than as a result the member's misconduct) or is retired or separated for disability under chapter 61 of title 10, the Secretary concerned—

"(i) shall not require repayment by the member or the member's estate of the unearned portion of any bonus or similar benefit previously paid to the member; and

"(ii) shall require the payment to the member or the member's estate of the remainder of any bonus or similar benefit that was not yet paid to the member, but to

which the member was entitled immediately before the death, retirement, or separation of the member, and would be paid if not for the death, retirement, or separation of the member.

"(B) The amount to be paid under subparagraph (A)(ii) shall be equal to the full amount specified by the agreement or contract applicable to the bonus or similar benefit as if the member continued to be entitled to the bonus or similar benefit following the death, retirement, or separation.

"(C) Amounts to be paid to a member or the member's estate under subparagraph (A)(ii) shall be paid in a lump sum not later than 90 days after the date of the death, retirement, or separation of the member, whichever applies."

(c) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS REFLECTING CONSOLIDATED SPECIAL PAY AND BONUS AUTHORITIES.**—

(1) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—Section 373 of title 37, United States Code, as added by section 661 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008, is amended—

(A) in subsection (a)—

(i) in the subsection heading, by inserting "AND TERMINATION" after "REPAYMENT"; and

(ii) by inserting before the period at the end the following: "; and the member may not receive any unpaid amounts of the bonus, incentive pay, or similar benefit after the member fails to satisfy such service or eligibility requirement"; and

(B) by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following new subsection:

"(b) **EXCEPTIONS.**—

"(1) **DISCRETION TO PROVIDE EXCEPTION TO TERMINATION AND REPAYMENT REQUIREMENTS.**—Pursuant to the regulations prescribed to administer this section, the Secretary concerned may grant an exception to the repayment requirement and requirement to terminate the payment of unpaid amounts of a bonus, incentive pay, or similar benefit if the Secretary concerned determines that the imposition of the repayment and termination requirements with regard to a member of the uniformed services would be contrary to a personnel policy or management objective, would be against equity and good conscience, or would be contrary to the best interests of the United States.

"(2) **MANDATORY PAYMENT OF UNPAID AMOUNTS UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES; NO REPAYMENT OF UNEARNED AMOUNTS.**—(A) If a member of the uniformed services dies (other than as a result the member's misconduct) or is retired or separated for disability under chapter 61 of title 10, the Secretary concerned—

"(i) shall not require repayment by the member or the member's estate of the unearned portion of any bonus, incentive pay, or similar benefit previously paid to the member; and

"(ii) shall require the payment to the member or the member's estate of the remainder of any bonus, incentive pay, or similar benefit that was not yet paid to the member, but to which the member was entitled immediately before the death, retirement, or separation of the member, and would be paid if not for the death, retirement, or separation of the member.

"(B) The amount to be paid under subparagraph (A)(ii) shall be equal to the full amount specified by the agreement or contract applicable to the bonus, incentive pay, or similar benefit as if the member continued to be entitled to the bonus, incentive pay, or similar benefit following the death, retirement, or separation.

"(C) Amounts to be paid to a member or the member's estate under subparagraph (A)(ii) shall be paid in a lump sum not later than 90 days after the date of the death, re-

tirement, or separation of the member, whichever applies."

(2) **CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.**—

(A) **SECTION HEADING.**—The heading of such section is amended to read as follows:

"§ 373. Repayment of unearned portion of bonus, incentive pay, or similar benefit, and termination of remaining payments, when conditions of payment not met"

(B) **TABLE OF CONTENTS.**—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 5 of title 37, United States Code, is amended by striking the item relating to section 373 and inserting the following new item:

"373. Repayment of unearned portion of bonus, incentive pay, or similar benefit, and termination of remaining payments, when conditions of payment not met."

(d) **CONDITION ON IMPLEMENTATION.**—The implementation by the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary concerned (as defined in section 101 of title 37, United States Code) of sections 303a(e) and 373 of such title, as amended by this section, during fiscal year 2008 shall be subject to the availability of funds for this purpose included in an appropriations Act enacted on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. SHEA-PORTER) and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Hampshire.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New Hampshire?

There was no objection.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, today the House has a unique opportunity to clarify the law to protect the financial security of wounded veterans, their families and the families of soldiers who have been killed in the line of duty. As recently as last month, we have heard a number of cases in the media suggesting that the Department of Defense has been requiring soldiers wounded in combat to pay back part of their enlistment bonuses if they hadn't yet served their full term, or even worse, that it would require these benefits to be paid back by the grieving families of soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

Quite simply, this is wrong. If a soldier signed up to serve our country and is unable to serve out the full term of his or her enlistment due to wounds received in the line of duty, this soldier should not then be asked to return any part of their signing bonus. For a soldier who has faced the hardships and battle and is now facing the challenges of recovery, we should not add the additional burden of paying back money that is rightfully theirs.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3793, the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act of 2007, ends the uncertainty about the policy and makes clear that this Nation will never attempt to recoup bonuses and benefits from wounded veterans or grieving families. It mandates that unpaid bonuses or similar benefits are paid in full, and it requires that this financial protection be provided not later than 90 days after the death of a soldier or the departure from the military due to disability from all active duty and Reserve component members.

Finally, the act establishes firm guidelines to ensure that the military will act with fairness and equity when handling the question of such bonuses for all servicemembers.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ALTMIRE) for his diligence and timely work on this sensitive issue and for his commitment to bring this important legislation to the floor of the House. I strongly support H.R. 3793, the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act of 2007, and urge its immediate adoption.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield so much time as he may consume to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES).

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. I thank the gentleman from South Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, in July, the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors reported that the Department of Defense was applying a rule that enlistees who leave the service early cannot receive their full enlistment bonus. The Commission was confident that this rule was not intended to apply to servicemen and women whose combat-related injuries forced them to leave the military. At that point, the Commission received assurances from the Department of Defense that this problem would be addressed. Today, the Congress will ensure that the problem is addressed by passing H.R. 3793, the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act of 2007.

As Americans, we should never break our promises to our veterans, especially in time of war. To promise a significant amount of money to a young American and then demand its return or refuse to continue distribution when the man or woman is injured in combat and subsequently discharged is unacceptable. In early October, I joined Congressmen ALTMIRE, STEARNS and MURPHY to remedy this problem.

Today, over 270 of our colleagues and 36 veterans organizations have joined us to advance H.R. 3793, the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act of 2007. This legislation guarantees that no servicemember who dies or is retired or separated for disability will be required to repay or forfeit their bonus. We cannot thank our veterans enough for the sacrifices they have made for our country. When our men and women come home from war, the cost of an enlistment bonus is low compared to the sac-

rifice that is made by our soldiers and Marines.

I am certain this House will pass H.R. 3793, the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act of 2007.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. I yield 5 minutes to my friend and colleague, the original sponsor of this important piece of legislation, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ALTMIRE).

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the bill we are debating today, H.R. 3793, the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act, which I introduced.

This legislation will ensure that from this point forward, every combat-wounded veteran injured in Afghanistan or Iraq receives their full enlistment or reenlistment bonus. No longer will American servicemen and women who have served our country so bravely and honorably and have been injured in service to our country, no longer will they be served with a bill to repay their enlistment bonus, and no longer will those heroic men and women suffer the indignity of having their prorated bonus payments cut off if those payments are to be made in installments.

Instead, my bill, which we are debating today, says that the full amounts due under the agreements and contracts that apply to a service combat disability be paid within 90 days of the separation of the servicemember. This legislation also applies to the family members and estates of servicemen and women who are killed in combat.

This issue first came to my attention over the summer while reviewing the Dole-Shalala Commission Report, an independent panel put into place in the spring to investigate the disgraceful situation at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. The Commission uncovered instances of our wounded warriors being denied their bonuses after being injured in combat. And after studying this issue in more detail and learning of other documented instances of this injustice, on October 10, I introduced a Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act, which is now before us.

In the weeks after I introduced the bill, we continued to hear multiple reports of cases around the country where servicemen and women had been denied bonuses, including the high-profile case involving Private Jordan Fox from my home area of western Pennsylvania. It has become clear that these were not just isolated examples, but instead, some of the hundreds and perhaps thousands of examples of veterans being asked to return their bonuses or be denied the remaining portion of their bonuses after being injured in service to our country.

And while some have made an issue of the expense of paying back these bonuses, let me be clear: There is no group that should stand ahead of our Nation's veterans when it comes time to making Federal funding decisions. Some may argue that because these servicemen and women were injured that they were unable to fulfill their

contractual obligations and therefore should be denied the remainder of their bonuses. I want to be equally clear on this point. Members of our Armed Forces have made every conceivable sacrifice for our country, and those who have been injured in service to our country have more than fulfilled the obligations of their service contract. Paying them the bonuses that they have fought for and that they have earned is the very least we can do to repay them for their bravery and their sacrifice.

Finally, I want to make clear that this is a bipartisan bill with more than 270 cosponsors. I want to thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, dozens of which have cosponsored this bill and some of whom will speak in favor of it today. I especially want to thank my colleagues, Mr. STEARNS from Florida and Mr. JONES from North Carolina, the lead Republican sponsors of this bill. They joined me in support of this bill before it became a high-profile issue, and I thank them for their leadership. I also want to single out two of my Democratic colleagues, my lead Democratic cosponsor, Congressman PATRICK MURPHY from my home State of Pennsylvania, an Iraq war veteran himself, and Congressman BART STUPAK of Michigan who has fought as hard as any Member of this House for the right of veterans to keep their enlistment bonus.

Most importantly, I want to thank Chairman IKE SKELTON for his willingness to help bring this bill to the floor. Chairman SKELTON's amendment has made this a better bill, and I thank him for his support and his continued leadership as chairman of the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in voting for the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act before us today. I am sure that all my colleagues in the House would agree that we in Congress must support our troops with our actions and not just with our words. This bill will ensure that every military veteran gets the bonuses they deserve. During this holiday season when our thoughts and prayers are with the brave servicemen and women serving overseas and their families here at home, I can think of no greater tribute we can provide.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield so much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BROUN).

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. I thank the gentleman for yielding. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support today of H.R. 3793, the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act of 2007.

As a former military officer and an enlisted marine, I take this matter very seriously, and I am a very strong supporter of our troops and their families. As Members of Congress, we have an obligation both to stand up for our troops that have been disabled and have to leave the military, as well as surviving families of soldiers who have

made the final sacrifice to protect our Nation and our freedom.

There is no greater insult to our wounded warriors and their families who have sacrificed so much than to deny or revoke their bonus because of a combat-related injury or death. This bill, the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act of 2007, would guarantee that no servicemember who dies, other than as a result of a member's misconduct, or is retired or separated for disability will be required to repay any portion of a bonus or similar benefit that they have received.

Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government has broken too many promises to our veterans, and I consider that verging on criminality. We have an opportunity today to support our veterans and to support our troops and to fulfill a promise that was made to these veterans.

I urge all of my colleagues of the House to support this measure and pass H.R. 3793, the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act of 2007.

□ 1430

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK).

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

I rise in support of the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act of 2007. Currently, when a servicemember is wounded in combat and cannot return to duty, the Department of Defense allows each military branch to determine, in their discretion, whether to pay a servicemember any portion of a bonus still due to them. As a result, some members of the Armed Forces, who have served their Nation bravely, sustaining severe injuries, are not receiving their full bonus.

In the last month, I have written to the President on three occasions urging him to immediately terminate this disgraceful policy. In response, I received conflicting information from the Department of Defense regarding this policy. Deputy Under Secretary William Carr wrote me on December 12, in a letter, and he stated: "The Army pays all unpaid enlisted and re-enlistment bonus installments." Not true.

In conversations with the Department of the Army National Guard Bureau, my staff has been told that instead of paying the full bonus due, the Army prorates a soldier's bonus based on the number of months the soldier served before their medical discharge. It's still unclear as to what the policy is with the Army. This is why we need to enact a Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act. We need to establish a uniform Department of Defense policy to ensure all outstanding bonuses are promptly paid to our deserving heroes. Bonuses should be paid in full, without question.

I was first alerted to this program by an Iraqi war veteran in my district, Derek Gagne, from Wilson, Michigan.

Derek, an Army National Guardsman, had been denied the remainder of his bonus after suffering a severe eye injury, losing part of his foot and his leg when his Humvee struck an IED in Iraq. Only after numerous calls and questions from my office is Derek now receiving his bonus. Our veterans should not need to fight so hard for something they are entitled to.

I am pleased to join my colleague from Pennsylvania (Mr. ALTMIRE) in cosponsoring the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act. This bipartisan bill, supported by over 200 Members of Congress, would require the Department of Defense to establish a uniform policy which provides veterans who are discharged from the military due to combat-related injuries or service-connected injuries their full payment of any bonuses within 90 days of discharge.

This legislation should not be necessary. As Commander in Chief, the President has the ability to correct this policy by requiring all military branches to provide severely wounded members with their full bonuses. This administration is quick to go to war, but slow to respond to the needs of our veterans.

Our Nation must be committed to caring for and honoring our veterans not just with words, but with deeds. Ensuring that our soldiers receive the bonuses they were promised is the least we can do for those who put their lives on the line to protect our freedoms.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3793, as amended, a bill to ensure that military personnel who die or who are retired or separated for medical reasons are paid their full enlistment or re-enlistment bonuses and are not subject to repayment of any portion of those bonuses.

Last month, media stories sparked outrage among Members of Congress and citizens alike when they highlighted what appeared to be a potentially widespread practice by the Army and Department of Defense. Media reports stated that wounded servicemembers who could no longer continue on active duty because of those wounds were being required to repay portions of their enlistment or re-enlistment bonuses because they had not fulfilled the terms of their contracts. In some cases, the Army was cited as demanding repayment of thousands of dollars from soldiers who, but for their wound or injuries in combat, continued to serve the Army in this Nation honorably.

What the media failed to report completely was that the Department of Defense and the military services had an active policy in place that addressed this problem. The policy did the following: first, in cases where a servicemember died, not at the result of his or her own misconduct, the unpaid portions of an enlistment or re-en-

listment bonus would be paid to the servicemember's survivors, and there would be no requirement to repay already paid bonuses.

Second, when the servicemember was unable to complete an enlistment or re-enlistment due to circumstances reasonably beyond the servicemember's control, no already paid bonus would be recouped. Finally, the Secretaries of the military services had broad discretion, on a case-by-case basis, to forego recoupment and pay out unpaid portions of bonuses.

H.R. 3793, as amended, captures and codifies the most effective parts of the existing DOD policy, and goes beyond that policy. When enacted, H.R. 3793 will guarantee that a servicemember who dies or is retired or separated for medical disability will not be required to pay any portion of a bonus or similar benefit that they had received. It mandates that the full contracted amount of any unpaid bonus or similar benefit be paid, as appropriate, to the estates of servicemembers who die or to servicemembers who are retired or separated due to a disability. And it mandates that payments are to be made not later than 90 days after the death, retirement, or separation of the servicemember.

Additionally, if a service Secretary determines that requiring repayment or withholding payment of the unpaid bonus would be contrary to a personnel policy or management objective, against equity and good conscience, or be contrary to the best interests of the United States, then they would be allowed to waive repayment or to continue payment of unpaid bonuses. Discretion should be allowed for the most beneficial interpretation in favor of our courageous servicemembers.

H.R. 3793 is a good bill, and I urge all my colleagues to join me in supporting it. Our servicemen and -women deserve our most humble thanks, and this bill would ensure that we are honoring their sacrifices by not denying them or their families their due pay.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11th.

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

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN).

Mr. MCGOVERN. I want to thank the gentlelady from New Hampshire for yielding me the time, and I appreciate her work on behalf of veterans and their families. I would also like to recognize my colleague from Pennsylvania, Representative ALTMIRE, for championing this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, a little over a month ago we celebrated Veterans Day and were reminded of the men and women who have served our Nation and continue to wear our country's uniform. These brave men and women have volunteered for service with the assurances of health care and benefits for

them and their families. But despite entering into this solemn pledge, far too often our government has unfairly shortchanged our veterans.

With our readiness levels considered to be reaching all-time lows, our military has been attracting recruits via monetary incentives. The Department of Defense has been offering signing bonuses to soldiers in order to entice candidates for longer enlistment periods. But in too many cases, our wounded warriors are having their payments cut short or, in some instances, entirely taken away. Soldiers who sustain a combat-related injury and cannot serve out the entirety of their enlistment period are being forced to return part of or all of their bonuses. That is flat wrong. This is a shameful practice that is unjust and in no way reflects how our Nation's heroes ought to be treated.

H.R. 3793, the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act, remedies this unfair practice by requiring the DOD to uphold their part of the deal and fully pay all bonuses to veterans medically discharged due to combat-related wounds. Injuries sustained on the battlefield which prevent a soldier from completing their enlistment period should not be treated like some type of breach of contract. It is reprehensible to ask our wounded warriors to pay back any bonuses afforded them, as they have already sacrificed an amount for which no price can be named.

Mr. Speaker, I stand in strong support of H.R. 3793 and encourage my colleagues to support its passage.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. CARNEY).

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise today in strong support of H.R. 3793, the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act. As a lieutenant commander still serving in the U.S. Navy Reserve, I know full well the hardships and dangers our troops face.

Our country has made a promise to these brave men and women; and this promise simply states that if you protect us and defend our freedom, we will provide you with the benefits you have earned. Unfortunately, that is not happening right now. These brave men and women and their families deserve their bonuses, especially if they were killed or wounded in action.

The Veterans Guarantee Bonus Act ensures our soldiers will get the money they deserve and earned, and it does so in a timely manner. I applaud Congressman ALTMIRE's leadership on this issue, and I urge all Members of Congress who care about our troops and the sacrifices they make to vote in favor of this legislation.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to my friend and col-

league, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. YARMUTH).

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, we have spent much of this year uncovering and correcting shortfalls in this country's treatment of our uniformed heroes. Reversing negligence is one thing, but today we address the reprehensible and willful act of docking a soldier's pay for being injured while answering the call of duty. This literally is our government adding insult to injury.

These men and women left their homes and families, they paid with their time, bodies, and health for the security of our fellow citizens. Without them, we are defenseless. Thanks to them, we are the most powerful Nation in the world.

To save the injured, that is not enough, and to ask them to pay once more is shameful at best. They volunteered to become part-time and full-time professional soldiers out of love of this country, and it is high time our leaders started to show some gratitude. We owe them the best medical care, respect, honor, forthrightness, and, at the very least, we owe them the payment they were promised.

I urge my colleagues to restore honor to our injured heroes and, in so doing, restore honor to the Nation they fight for by supporting the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3792, introduced by my good friend, Representative ALTMIRE. This bill ensures that we keep our promises to our wounded soldiers who are injured in the line of duty by guaranteeing they receive full payment of their bonuses. Department of Defense rules deny enlistees their full enlistment bonus if they don't fulfill their entire military obligation. Members who were injured in combat and forced to retire or separate from the Armed Services before the end of their service commitment are forced to pay back the Department of Defense or do not receive the remaining portion of the bonus owed to them. This important legislation corrects this injustice and ensures that service members are not being financially penalized for their injuries after their patriotic duty to and sacrifice for their country. It comforts me knowing that Democrats are being elected to Congress who know and understand the problems that their constituents face and that they aren't wasting any time introducing bills that correct them. For that I commend Representative ALTMIRE and his leadership in Congress on veterans' health care.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. SHEA-PORTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3793, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. 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.

AWARDING CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4286) to award a congressional gold medal to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in recognition of her courageous and unwavering commitment to peace, non-violence, human rights, and democracy in Burma.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4286

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds as follows:

(1) Aung San Suu Kyi was born on June 19, 1945, in Rangoon, Burma, to Aung San, commander of the Burma Independence Army, and Ma Khin Kyi.

(2) On August 15, 1988, Ms. Suu Kyi, in her first political action, sent an open letter to the military controlled government asking for free, open, and multi-party elections.

(3) On September 24, 1988, the National League for Democracy (NLD) was formed, with Ms. Suu Kyi as the general-secretary, and it was, and remains, dedicated to a policy of non-violence and civil disobedience.

(4) Ms. Suu Kyi was subsequently placed under house arrest, where she remained for the next 6 years—without being charged or put on trial—and has been imprisoned twice more; she currently remains under house arrest.

(5) Despite her detention, the National League for Democracy won an open election with an overwhelming 82 percent of the vote—which the military junta nullified.

(6) While under house arrest, she has bravely refused offers to leave the country to continue to promote freedom and democracy in Burma.

(7) For her efforts on behalf of the Burmese people, she has been awarded the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 1990, the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2000, and the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991.

(8) Ms. Suu Kyi continues to fight on behalf of the Burmese people, even donating her \$1.3 million from her Nobel Prize to establish a health and education fund for Burma.

(9) She is the world's only imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize recipient, spending more than 12 of the past 17 years under house arrest.

(10) Despite an assassination attempt against her life, her prolonged illegal imprisonment, the constant public vilification of her character, and her inability to see her children or to see her husband before his death, Ms. Suu Kyi remains committed to peaceful dialogue with her captors, Burma's military regime, and Burma's ethnic nationalities towards bringing democracy, human rights, and national reconciliation to Burma.

SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate