

they get home. We need to help these heroes out anyway we can.

Mr. BUYER. I yield back the balance of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 3023, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 3023, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MEDAL OF HONOR SPECIAL PENSION INCREASE

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6980) to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase the amount of the Medal of Honor special pension provided under that title by up to \$1,000.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6980

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

SECTION 1. AUTHORITY OF SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO INCREASE MEDAL OF HONOR SPECIAL PENSION.

(a) **AUTHORITY TO INCREASE RATE OF SPECIAL PENSION.**—Subsection (a) of section 1562 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting “(1)” after “(a)”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(2)(A) Subject to the availability of appropriations for this purpose in advance in an appropriations Act, the Secretary may increase the rate of the special pension otherwise in effect under paragraph (1) by not more than \$1,000.

“(B) The Secretary may not increase the rate of a special pension under subparagraph (A) after the Secretary has expended all the funds specifically provided for such purpose in an appropriations Act.

“(C) The authority under subparagraph (A) expires on September 30, 2013.”.

(b) **CONFORMING AMENDMENT.**—Subsection (f)(1) of such section is amended by striking “this section” and inserting “subsection (a)(1)”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. BROWN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, since this bill was brought to us by the dis-

tinguished gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. BROWN), I would like to have him explain the bill and make sure everybody knows how important it is. We thank him for bringing us this legislation.

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to offer my support of H.R. 6980, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase the amount of the Medal of Honor special pension provided under that title by up to \$1,000.

It is with great satisfaction that I stand before you today, to further honor our military heroes who have already received our Nation's highest recognition and praise—those who have been awarded the Medal of Honor. With this bill, we honor those heroes with our financial support, because they were willing to defend our country with their lives.

The Medal of Honor is the nation's highest award for bravery and military valor that can be bestowed upon any servicemember in the military. It is presented by the President of the United States in the name of Congress.

The Medal of Honor was established by a joint resolution of Congress in 1862 and was first presented during the Civil War. It is bestowed on a member of the United States armed forces who distinguishes himself “. . . conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States . . .” Because of its nature, awards of the medal are frequently made posthumously.

The Medal of Honor confers special privileges on those who receive it, both by tradition and by law. By tradition, all other soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen—even higher-ranking officers up to the President of the United States—who are not also recipients of the Medal of Honor, must salute the recipient.

By law each recipient of the Medal may have their name placed on the Medal of Honor Roll. Each person whose name appears on the Medal of Honor Roll is certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as being entitled to receive a special pension.

The current rate of that pension is just over \$1,100 monthly . . . less than \$14,000 annually. I believe, and I think every other American will back me in this, that we have to do better in honoring our heroes.

H.R. 6980 will increase the rate of the special pension for recipients of the Medal of Honor by up to \$1,000. I believe that we should do more . . . but I recognize that this is the best we can do now!

Madam Speaker, yesterday we passed a bill for a one time payment to Filipino Veterans of World War II that I don't believe went far enough. Today, we'll pass this bill in support of our Nation's highest decorated heroes . . . and sadly . . . it too won't go far enough.

As we, as a Congress and as a Nation, focus on our veterans, particularly our newest veterans from OEF and OIF, we must also remember and never forget our heroes of previous wars. We owe to them all a debt of gratitude, and certainly to those who earned our Nation's highest honor every financial benefit we can bestow.

Today, by passing H.R. 6980, we once again recognize our military heroes, this time with financial support, and we tell them that we will never forget their bravery.

Madam Speaker, I urge the support of all my colleagues.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6980, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase the amount of the Medal of Honor special pension provided under that title by up to \$1,000.

I especially want to thank Chairman FILNER and Ranking Member BUYER for working with me on this legislation, and to thank Chairman MICHAUD for joining me in introducing the original version of this legislation, H.R. 1137.

Madam Speaker, the Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration awarded by the United States of America. It is awarded “for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life, above and beyond the call of duty, in actual combat against an armed enemy force.”

Since its initial presentation in 1863 to Private Jacob Parrott, 3,448 Americans have been awarded the Medal of Honor. Today's legislation is important, but I want to spend most of my time talking about the heroes who have received this honor.

Today there are 100 living recipients of the Medal of Honor. The average age of a living recipient is 74 years of age, and 47 percent of recipients earned their medals more than 50 years ago while serving in World War II and in Korea. The oldest living recipient, John W. Finn, is 99 years old. He received his medal for manning a 50-caliber gun in an exposed position, while wounded, during much of the attack on Pearl Harbor. In addition to Mr. Finn, 34 other recipients are veterans from World War II.

Sixty living recipients of the Medal of Honor earned their medals while serving in Vietnam, including a good friend of mine from my congressional district, General James Livingston. Another recipient of the Medal of Honor, Frank Curry, also lives in my district and is a veteran of World War II. The Congressional Medal of Honor Museum, located on the hangar deck of the USS *Yorktown* in Charleston, South Carolina, serves as both a memorial to the heroic acts of the Medal of Honor recipients and a way to educate the public on their extraordinary service to their country.

The most recent Medal of Honor was awarded posthumously on June 5, 2008, to Private First Class Ross A. McGinnis, a member of the U.S. Army recognized for his service in Iraq. On December 4, 2006, Mr. McGinnis' platoon was on patrol when an insurgent threw a grenade into his HUMVEE. Although Private McGinnis could have escaped, he threw himself on top of the grenade, pinning it between himself and the radio mount and saving his fellow soldiers in the HUMVEE. Private McGinnis is the fourth Medal of Honor recipient from Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Navy SEAL Master-at-Arms Michael A. Monsoor and Lieutenant Michael P. Murphy, as well as Marine Corporal

Jason L. Dunham, were all posthumous recipients of the Medal of Honor for their incredible bravery in service to our country and their fellow men in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In recognition of their exceptional service, Medal of Honor recipients are entitled to a special pension, as first authorized by Congress in 1916. Currently, the 100 living recipients received an inflation-adjusted \$1,000 per month. H.R. 6980 will increase the base payment to \$2,000 per month, subject to appropriations. This benefit will act as the smallest token of appreciation to people who have shown the greatest possible devotion to their fellow soldiers and to their country.

Madam Speaker, this legislation would not have come to the floor today without the support of my good friends, Chairman FILNER, Ranking Member BUYER and Chairman MICHAUD.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 6980.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. I urge my colleagues to unanimously support this very important legislation, H.R. 6980.

Mr. BUYER. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6980, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase the amount of the Medal of Honor special pension provided under that title by up to \$1,000.

The Medal of Honor is the Nation's highest award for military valor. It is presented by the President in the name of Congress, and is often called the Congressional Medal of Honor. Since its first presentation in 1863, over 3,467 Medals of Honor have been awarded to a total of 3,448 individuals (there have been 19 double recipients).

Under current law, a veteran who has been awarded a Medal of Honor is eligible for a monthly pension (\$1,129 as of December 1, 2007). Eligibility for the pension is based solely on receipt of the Medal of Honor, and the recipient of the Medal of Honor must elect to receive the special pension. Receipt of this pension does not reduce any other benefits under U.S. law, and a veteran who has received more than one Medal of Honor is limited to receiving only one Medal of Honor pension benefit.

The legislation before us would increase the rate of this special pension by not more than \$1,000, subject to appropriations. In an informal estimate provided to my office, the total cost of this bill would be \$6 million over 5 years. The authority provided to the Secretary to expend the funds provided for this purposes would expire on September 30, 2013. After expending any funds appropriated for this purpose, the Secretary would not be authorized to further increase the rate of the special monthly pension.

Madam Speaker, over the years, it has been the honor of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs to name facilities after a number of Medal of Honor recipients, many of whom have passed on, but 100 still remain with us and walk as humble heroes among a grateful people. We can never thank these heroes enough for all they have given to protect our freedom and security. The special pension increase seems like a small amount compared to the price these warriors have paid.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. FILNER. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6980.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERMISSION TO CONSIDER AS ADOPTED MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Ms. SUTTON. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the motions to suspend the rules relating to the following measures be considered as adopted in the form considered by the House on Monday, September 22, 2008, or Tuesday, September 23, 2008, as applicable:

H.R. 160, H.R. 2933, H.R. 4828, H.R. 6323, H.R. 2994, and H.R. 1532.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, respective motions to reconsider are laid on the table.

There was no objection.

GRAMM-LEACH-BLILEY

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I would like to place in the RECORD remarks that I made in 1999 regarding a measure called the Gramm-Leach-Bliley bill that passed in this Congress on a vote of 362-57. At the time we said it would cause the mess we're facing today on Wall Street and indeed it has.

I will place also in the RECORD the votes of those who were present voting "yes" and voting "no."

This is an extraordinarily important vote that essentially unharnessed Wall Street to do whatever it wanted, mixing banking, commerce, real estate, insurance in a way America had not done for over half a century.

Some of what I said at that time was, "I would say to the people listening tonight, are you tired of calling banks and getting lost in the automated phone system, never locating a breath-

ing human being? This bill will make it worse.

"Are you fed up with rising ATM fees and service fees that now average over \$200 a year per account holder? This bill will make it worse.

"Are you tired of mega-financial conglomerates and mergers that have made your community a branch economy of financial centers located far away whose officers you never know who never come to your community? This bill will make it worse."

I would urge my colleagues to take a look at the remarks that were made over a decade ago and think about what we are facing today. I commend all of my colleagues who voted "no" in those days. They deserve a badge of honor.

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to the rule and in opposition, strong opposition, to the bill. This bill is pro megabank and it is against consumers.

And I would say to the people listening tonight, Are you tired of calling banks and getting lost in the automated phone system, never locating a breathing human being? This bill will make it worse.

Are you fed up with rising ATM fees and service fees that now average over \$200 a year per account holder? This bill will make it worse.

Are you skeptical about banks that used to be dedicated to safety and soundness and savings but are now switching to pushing stocks and insurance and debt? This bill will make it worse.

Are you tired of the megafinancial conglomerates and mergers that have made your community a branch economy of financial centers located far away, whose officers you never know, who never come to your community? This bill will make it worse.

Punitive reporting requirements in this bill are aimed at disabling community groups that are the only groups in this country that hold these institutions accountable for the depositors' money. It is going to make them a target of Federal reporting requirements. So why do community groups oppose this bill, like the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs, the Fair Housing Alliance, the National Low-Income Housing Coalition, the Coalition of Community Development Financial Institutions, Consumers Union, the Volunteers of America? Sounds like the folks that live in my neighborhood, my colleagues.

I would say this is one of the worst conceived bills ever to come before this body, simply because it does not pay attention to the majority of the American people who have, on average, less than \$2,000 in any financial institution in this country. To anyone listening tonight I say, Put your money in the credit unions. They are owned by you and they will take care of you. Vote against this bill.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 362, nays 57, not voting 15, as follows:

From Nov. 4, 1999 [Roll No. 570]

YEAS—362

Abercrombie	Andrews	Baird
Ackerman	Archer	Baker
Aderholt	Armey	Baldacci
Allen	Bachus	Ballenger