

or upcoming speculation on that. There are still many people at the mid-level management, regional directors, and the regional centers that need to be held accountable and get immediate results now and not way into the future after much more backlogs.

RESIGNATION OF ERIC SHINSEKI

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, for years, I have struggled with the VA bureaucracy in my region. There are attempts to downgrade the Roseburg Hospital. We are still fighting over adequate status and staffing. It took 6 years after I got funding for a critical new VA clinic in Eugene for them to break ground so we can get expanded services in staffing. Day in and day out my staff and I have to push the VA to get our veterans the benefits they have earned and the services they deserve.

Now we find that these problems were systemic and nationwide. It is right that General Shinseki has resigned, but that is just the beginning of the housecleaning and the reform we need in the Veterans Administration to see that they become an organization that is totally oriented toward serving our veterans and getting them the services they have earned and they deserve. Veterans shouldn't have to fight, they shouldn't have to wait in line. We can do better, and we must.

TRIBUTE TO ADMIRAL ROBERT PAPP, JR., AND COMMANDANT PAUL F. ZUKUNFT

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to congratulate the service of retiring Admiral Robert Papp, Jr., the Commandant of the Coast Guard, and to acknowledge the coming on board, if you will, of Commandant Paul F. Zukunft; to thank them for their collective service and to acknowledge Admiral Robert Papp, Jr., for his commitment to a rising and excelling United States Coast Guard.

In every hearing that the Coast Guard appears before us, as a member of the Homeland Security Committee and a ranking member on Border Security and Maritime Security, I acknowledge that sight of Coast Guard helicopters rescuing thousands during Hurricane Katrina, plucking them out of the raging waters and saving lives. Many people don't remember 1,000 died.

Today, that ceremony is occurring. I pay tribute to them, and I hope that many of us will have the opportunity to congratulate both of them.

Thank you for your service to this Nation. You are remembered.

STOP TRYING TO TAKE CARE OF THE WHOLE WORLD AND PUT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FIRST

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

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, you can never satisfy the government's appetite for money or land. They always want more. But this Nation's national debt has now reached an astounding \$17.6 trillion. The only reason more people are not upset about that figure is that nobody can humanly comprehend a figure like \$17.6 trillion.

Basically, what it means is that this Nation is in the shape of Detroit. The only difference is Detroit can't print money. This Nation keeps printing more money, more money, and more money. That is going to speed up in the years ahead if we don't get much more fiscal conservatism at the Federal level.

Anyone who wants to draw Social Security, our Federal pension, or our military pension that will buy very much in future years should demand much more fiscal responsibility from our Federal Government.

What we mainly need to do, Mr. Speaker, we need to stop trying to take care of the whole world and start taking care of our own country and putting the American people first once again.

HONORING TYLER FAZZARI

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

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Tyler Fazzari. Tyler is 10 years old. He lives in Port Washington, and he is giving back to our community in a major way.

Last week, I visited Nassau Suffolk Services for Autism, and I literally ran into Tyler in a corridor. I learned that he gave that school \$800 donated by his friends for his own birthday. He has a friend with autism, and he wanted to do something about it.

Tyler told me that he formed an organization called BirthdayBack. It inspires other kids to raise money for their birthdays in lieu of gifts and give to charity.

Tyler is an entrepreneur, but he is also a philanthropist. And at age 10, he gives me great hope for the future of our country and great hope that if enough of us are inspired by Tyler we will find a cure for autism.

Thank you, Tyler.

RESIGNATION OF VA SECRETARY SHINSEKI

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

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Secretary Shinseki for his service.

When you are born you get a birth certificate and when you die you are going to get a death certificate, and that dash in between is what you have done to make this a better place.

I have served on the Veteran Affairs' Committee for 22 years, and I know that my colleagues in the House and in the Senate talk a good talk. We talk about what we want to do for veterans. But talking and walking and rolling, I know for a fact that not until we had a Democratic House, a Democratic Senate, and a Democratic President, we got the largest funding in the history of the United States for the veterans.

This Secretary opened up the system so that all the Vietnam veterans could come in without proving one by one. So it is a lot of work that we have got to do—not what we have got to do, not just the VA, but what we have to do to make sure that we have the kind of service the veterans deserve.

CORRINE BROWN GRATEFUL FOR THE SERVICE OF VA SECRETARY SHINSEKI HE IS A TRUE AMERICAN HERO

WASHINGTON, DC.—Congresswoman Corrine Brown released the following statement today:

As a senior member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I am disappointed in the resignation of VA Secretary Shinseki. While he felt he would have been a distraction going forward to resolve the issues brought to light by Phoenix, I feel Secretary Shinseki was the person most capable of fixing these issues. I am grateful for his service both as a soldier and a veteran.

Since being sworn in as the seventh Secretary of Veterans Affairs in 2009, Secretary Shinseki has brought reform and a new way of thinking to the VA. As a former Chief of Staff of the Army, Secretary Shinseki knew what the young men and women protecting our freedoms overseas were going through and wanted to make sure they did not have to fight a bureaucracy to get the services they earned.

The young men and women coming back and the veterans from previous wars shared more than battlefield wounds when they returned home, they shared a difficulty in getting care and benefits for their signature wounds. For the Vietnam veterans, it was exposure to Agent Orange; for veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan, it was Traumatic Brain Injury.

Secretary Shinseki made the decision in 2009 to establish service connection for Vietnam Veterans with three specific illnesses that, based on the latest scientific evidence, have been associated with exposure to the herbicides referred to as Agent Orange—Parkinson's disease, ischemic heart disease, and B-cell leukemias.

This was the right thing to do for Vietnam Veterans and, thanks to this decision, Veterans who served in Vietnam during the war and who have one of the "presumptive" illnesses do not have to face another hurdle and prove an association between their illness and their military service. Thanks to this quick and decisive action VA has granted more than 160,000 retroactive claims associated with these three presumptive conditions, and awarded more than \$4.5 billion in retroactive benefits, with an average retroactive benefit payment of nearly \$27,000. Under Secretary Shinseki, the VA continues to expand and improve its mental health programs, adding more than 3800 mental health professionals to its clinical staff. As part of VA's 2012 hiring initiative, VA has hired 1,600