again, there is still much more to do to keep America safe. Each and every one of us, as I said, has an important role to play in this effort. By staying informed and active in our communities, we can all help accomplish this.

I commend Secretary Ridge and the Department of Homeland Security for inaugurating National Preparedness Month, which is keeping us all focused on this important goal.

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

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support the adoption of House Concurrent Resolution 489, and 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. OSE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 489.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL LONG-TERM CARE RESIDENTS' RIGHTS WEEK

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 772) supporting the goals and ideals of National Long-Term Care Residents' Rights Week and recognizing the importance to the Nation of residents of long-term care facilities, including senior citizens and individuals living with disabilities.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 772

Whereas there are nearly 1.7 million individuals living in 17,000 nursing homes and 1 million individuals living in 46,000 board and care and assisted living facilities in the United States;

Whereas residents of long-term care facilities, including senior citizens and individuals living with disabilities, are one of the Nation's most valued resources;

Whereas residents of long-term care facilities include the ''Greatest Generation'' of Americans who protected our freedoms in World War II and helped rebuild the world in the postwar years;

Whereas almost 160,000 people younger than 65 years of age live in the Nation's nursing homes;

Whereas the Nation should honor and celebrate long-term care residents, recognize their rich individuality, and reaffirm their rights as community members and citizens, including the right to vote;

Whereas the Federal Nursing Home Reform Act of 1987 guaranteed important rights, such as the right to privacy, the right to be treated with dignity, the right to exercise self-determination, the right to participate in the review of one's care plan, the right to be fully informed in advance of any changes in treatment, and the right to voice grievances without discrimination or reprisal;

Whereas long-term care ombudsmen, citizen advocates, facility staff, and family and resident councils work to educate and empower residents in the exercise of their rights;

Whereas the week beginning October 3, 2004, should be celebrated as National Long-Term Care Residents' Rights Week;

Whereas in recognition of National Long-Term Care Residents' Rights Week, individuals and groups around the country will be affirming the importance of quality of care and quality of life for long-term care residents; and

Whereas National Long-Term Care Residents' Rights Week originated in 1980, with resolutions introduced by Representative Claude Pepper and Senator David Pryor to designate a Nursing Home Residents Day: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Long-Term Care Residents' Rights Week; and

(2) encourages the President to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe that week with appropriate ceremonies and activities to demonstrate the importance of long-term care residents to our everyday lives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution supports the goals and ideals of National Long-Term Care Residents' Rights Week. Many Americans may not be aware that dozens of national, State and local organizations observe National Long-Term Care Residents' Rights Week during the first week of October. As we approach that time, I am pleased that the House is considering this resolution.

As the U.S. population grows older, long-term care facilities become increasingly important resources for more American families. These homes provide invaluable services by helping people with the day-to-day care of their elderly loved ones.

Nearly 2 million Americans today live in assisted living homes. These people are our parents, our grandparents, our great grandparents, our mentors, neighbors and friends. They have lived full lives, but they have much more living to do. We should always value and respect their dignity as that transpires.

I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN) for his efforts on House Resolution 772, and I urge its adoption.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, almost 1.7 million Americans live in a long-term care facility somewhere in the United States. With improvements in medicine and the aging of the baby boomer generation, that number is likely to increase. Therefore, it is important that we take the steps necessary to secure the safety, dignity and happiness of our senior citizens.

In 1987, the Federal Nursing Home Reform Act was created as an important first step towards protecting the rights of senior citizens. The act guaranteed seniors the right to self-determination, to be treated with dignity and the right to voice grievances without reprisal. However, much more can be done to educate seniors about their rights.

Creating a National Long-Term Care Residents Rights' Week is a step in the right direction. One week each year, Americans will be educated about long-term care facilities and the quality of care and the quality of life that our seniors deserve.

Our seniors are a national treasure that should be valued and treated with the utmost respect. There is no question that we are a stronger, safer and more prosperous nation because of the hard work and sacrifices made by the generations that have come before us.

□ 1415

We are without doubt in their debt. I support the goals and ideals of National Long Term Care Residents' Rights Week, and I encourage the President to issue a proclamation that calls upon the people of the United States to observe National Long Term Care Residents' Rights Week beginning October 3.

We also need to seriously look at what is being done about the pay of individuals who work in nursing homes and especially those at the lower levels. Even as I speak today, I think of my father who is 93 years old and who is probably breathing out his last breath in a facility today, so I have a great deal of concern for those individuals who work in these facilities and who often times are paid wages that are not commensurate with the importance of the work that they do.

I also would like to express appreciation to the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN) for his leadership on this important piece of legislation.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 772, a resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Long-Term Care Residents' Rights Week and recognizing the importance of residents of long-term care facilities to our everyday lives.

I want to thank Representative TOM DAVIS and Representative DANNY DAVIS for working with me to bring this resolution to the floor in a timely manner. I also want to recognize Representative JOHN MCHUGH for joining me in sponsoring this National Long-Term Care Residents' Rights Week resolution.

Since coming to Congress 30 years ago, one of my top priorities has been improving the health care received by senior citizens and

persons living with disabilities. It is these people whom we honor during National Long-Term Care Residents' Rights Week, which will begin this year on October 3.

I am especially pleased to be following in the footsteps of the legendary Claude Pepper, who first introduced a resolution in 1980 to designate a Nursing Home Residents Day. As many of you may remember, Claude Pepper was a tireless advocate for the interests of senior citizens and the disabled during his five decades of public service. Since 1980, this commemoration has been broadened to include all 2.7 million persons who live in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and board and care facilities in the U.S.

A large number of these long-term care residents are members of America's "Greatest Generation"—those men and women who protected our freedoms in World War II and helped rebuild the world in the post-war years. Our Nation should honor and celebrate these residents, recognize their rich individuality, and reaffirm their rights. These rights include the right to privacy, the right to be treated with dignity, the right to review one's care plan, the right to voice grievances without fear of reprisal, and the right to vote.

Mr. Speaker, residents of long-term facilities are a vital part of our Nation and they deserve our honor today. I urge the passage of H. Res. 772.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 772, which recognizes the importance of residents of long-term care facilities to the Nation, including senior citizens and individuals living with disabilities. This resolution calls for the week beginning October 3, 2004 to be celebrated as National Long-Term Care Residents' Rights Week.

We should do all that we can to help senior citizens and individuals living with disabilities maintain their rights and dignity in their daily lives as they strive to participate in the community and make meaningful contributions to our society. Helping them achieve their goals and dreams, and empowering them with the resources they need to lead rewarding lives depend on making sure their rights and benefits are preserved and strengthened. The objectives set forth under this resolution are consistent with these laudable goals.

Our nation's elderly include approximately 1.7 million who are living in 17,000 nursing homes and 1 million living in 46,000 assisted living facilities in the United States. About 160,000 people younger than 65 years of age live in the Nation's nursing homes. These numbers show the elderly and disabled constitute growing significant segments of our population and that we should recognize their specific needs and challenges and how to best serve their interests. I encourage my colleagues, therefore, to support the goals and ideals of National Long-Term Care Residents' Rights Week, and I welcome the participation of long-term care advocates as we strive to help those in such facilities lead productive and rewarding lives.

My commitment to our seniors in long-term care facilities and who are cared for by their families is why I introduced "The Elder Justice Act" (H.R. 2490). This bill will elevate problems associated with abuse against seniors to national attention by consolidating existing government functions dealing with the problem in several different federal agencies under a new Elder Justice Office within the Department of Health and Human Services. My legislation will also help States and local agencies combat neglect and exploitation—whether it is physical, psychological or financial—such as assisting victims and at-risk seniors through "safe havens" and supporting local and state prosecution of abuse perpetrated against the elderly.

Mr. Speaker, we should fulfill our commitment to seniors and disabled Americans. And we must ensure that resolutions like these move forward to demonstrate our obligations to those who need our help. I thank the gentleman from California, Mr. WAXMAN, for introducing this important resolution, and I urge my colleagues to support passage of H. Res. 772.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues support the passage of this important legislation.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LINDER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 772.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD DESIGNATE SEPTEMBER 11 AS A NATIONAL DAY OF VOLUNTARY SERVICE, CHARITY, AND COMPASSION

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res 473) expressing the sense of Congress that the President should designate September 11 as a national day of voluntary service, charity, and compassion, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 473

Whereas, across the Nation and around the world, people of all ages and walks of life collectively witnessed an event of immense tragedy on September 11, 2001;

Whereas the events of that day instantly transformed many lives, some through personal loss, and many others through an unfamiliar sense of individual and national vulnerability;

Whereas an unprecedented, historic bonding of Americans arose from the collective shock, unifying the Nation in a sustained outpouring of national spirit, pride, selflessness, generosity, courage, and service;

Whereas, on that day and the immediate days that followed, many brave people heroically, tirelessly, and courageously participated in an extraordinarily difficult and dangerous rescue and recovery effort, in many cases voluntarily putting their own well being at risk;

Whereas September 11 will never and should never be just another day in the hearts and minds of all Americans;

Whereas the creation of memorials and monuments honoring the lives lost on September 11, as well as the efforts of those who participated in rescue, recovery, and voluntary service efforts, are necessary, proper, and fitting, but alone cannot fully capture the Nation's desire to pay tribute in a meaningful way;

Whereas it is fitting and essential to establish a lasting, meaningful, and positive legacy of service for future generations as a tribute to those heroes of September 11;

Whereas many citizens wish to memorialize September 11 by engaging in personal and individual acts of community service or other giving activities as part of a national day of recognition and tribute; and

Whereas to lose this opportunity to bring people together for such an important endeavor would be a tragedy unto itself: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That—

(1) it is the sense of Congress that it is appropriate to annually observe Patriot Day, September 11, with voluntary acts of service and compassion in honor of the lives lost on that day and in the spirit of selflessness and unity demonstrated by those who participated in the rescue, recovery, and voluntary service activities that day; and

(2) Congress urges the President to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to annually observe Patriot Day, September 11, with appropriate and personal expressions of voluntary service, charity, and compassion toward others.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 473.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in September 2002 President Bush declared the anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks as Patriot Day. The President said September 11 should be a national time for prayer and remembrance for the heroes America lost on that fateful, Earth-shattering day. Accordingly, House Concurrent Resolution 473 states that it is appropriate to annually observe Patriot Day on September 11. I join with my colleagues in urging strong support of this meaningful resolution.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution before us takes the call for remembrance a step forward. It urges people to commemorate the day with voluntary acts of compassion towards loved ones, neighbors and others. These actions can have great effects on our communities all year long.

With little question, September 11, 2001, ushered in a new era in American history. This is a period in which we need to be vigilant, aware, unafraid, and appreciative of our freedoms. But because countless Americans have embraced the sentiment of this resolution