I would like to thank Milo Huempfner's children, Jackie, Wayne, Geri and Milo, for their help and also his friend, Bernard Depry of Green Bay, who brought this request to my attention and worked tirelessly over the years to make this a reality.

I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 2408. We are recognizing the deeds of a brave and noble man.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2408, a bill to designate the VA outpatient clinic in Green Bay, Wisconsin as the Milo Huempfner Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic would honor an individual whose demeanor during combat in World War II exemplifies the concept of the army of one.

In 1944, Private First Class Huempfner was stranded in the small Belgian village of Leignon after his truck was separated from its convoy and slid off the road. While in hiding in Leignon, Private First Class Huempfner found that the village had been overrun by German troops. He proceeded, over the next 4 days and nights, to singlehandedly wage war against an entire German armored column consisting of tanks, numerous heavy gun emplacements, and hundreds of soldiers. During this period of time, Private First Class Huempfner warned off numerous American and British troops from Leignon, who otherwise would have been slaughtered by the Germans occupying the town. He repeatedly refused to be evacuated on these occasions, staying to destroy additional German equipment, killing German soldiers in direct combat, and protecting the citizens of the occupied town.

Mr. Speaker, on Christmas Eve, British forces dislodged German forces using information collected by Private First Class Huempfner. After over 72 hours on his feet, under constant threat and harassment from enemy forces, Private First Class Huempfner retired to a household he had earlier defended.

For all of these accomplishments he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in 1973. After the war, Private First Class Huempfner attended the funerals of as many veteran comrades as possible. Reports indicate that he participated in the burial of some 900 fellow comrades in arms over the years since World War II, attending in full dress uniform, honoring their service and repeatedly demonstrating his love for our Nation by showing the brave veterans of Brown County the dignity and respect that they had earned. He continued attending these funerals until a week before his death in October 1985.

Mr. Speaker, I support honoring this brave American veteran by naming this facility the Milo C. Huempfner Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic. It is a fine tribute to a true patriot and true hero.

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I again 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. 2408.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. I want to thank Mr. KAGEN for bringing this story and history of a brave American and a great hero for Wisconsin. I wish your guys from Green Bay, whether they be quarterbacks or heroes, would have names we could pronounce. But we thank you for telling us the story of Milo Huempfner, and we look forward to the naming of the facility in Green Bay after him.

Mr. Speaker, the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) was established in 1918 by President Woodrow Wilson. It is the second highest military decoration of the United States Army and surpassed only by the Medal of Honor in order of precedence.

The DSC is awarded for extreme gallantry and risk of life and this extraordinary heroism must take place while the individual is engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States. The act of heroism must be so notable and involve risk of life so extraordinary as to set the individual apart from his comrades.

It is an honor for me to stand before you today to talk about one such individual—Milo C. Huempfner.

Mr. Huempfner was the most decorated serviceman in Brown County during World War II. In 1944, PFC Huempfner committed acts of extraordinary bravery and heroism during the final European campaign of World War II.

On December 20, 1944, in Belgium, PFC Huempfner was driving a truck loaded with ammunition that went off the road. Sending his only comrade back to seek help and safety, Huempfner proceeded over the next 4 days and nights to wage war, single-handedly, against an entire German armored column.

During this time, he warned off numerous American and British troops from the area who otherwise would have been slaughtered by the Germans occupying the area.

After his military service he remained heavily involved in veterans activities.

H.R. 2408 would name the Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic in Green Bay, Wisconsin, as the "Milo C. Huempfner Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic".

Given his unselfish service to his country, it is only fitting that we name a Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic in his honor.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague of Wisconsin, STEVE KAGEN, for introducing this bill and I urge the support of my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, 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. 2408.

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.

CONDEMNING THE ACTIONS OF SEPTEMBER 7, 2007, RESULTING IN DAMAGE TO THE VIETNAM VETERANS WAR MEMORIAL

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 680) condemning the actions of September 7, 2007, resulting in damage to the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 680

Whereas the Vietnam Veterans Memorial serves as a memorial to the 2,700,000 men and women in the United States Armed Forces who served in the designated war zone during the Vietnam Era;

Whereas 58,256 men and women died while serving in South East Asia or as a result of their wounds or a service-connected disability;

Whereas on Friday evening, September 7, 2007, the United States Park Police reported being notified of a light, oily, and unidentified substance that was spilled over portions of some of the names, panels, and paving stones of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial;

Whereas at least 14 of the 140 inscribed panels of the Memorial Wall were damaged; and

Whereas the National Park Service has determined that the damage was the result of an act of vandalism: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives condemns all attacks upon the memory of veterans and their service to the United States, as exemplified by the incident of vandalism of September 7, 2007.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I might consume.

I rise in strong support of this bill which condemns the action that resulted in damage to our Vietnam Veterans Memorial. We all know that this memorial recognizes and honors the men and women who are veterans of our Nation who served in one of America's most divisive wars. The memorial grew out of a need to try to heal the Nation's wounds as America struggled to reconcile its different moral and political points of view on this war. In fact, the memorial was conceived and designed to make no political statement about the war. It was designed to bring us together. It was designed as a place where everyone, regardless of their opinion of the war, could come together, remember and honor those who served and those who made the ultimate sacrifice in service of their country. I think all of us, wherever we were during that terribly divisive time,

feels at peace and feels a relationship to those people who served our Nation.

The memorial, as I said, has paved the way towards reconciliation and healing, a process that still continues. That's why, Mr. Speaker, I think we were all so disturbed when we heard about the senseless act of vandalism that happened earlier this year. Someone walked along that memorial with some type of oil applying it secretly on the wall as they walked by. The unknown oil has done real damage to the polished granite surface. But it did more than damage the wall, Mr. Speaker. It damaged the respect we have for our Nation's veterans and their sacrifice, damaging the healing process; and it takes us, as a Nation, back to a time when we did not honor or take care of our returning Vietnam veterans.

It takes us back to a time when many people in this country confused the war and the warrior. If you did not like the war, you said to heck with the warrior. That was a deep mistake on our part, Mr. Speaker, a tragic mistake, and one, as a Nation, we still suffer from today.

We did not provide these veterans the care they needed. We didn't welcome them back with honor and dignity and respect, and we're paying a price today. More than half of the homeless on the streets throughout America tonight, are Vietnam vets, over 200,000. Others still suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, other ailments. And as I said earlier, as many Vietnam veterans have now committed suicide as died in the original war. We, as a Nation, have to rectify this wrong. We have to take care and provide the health care, the treatment and the support that our Vietnam veterans deserve and need. We have to say that we are sorry for the treatment that they received when they came home, and honor these courageous men and women for their sacrifice to this Nation.

Anything that subtracts from this healing process is an outrage to the honor and memory of these brave veterans who fought and died for our country. And that is exactly what the senseless, needless act of vandalism that was perpetrated on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial does. It rubs salt into the wounds of our veterans that are still healing, and dishonors those that deserve nothing less than our Nation's honor and gratitude.

□ 1330

So, Mr. Speaker, through this resolution we condemn this act. We condemn those who are responsible. The oil is not just a stain on a piece of granite; it is a stain on the fabric of our Nation, a Nation still healing from a divisive war but a Nation that honors the sacrifices of its soldiers and veterans.

Maya Ying Lin, who designed the Memorial, said, '' . . . this Memorial is for all those who have died, and for us to remember them.''

Mr. Speaker, let us remember their patriotism and valor and let us condemn the discordant acts of those who seek to tarnish them.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 680, which condemns the actions of September 7, 2007, resulting in damage to the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial.

Mr. Speaker, the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial, commonly referred to as ''The Wall,'' serves as a memorial to the 2.7 million men and women in the United States Armed Forces who served in Vietnam. It is a memorial that has many different meanings to those who lived through that era and serves as an especially poignant reminder of the cost of that war and the ultimate sacrifice made in any conflict.

Americans come from all across the country each year to reflect on the sacrifices of the 58,256 names inscribed on the 140 panels of black granite. Whether it is a family member looking for the name of a loved one or a comrade in arms honoring a foxhole buddy or a young child searching for the name of a relative they never knew, every American who visits the wall leaves a changed person. It is fitting that the Memorial for our most divisive war has become a place of solace and coming together.

Mr. Speaker, regardless of who is responsible for the recent attack on the Vietnam Wall, that cowardly act was an affront to every American. In an apparent act of vandalism, 14 panels were defaced with a light, oily substance that damaged names, panels, and paving stones of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

While I am thankful that it appears that the substance was removed and the Memorial has been restored to its pristine condition, I believe it is important for us in Congress to show Congress's support for one of our Nation's most sacred sites.

Mr. Speaker, I also urge my colleagues to join me between November 7 through November 10 to read some of the 58,256 names on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. This will only be the fourth time that this reading has occurred here in Washington, and it coincides with the 25th anniversary of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

I thank my colleague Representative CARTER for introducing this resolution and Chairman FILNER and Ranking Member BUYER for bringing it to the floor today.

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

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to another hero of the Vietnam War, a man who served two tours in Vietnam, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. BOSWELL).

Mr. BOSWELL. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman FILNER for yielding and what he is doing here for veterans.

I have to thank JOHN CARTER for his attention to this issue. Vandalism is never acceptable. Never. When I learned about the vandalism that took place at the Vietnam Memorial, I was outraged. Outraged.

As a Vietnam veteran, as many of you are in this Chamber, many of our colleagues, for me 20 years plus, I know firsthand, a lot of us do, the sacrifices that servicemembers and their families make.

This memorial does more than just honor the brave men and women who gave their lives for this great Nation. It also serves as a reminder to all Americans the price of freedom.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial serves as a resting place for our brethren who were unable to come home. And I will bet some of the rest of you, as I, have wondered how come our name wasn't on that wall. We know it could have been. And for somebody to desecrate that is just unacceptable. I hope the park service will be able to find these criminals and swiftly bring them to justice.

I would like to give special thanks to all of our troops and all those of them who have given the ultimate sacrifice. We cannot forget them.

With the passage of this legislation today, it is one more example of what Congress has done to fulfill our Nation's obligation to servicemembers, their families, and all veterans.

I am proud to stand here as a cosponsor of this bill, and I encourage the House to pass H. Res. 680 today.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the sponsor of the legislation, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER).

Mr. CARTER. I thank the gentleman for yielding. And I would also like to thank Ranking Member BUYER and Chairman FILNER for bringing this forward today. I think this is an important resolution.

When I heard about the fact that someone had defaced the Vietnam Memorial, I just didn't really know what to think about it. It wasn't a front page item; it was a back page item. But to me it was just a shock. So I went down to the park to take a look at it.

And as I walked along there, and I know some others have done this too, you could see where this substance had cast what looked like a shadow across the names that were printed on portions of this wall. And it brought back to me a memory of the time when the traveling wall came to the town I am from in Round Rock, Texas, and was put up out in the park, and I went out there with one of my good friends and one of the lawyers who worked in my court who was a true Vietnam veteran and a hero, and we walked up to approach that wall. And it was sitting up on a hill in our park, and he got about 75 or 50 yards from the wall and he just stopped. And I said, Mike, are you going up there? And he said, Not right now. And then he stood there and stared at that wall and cried. And it

took him a long time before he approached that wall because, as he said, there were too many names on that wall that he missed and loved.

That wall means that kind of thing to our Vietnam veterans. And for someone to go out and deface the honor of these fallen heroes whose names were carved on that wall is intolerable. I too hope the Park Service finds these people and prosecutes them to the full extent of the law because this is a shame. It's not only a shame to our national monument, which is against the law, but it is a shame to our national honor that this happened. And that is why I brought this bill forward.

I want to note that there are others who feel the same way, and many of them are here today and I am thankful for them. The Gathering of Eagles and the AMVETS posted a $5,000 reward to try to find out who did this defacing of the wall. That's how much it means to them.

This act of vandalism cannot be tolerated, should not be tolerated. And by passing this resolution, we will reaffirm to our veterans who fought the war in Vietnam that they did it with honor, they did it with principle, and we respect them as our warriors who did their job and should have been treated accordingly with honor when they came home. We need to continue to honor our Vietnam vets. That's why I feel this resolution is so important. And I hope it will be passed unanimously by this House.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial serves as a memorial to the 2,700,000 men and women in the United States Armed Forces who served in the designated war zone during the Vietnam Era.

While serving in Southeast Asia or as a result of their wounds or a service-connected disability, 58,256 men and women died.

On Friday evening, September 7, 2007, the United States Park Police reported being notified of a light, oily, and unidentified substance that was spilled over portions of some of the names, panels, and paving stones of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

At least 14 of the 140 inscribed panels of the Memorial Wall were damaged.

The National Park Service has determined that the damage was the result of an act of vandalism.

Thank the Gathering of Eagles organization and AMVETS for bringing attention to this crime through the $5,000 reward they are offering and by spreading the word to their members.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing the words of our great Vietnam hero, Mr. JOHNSON, who was, of course, a POW in Vietnam for many, many years. But I will let Mr. BOOZMAN introduce him.

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON), a true American hero who certainly can speak with authority on this subject.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Thank you, Mr. BOOZMAN, and thank you, Chairman FILNER. I appreciate your bringing this to the floor. It's an important piece of legislation. And I think what everyone has said is absolutely true.

Mr. Speaker, as a former POW in Vietnam for nearly 7 years, and I was there for two tours too, Mr. BOSWELL and I both, I find this vandalism unconscionable and un-American. Why on Earth would someone want to reignite the pains of the past?

Defacing the wall was the ultimate act of cowardice. Why anyone would want to destroy a sacred monument in Washington, DC. is beyond me.

Even though I did two tours in Vietnam, I spent most of my time in captivity. I didn't get to know a lot of the brave men and women who died in action, those who have their names etched into the shiny, marble dark wall.

But I did get to know a great American very well. His name is Ron Storz, a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force and a fellow fighter pilot.

Originally from New York, Ron was shot down on April 28, 1965. I was shot down barely a year later, on April 16, 1966.

Because our captors tried to blame a handful of us for overthrowing the Vietnamese Government, they labeled us diehards. They threw 11 of us in solitary confinement in adjacent cells. Of the 11 of us, only 10 came home. Our captors killed Ron Storz after he went on a hunger strike.

It breaks my heart to think that someone would senselessly harm and deface the names, the honors, the legacies of great patriots like Ron.

You can find Ron's name on panel 1 of the east wall.

I deeply hope and pray the loved ones of those men and women memorialized on the wall know we remember their selfless family members and thank them for their dedicated service and ultimate sacrifice. These men and women listed on the wall all demonstrate why America is the land of the free and the home of the brave. These valiant warriors fought to protect and defend this great Nation, and we should not allow someone to tarnish their good names, and we must condemn this vandalism.

I thank you both.

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota, Colonel KLINE.

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I, like my colleagues, have come here today to condemn in the strongest possible terms the actions which damaged the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

And as always when I am in the same room with my colleague Mr. JOHNSON from Texas, I am humbled to be in the presence of a real hero of the Vietnam War. And I don't know that I can add to the passion and to the caring that he has already conveyed for us, but I just have to say that I can't remember being so outraged by such a cowardly act.

Visitors from around the world who come to visit the Memorial are moved by the simple but powerful image of the etched granite wall. For those of us who served in Vietnam, however, the names on the wall hold an even stronger significance. Those names bolster our sometimes failing memories of the friends and comrades who didn't return with us.

It is with these memories in minds that I express my complete, my total, utter outrage at this recent desecration. The person or persons who did this have violated a sacred trust, and I consider their actions deplorable. Their cowardice, yes, their cowardice, stands in sharp contrast to the bravery and valor of those for whom this memorial was erected, and we as a country will simply not tolerate such behavior. Just as we honor and pay tribute to those who served and sacrificed so much, so too must we condemn, we as a Congress, we as a people, we as a Nation, those who would denigrate that sacrifice through such cowardly actions.

If there are those who applaud or somehow justify this desecration, I would only remind them of the hypocrisy of their beliefs and their actions. Our freedom was won and maintained by brave men and women such as those honored on this wall, and we should all hold them reverently in our hearts.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague Mr. CARTER for bringing this important resolution to the floor, to the chairman and ranking member of the committee for bringing it to the floor.

I encourage my colleagues to support this bill. Let's support it unanimously.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE).

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my colleagues today to condemn in the harshest terms possible the vandalism that scarred the Vietnam Veterans Memorial a few weeks ago.

My district in Florida is home to the second most veterans of any Member of this body, with more than 105,000 veterans and their dependents residing there.

□ 1345

I also serve on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. So many brave soldiers, marines, Navy men, airmen who fought with bravery over in the Southeast to stop the spread of communism and to protect American interests live in my district. For those brave troops throughout our great Nation who perished in the line of fire, their names are forever marked on the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial here in Washington, DC. That anyone would deface the wall and desecrate the memory of these fine soldiers is beyond anyone's comprehension.

As someone who grew up in the Vietnam era and someone whose brother

and cousin and other family members served honorably and, thankfully, came home safely, I know firsthand the sacrifices these soldiers made, physically and emotionally, during their periods of service.

While thousands of our troops perished in the jungles of Vietnam and had their names inscribed on the wall, tens of thousands more came home to their families and loved ones. These are the people who deserve to be the most outraged by the vandalism that took place, the families, friends and fellow soldiers of the deceased, who make pilgrimages to the wall to pay respects and honor those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our great Nation.

I commend Judge CARTER for bringing this resolution to the floor today. And I thank him for doing his part to honor the memory of those who fought and died in Vietnam.

We all hope that the individuals who perpetrated this crime will be caught and prosecuted to the full extent of the law and that, clearly, something like this would never happen again.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE).

Mr. POE. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

General Westmoreland said: ''I do not believe that the men who served in uniform in Vietnam have been given the credit they rightfully deserve. It was a difficult war against an unorthodox enemy.'' I agree with General Westmoreland, especially in light of those events when, last month, Vietnam veterans were dishonored when outlaw vandals desecrated the memorial.

I want to thank my colleague, Judge CARTER, for introducing this resolution that deplores this despicable act. I'm glad to be a cosponsor of it.

It has also been said that in this war, Vietnam War, ''all gave some, and some gave all.'' And the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial lists the names of over 58,000 Americans who gave all for their country. And of course the men and women who sacrificed their lives in Vietnam deserve better than what happened to the memorial that honors them.

The thugs who desecrated the wall ought to be tracked down and be brought to justice because justice is the one thing we should always find. I certainly know what I would do to them if I were still on the bench, and I'm sure Judge CARTER would like to do the same if he caught them. Be that as it may, they should be brought before the bar of justice.

Many of the friends that I grew up with in Texas served in Vietnam, and there are five of their names on that wall. We can honor them today by passing this resolution and demanding justice.

It has been said that in the Vietnam War it cost our troops everything, and it cost the American public almost nothing. It's time for the American public, by standing up for this resolution, to stand up for our troops and honor their memory in Vietnam.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I know that all of us look forward to passing this very important resolution. I want to thank Judge CARTER for bringing it forward. And then also a special thanks to Mr. FILNER, chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and Ranking Member BUYER, in expediting it and getting it on the floor.

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Mr. 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. Res. 680.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. CARTER. I thank all the Members who spoke on this legislation. It is an important bill. But I must say, we ought to go further than this resolution.

Mr. POE said voting for this resolution means we're standing up for our troops. Well, I just spoke recently to the Annual Convention of the Vietnam Veterans of America. I'll tell you what they define as standing up for our troops—and there will be legislation embodying all of this soon. It would mean that we would look at the 200,000 Vietnam vets who are on the street homeless tonight and solve that moral blot on our record.

Most of us go to Stand-Downs every year, where the whole community comes around for 3 days and provides security and comfort, medical attention, dental health, legal assistance, clothes for the homeless vets in that community. The community comes together and has a holistic approach of drug and alcohol abuse and job counseling. So we know what to do for those 3 days. But the last five or eight Stand-Downs that I've addressed I said, I'm tired of coming to Stand-Downs. We should have Stand-Downs 365 days a year. That's what the Veterans Administration ought to do. With a $100 billion budget, you would think we could take care of the Vietnam vets who are homeless. That would be standing up for the troops.

In addition, many of them have been fighting for decades to get compensation for an agent orange disability. And the law, while we have extended the areas to which presumption applies and give these brave veterans health care and disability compensation, there is still too many areas that are not awarded a claim.

At this stage (I would like to talk to Mr. JOHNSON later about this), I would say all these agent orange claims, if they have medical backing and help by a veteran service officer, are presumptive, and have them stop fighting after all these decades and get the care and attention that they need.

I will tell you, I have just got a list of 500 veterans from one State, Vietnam vets, who got Parkinson's disease in their early fifties. That's way earlier than the average age of on set for the general population. So it's obviously Vietnam that was the cause. Yet the law says there is no proof that agent orange caused Parkinson's or Lou Gehrig's disease, and so they're shut out. That's a shame. They served us; we should serve them. Let's grant all these agent orange claims.

And we ought to, according to the representatives at the convention, give the status of ''mandatory'' or ''assured funding'' to the health care for our veterans. Right now, health care in our budget is called ''discretionary.'' We fight over it every year, Democrats, Republican, House, Senate, VA Committee versus everybody. We should not play politics with veterans health care, and we should have a guaranteed mandatory budget.

Those are the things that would really tell our Vietnam vets that we care about them. So let's pass this resolution. The wall is, as we've heard today, so important to our memories, to our healing, to those brave men who fought for us. But let's go further and really give the Vietnam vets a thank you and pass legislation that will not only end homelessness and grant the agent orange claims, but give mandatory funding for the VA health care budget.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 680 condemning the act of vandalism on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial last month. On the evening of September 7th vandals dumped an oily substance, which damaged 14 of the 140 black granite panels commemorating the lives of more than 58,000 men and women killed or missing during the war. The substance has been cleaned up, however I believe it is important for the American people to know what happened to this sacred shrine.

Mr. Speaker, while no one has yet been connected with the vandalism, anti-war protesters earlier this year defaced other Washington landmarks. In January, protesters spray painted a Capitol terrace. Protesters later defiled the Lone Sailor statue at the United States Navy Memorial. This pattern of attacks is a national disgrace.

When I stand before the Wall and look on those names, I feel great humility in the presence of what this memorial represents. These men and women died so that our very way of freedom might endure. I call upon the coward or cowards who defiled this shrine to come forward and accept responsibility, or go back under the rock from which they came. It is an obscene perversion that others would creep out in the dark of night to deface the memory of heroes. The memory of these patriots endures in our hearts, whatever hateful attacks vandals may attempt.

I would like to thank my colleague Representative JOHN CARTER of Texas for introducing this important legislation, and I thank the House leadership for bringing it to the floor.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, 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 agree to the resolution, H. Res. 680.

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

Mr. CARTER. 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.

SUPPORTING AND ENCOURAGING GREATER SUPPORT FOR VETERANS DAY EACH YEAR

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 237) supporting and encouraging greater support for Veterans Day each year.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 237

Whereas veterans of service in the United States Armed Forces have served the Nation with honor and at great personal sacrifice;

Whereas the American people owe the security of the Nation to those who have defended it;

Whereas on Memorial Day each year, the Nation honors those who lost their lives in service to the Nation;

Whereas on Veterans Day each year, the Nation honors those who have defended democracy by serving in the Armed Forces;

Whereas the observance of Memorial Day and Veterans Day is an expression of faith in democracy, faith in American values, and faith that those who fight for freedom will defeat those whose cause is unjust;

Whereas section 116(a) of title 36, United States Code, provides that ''The last Monday in May is Memorial Day'' and section 116(b) of that title requests the President to issue a proclamation each year calling on the people of the United States to observe Memorial Day by praying, according to their individual religious faith, for permanent peace, designating a period of time on Memorial Day during which the people may unite in prayer for a permanent peace, calling on the people of the United States to unite in prayer at that time, and calling on the media to join in observing Memorial Day and the period of prayer;

Whereas section 4 of the National Moment of Remembrance Act (Public Law 106–579) provides, ''The minute beginning at 3:00 p.m. (local time) on Memorial Day each year is designated as the 'National Moment of Remembrance' ''; and

Whereas Section 6103(a) of title 5, United States Code, provides that ''Memorial Day, the last Monday in May'' and ''Veteran's Day, November 11'' are legal public holidays: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) encourages Americans to demonstrate their support for veterans on Veterans Day each year by treating that day as a special day of reflection;

(2) encourages schools and teachers to educate students on the great contributions veterans have made to the country and its history, both while serving as members of the United States Armed Forces and after completing their service; and

(3) requests that the President issue a proclamation each year in connection with the observance of Veterans Day calling on the people of the United States to observe that day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I would yield for as much time as he may consume to the author of this legislation, an Army veteran of the Vietnam era, the gentleman from California (Mr. BACA).

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 237.

I want to thank Representative FILNER for his commitment to this resolution in support of our veterans. And I say ''the support of our veterans.'' As a veteran myself who served in both the 101st and 82nd Airborne Division, I am proud to stand with our brave men and women.

Today, there are over 23 million veterans living in the United States; 165,000 in Iraq and Afghanistan. In my district, we have over 32,000 veterans. There are also many veterans who serve in Congress, and I want to thank those Members who have served this country. And I salute each and every one of the Members who have served our country.

To my fellow veterans, I commend you for your service. When our troops commit to serve our country, they make a promise to serve and to protect this country.

We also have a moral responsibility to protect the returning veterans and their families. Veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan must receive the best treatment. Sadly, for the last few years, I don't believe that our government has held its end of the bargain. The conditions at Walter Reed show us that in many cases our veterans are not receiving the care they deserve. This resolution reminds us that Veterans Day is not just a day off from school or work. This is a special day of reflection to honor those who have defended our country.

I visited Israel a few years ago. There I learned how truly they respect and honor veterans in that country. Israel calls for 1 minute of silence across the whole country. The country's emergency siren goes off at 10 a.m., and all TV and radio stations are also interrupted and programs sounding the alert. Everyone then stops whatever they are doing, working, driving, anything else, and stands in silence for those heroes who have served their country. That's paying respect.

My resolution also encourages schools to educate our young people about the contributions of our veterans to this country because they ultimately have made the sacrifice for the freedoms that they have to be in school and to be all that they want to be.

This year, as Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, I have worked closely with Hispanic veterans and the Medal of Honor veteran winners from World War II until today. The stories of courage and sacrifices I've heard from them were nothing short of amazing. They deserve to be recognized and thanked, as well as every veteran who has served our country.

I also believe a special thanks is necessary to the veterans and military families that are left behind. Too often we forget about the families and veterans who are left behind. They have sacrificed so much for their loved ones and for America, for America that we stand up with, America that we have always been with. You are the support system and the backbone for all of these veterans.

On November 11, on Veterans Day, do not forget those who are the true heroes of this country. Reflect on the true meaning of Veterans Day, and remember the sacrifices made by so many proud American sons and daughters that we will honor on that day.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution. Veterans Day is about our heroes.

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

Mr. Speaker, I take great pleasure in urging my colleagues to support House Resolution 237, urging all of America to make a special effort to honor America's veterans on November 11, introduced by a veteran of the Vietnam War, the Honorable JOE BACA.

This resolution reminds each of us of the debt we owe to those whose sacrifices have made America the beacon of freedom throughout the world. America's holidays remind us of important events and persons in our Nation's history. It is significant that veterans are honored with two holidays that recognize the important role of those who wear the uniform.

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Veterans have assaulted heavily defended beaches, jumped from aircraft under heavy fire, shivered in frozen foxholes, slogged through malaria-ridden jungles, and endured horrible abuses as prisoners of war. Veterans have survived incredible hardships, they have suffered wounds, and far too many have paid the ultimate price of freedom. They have often experienced long separations from families, and they serve in the outposts of freedom while their fellow citizens enjoy the fruits of everyday life in America. Each of them, from the Army or Marine infantrymen on patrol, to the sailor deep in the bowels of an aircraft carrier, to the airmen miles above the ground sets an example for the rest of us.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to recall how Veterans Day came to be. In 1921, an unknown World War I American soldier was buried in Arlington