

110TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 6662

To require the Department of Defense to grant access to accredited members of the media at military commemoration ceremonies and memorial services for members of the Armed Forces who have died on active duty and when the remains of members of the Armed Forces arrive at military installations in the United States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 30, 2008

Mr. JONES of North Carolina (for himself, Mr. PAUL, Mr. GILCHREST, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. TAYLOR, Mr. POE, and Ms. SHEA-PORTER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To require the Department of Defense to grant access to accredited members of the media at military commemoration ceremonies and memorial services for members of the Armed Forces who have died on active duty and when the remains of members of the Armed Forces arrive at military installations in the United States.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Fallen Hero Com-
5 memoration Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. MEDIA ACCESS TO MILITARY COMMEMORATION**
2 **CEREMONIES, MEMORIAL SERVICES, AND AR-**
3 **RIVAL CEREMONIES FOR MEMBERS OF THE**
4 **ARMED FORCES WHO HAVE DIED ON ACTIVE**
5 **DUTY.**

6 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

7 (1) Members of the Armed Forces swear an
8 oath to support and defend the Constitution of the
9 United States.

10 (2) The Freedom of the Press is protected by
11 the First Amendment to the Constitution and is one
12 of the fundamental freedoms enjoyed by Americans.

13 (3) In each generation, members of the Armed
14 Forces have selflessly given their lives to secure the
15 freedoms Americans enjoy today.

16 (4) Americans must never forget the sacrifice
17 that was made, and continues to be made, by mem-
18 bers of the Armed Forces on behalf of the United
19 States.

20 (5) During the Vietnam War, images of arrival
21 ceremonies and flag-draped caskets of members of
22 the Armed Forces appeared regularly on television
23 and in print news sources.

24 (6) In 1985, the media covered a ceremony at
25 Andrews Air Force Base for members of the Armed
26 Forces killed in El Salvador. President Reagan at-

1 tended the ceremony and pinned Purple Heart med-
2 als on the flag-draped caskets.

3 (7) The practice of permitting media coverage
4 of the return of the remains of members of the
5 Armed Forces killed overseas was changed by the
6 Department of Defense in 1991, during the Persian
7 Gulf War. Department of Defense policy stated that
8 “Media coverage of the arrival of remains at the
9 port of entry or at the interim stops will not be per-
10 mitted . . .”.

11 (8) However, in 1996, the media photographed
12 the arrival and transfer ceremony at Dover Air
13 Force Base for the remains of Commerce Secretary
14 Ron Brown and 32 other Americans killed when
15 their plane crashed in Croatia. President Clinton
16 was present to receive the flag-draped caskets.

17 (9) In 1998, the media photographed the ar-
18 rival ceremony at Andrews Air Force Base for
19 Americans killed in simultaneous bombings of
20 United States embassies in Tanzania and Kenya.

21 (10) In 2001, the Department of Defense re-
22 stated the ban on media coverage at Dover Air
23 Force Base and at Ramstein Air Force Base. How-
24 ever, in 2002, the media was permitted to photo-
25 graph the transfer of flag-draped caskets at

1 Ramstein Air Force Base that carried the remains
2 of four members of the Armed Forces killed in Af-
3 ghanistan.

4 (11) In 2003, the Department of Defense ex-
5 panded the no-media policy, stating that “There will
6 be no arrival ceremonies for, or media coverage of,
7 deceased military personnel returning or departing
8 from Ramstein Air Base or Dover Air Force Base,
9 to include interim stops . . .”.

10 (b) ACCESS.—Subject to subsection (d), the Sec-
11 retary of Defense shall grant access to accredited members
12 of the media at military commemoration ceremonies and
13 memorial services conducted by the Armed Forces for
14 members of the Armed Forces who have died on active
15 duty and when the remains of members of the Armed
16 Forces arrive at military installations in the United
17 States.

18 (c) ACCREDITATION.—The Secretary of Defense may
19 establish the policy for accreditation of members of the
20 media for purposes of granting access under subsection
21 (b).

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