

I want to express my appreciation to the leadership of this House, to the members of the committee, and especially to the chairmen of the subcommittees and their ranking members. And I want to single out and offer a special note of thanks to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS), the ranking Democrat of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for all his work and for the legislation that we have been able to enact. He and his staff have been truly great to work with this year, as well as previous years. He is thoroughly committed to improving the lives of veterans; and due to his contributions to the legislative process, we have improved our work products immensely.

I want to acknowledge the contribution of the majority staff for this committee's work. Staff plays a key role in getting bills enacted, and it is important to recognize the contribution they make to the legislative process, and I thank them all for the work that they have done this year. That said, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 284.

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, as a cosponsor of H.R. 284, to support this measure, the "Honor Guard for Veterans Empowerment Act." This bill does a tremendous service to the men and women who so honorably served our country to preserve the freedom and prosperity we enjoy today. There is no doubt that those women and men deserve to have an Honor Guard funeral on their burial day. The Honor Guard for Veterans Empowerment Act is a critical piece in fulfilling this country's obligation to our Veteran community.

As the member who represents Congressman Sonny Montgomery's district I am proud to continue his legacy as a defender of our Veterans' rights. I believe this legislation continues the work he left in defending and honoring those who served this country in the time of greatest need.

I strongly support the Defense Departments January 1st, 2000 decision, ensuring that all veterans desiring a military funeral will have the opportunity. This legislation makes that commitment viable. H.R. 284 responds to the 21% growth in request for an honor guard funeral. It is critical that we have the resources to provide the greatest generation with the honor they are due on the day they are laid to rest.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support H.R. 284, which will allow Reservists to serve at military funerals by granting them the necessary release of time from their civilian jobs. Active military personnel are shrinking in numbers and the number of funerals performed are rising each year. Add to this the new policy adopted by the Department of Defense ensuring that all veterans receive a proper military honor funeral, and we must call upon the Reservists to perform occasionally in this capacity. These people should be supported for their willingness to serve this function and this bill will protect them in regard to their civilian employers. For these reasons I urge passage of this important bill.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 284, the Honor Guard for Veterans Empowerment Act. I urge my colleagues to join in supporting this urgently needed legislation.

H.R. 284 sets in statute language protecting the performance of voluntary inactive-duty funeral honors by Reserve component members. This is an important development in light of the increase in military funerals over the past 2 years.

Last year the Congress passed legislation requiring the Department of Defense to provide personnel for military funerals whenever an eligible veteran's family made such a request. However, manpower shortages in our active duty forces have made fulfillment of this task problematic.

Moreover, the number of requests by veterans and their families for military honors at funerals is on the rise. During the first 6 months of 2000, the number of such requests was 21 percent higher over the same period in the previous year.

As a result of these two factors, the Department of Defense has had to place an increasing reliance on its Reserve components for the performance of their duties. Yet current regulations do not reflect this reality, offering small compensation to the Reservist in exchange for the possible loss of a full-time job.

H.R. 284 protects Reservists by ensuring the performance of voluntary inactive-duty funeral honors by Reserve component members is protected under title 38, United States Code, chapter 43. It also offers additional incentives to reservists for the performing of these duties, and educates employers about the vital role played by reservists in veterans funerals.

Mr. Speaker, since this legislation is desperately needed, I urge my colleagues to lend it their wholehearted support.

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. STUMP) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 284, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess for approximately 10 minutes.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 53 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess for approximately 10 minutes.

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□ 1101

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PEASE) at 11 o'clock and 1 minute a.m.

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#### SENSE OF HOUSE REGARDING FIGHT AGAINST BREAST CANCER

Mr. COBURN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the reso-

lution (H. Res. 278) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the importance of education, early detection and treatment, and other efforts in the fight against breast cancer.

The Clerk read as follows:

#### H. RES. 278

Whereas an estimated 175,000 women and 1,300 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer in 1999, and an estimated 43,300 women and 400 men will die of the disease;

Whereas breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among women, excluding skin cancers;

Whereas breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death among all women and the leading cause of cancer death among women between ages 40 and 55;

Whereas breast cancer can often be treated most successfully if detected early on;

Whereas education, regular clinical and self-examinations, regular mammograms, and biopsies (when appropriate) are critical to detecting and treating breast cancer in a timely manner;

Whereas the American Cancer Society recommends that all women aged 40 and over have annual screening mammograms and clinical breast examinations by health professionals, that women aged 20 to 39 have clinical examinations every three years, and that all women aged 20 and over perform a breast self-examination every month; and

Whereas the House of Representatives as an institution and Members of Congress as individuals are in unique positions to help raise public awareness about the detection and treatment of breast cancer and to support the fight against breast cancer: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) all Americans, and above all women, should take an active role in the fight against breast cancer by using all the means available to them, including regular clinical and self-examinations, regular mammograms, and biopsies (when appropriate);

(2) the role played by national and community organizations and health care providers in promoting awareness of the importance of regular clinical and self-examinations, regular mammograms, and biopsies (when appropriate), and in providing information, support, and access to services, should be recognized and applauded; and

(3) the Federal Government has a responsibility to—

(A) endeavor to raise awareness about the importance of the early detection of, and proper treatment for, breast cancer;

(B) continue to fund research so that the causes of, and improved treatment for, breast cancer may be discovered; and

(C) continue to consider ways to improve access to, and the quality of, health services for detecting and treating breast cancer.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN).

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

Mr. Speaker, October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. In our country this year, 175,000 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer. That is very personal to me in that my sister has been diagnosed with it, my sister-in-law, and a very close first cousin recently died of this disease.