

We rely on them to do a job in Afghanistan.

□ 2350

We rely on them to do jobs all over the world for the security of this Nation. They certainly are entitled to the care of this Congress by making sure that they have first-class and the same good equipment as the regular Army. We will have a chance to vote on this tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MUSGRAVE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KENNEDY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HINCHEY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SKELTON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE COMPASSIONATE VISITOR VISA ACT TO FACILITATE THE TEMPORARY ADMISSION OF NON-IMMIGRANT ALIENS IN CIRCUMSTANCES OF FAMILY EMERGENCY OF CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CASE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the compassionate Visitor Visa Act, a bill to facilitate the temporary admission into our country of nonimmigrant aliens, who present no security risk, in times of family emergency for close relatives that are United States citizens or legal permanent residents.

Mr. Speaker, each of us tries to make the best decisions we can on the national and international issues of our day. But each of us is also committed to helping those we serve with their individual concerns, where the rubber of our national policies meets the road of everyday life. And those of us who represent communities of proud immigrants maintaining close ties to their homelands know that a large, growing, and increasingly difficult and frustrating portion of our casework is devoted to immigration.

In my own case, these issues involve citizens and legal residents with ties to the countries of Asia and the Pacific, the Philippines foremost among them (my district has more Filipino-Americans than any other congressional district in our country.) And of the related immigration concerns my constituents have sought my assistance with, none have been more difficult and heartwrenching than those involving the efforts of families to be reunited in time of family emergency.

Consider the following real-life examples from my own district experience:

A U.S. citizen mother was diagnosed with a terminal illness. She wanted to see her daughter, a Philippine citizen, from whom she had been separated for 15 years, one last time. Her daughter had remained in the Philippines by choice with her husband and children when the rest of the family emigrated to the U.S. She had no desire to emigrate and was willing to travel to see her dying mother without her husband and children. Nonetheless, she was denied a temporary nonimmigrant visa to say a final farewell and to attend her mother's funeral because she was not able to demonstrate affirmatively that she would in fact return to the Philippines.

A terminally ill U.S. citizen had not seen any of her siblings for more than 20 years and wanted to see just one of them one last time. Her sister applied for a nonimmigrant visa to be able to visit and care for her sibling in her final days. Similarly, she was going to leave her own husband and young children behind in the Philippines. Her visa application was denied, the reason cited being that because her husband's income was modest and she was not employed, the assumption was she would not return to the Philippines.

Madam Speaker, these are compelling stories of a well-intentioned immigration policy gone very wrong.

Let me first say that the problem these stories graphically illustrate and the solution my bill offers have nothing to do with preserving our homeland security. The reason for the rejection of these applicants was in no way related to any assessment of their security risk. They were subject to a security review like other applicants, and nothing in the compassionate Visa Act would alter that. All of that stands as it is and as it should be. (I will comment that resources to process security reviews in a timely and efficient manner are woefully inadequate to meet demand, but that is another discussion.)

The reason lies instead in the application of the presumption clause in current immigration law. In practice, applicants for nonimmigrant visas are presumed to be at risk of defaulting on their visas and remaining in our country illegally unless they can affirmatively prove that they will return to their countries. In the cases above, the applicants provided documentation to overcome this presumption and dem-

onstrate they had every reason to return to their country of origin: they maintained homes, businesses, bank accounts, and would leave other family members, often children, behind, but to no avail.

We can and should have an in-depth debate about whether this policy, in theory and practice, is wise or fair across-the-board as to all nonimmigrant visa applicants, but this bill does not engage in that larger picture. What the Compassionate Visa Act does say, however, is that the presumption clause, as applied to close family members, who are not security risks, of U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents that are seriously ill or who have died, is wrong and should be changed.

Opponents of the bill may argue that the results would be to detract from homeland security and enhance the default rate on nonimmigrant visas. First, for the third time, nothing in this bill changes or compromises procedures designed to identify and weed out security threats, so that cannot be used as an excuse to avoid the focus of this bill. Second, this bill does not say that consular officers cannot consider evidence of applicants' willingness to honor visa terms and return to their countries, but it does say that the deck won't be virtually impossibly stacked against them from the get-go. And third, this bill applies only in the narrow case of an applicant whose close family member has a serious illness or has died or has some other similar family emergency, as demonstrated by proof to the satisfaction of the immigration officers. Frankly, I don't accept that changing the presumption clause will increase the default rate.

Madam Speaker, this is the right thing to do, and we should do it.

SAY NO TO ADDED DEBT FOR OUR CHILDREN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. INSLEE. Madam Speaker, this is not a debate about whether or not to fulfill our moral obligation to continue to work in Iraq. It is a debate about how to do it. It does not matter how we got into Iraq. We are there now. Americans of all stripes, those who supported the war and those who oppose it, know in their hearts that we are united in our desire to support our proud troops in the field and to continue our work in Iraq.

I will be joining the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) and others in an attempt to increase the pay of those men and women who are making such a sacrifice in Iraq and Afghanistan tomorrow. But we owe these proud Americans in the field more than just that. We owe them a willingness to make some measure of sacrifice at home that is even the smallest fraction of the sacrifice they make overseas.

The bill before us takes the irresponsible road and fails to truly call upon us at home to actually pay for the costs of this war. This bill proposes to avoid any sacrifice at home by stealing every single dollar it spends from the Social Security trust fund to wage this war. Every single dollar proposed to be