

IN RECOGNITION OF SGT. S.J. TESKE AND THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE U.S. MILITARY

HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 2004

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the men and women of the United States armed services currently serving in the theaters of Afghanistan and Iraq. These men and women, from a diverse, cross-section of America perform their duties with pride and deep patriotism. Our soldiers remain committed to fulfilling a democratic Iraq where men, women and children can freely live without fear of a dictatorial regime and the suppression of individual freedoms. The successes that liberated Afghanistan from the Taliban and Iraq from Saddam Hussein resulted from the commitment, skill and expertise our soldiers displayed on the battlefield.

Mr. Speaker, I recently spoke to Sargent S.J. Teske of Boca Raton. Sgt. Teske is a member of the U.S. Marine Corps and has recently been deployed to the Iraq region. Following my conversation, I was presented with a letter written by this brave American. I ask unanimous consent to include Sgt. Teske's letter in to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

May God bless Sgt. Teske and the men and women of our armed forces.

A LETTER FROM ONE OF OUR TROOPS

APRIL 5, 2004.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: This afternoon I received a phone call from my brother requesting me to write a letter about how I felt about being deployed to Iraq. A relatively easy task to which I replied, "No problem, you will have it tonight." I debated as to whether I should give a generic, political or military answer or one that came from my heart. Needless to say, last night came and went.

I lay in bed looking at my fiancé fast asleep and our darling 1 year old lab curled up next to me, thinking about the weeks that lie ahead and how few I have left prior to my departure. Visions of the good-byes I would soon have to make to my parents, brothers, sisters, fiancé and friends ran through my mind and my eyes quickly swelled with tears. I thought about my 10 year high school reunion that I would miss in November, Christmas, birthdays, my best friend's wedding, dropping out of school, taking a \$30,000 salary cut and how my fiancé and family would have to take on so many responsibilities. Then the thoughts about why I had joined the Marine Corps 9.5 years ago came to mind, the blood, sweat, tears and pain throughout those years I put my body through to become one of "The Few". As my mind recaptured all of these memories and the soon approaching anxieties I decided that this is my answer to that question:

I feel that it is my responsibility to deploy to Iraq and partake in Operation Iraqi Freedom, not just as a responsibility to my troops and the Marine Corps, but to our Country. Freedom is not free. The fatigues I wear do not represent the United States Marine Corps; they represent all who have given their lives before me so I could have the opportunity to wear them. I belong to a brotherhood of individuals who are willing to sacrifice the most priceless gift, so others can know how amazing the meaning of Freedom really is. It is a responsibility and an obligation to a commitment made so many years

ago that I still today continue to choose to be apart of. I find pleasure in the simple things in life and the things you cannot buy or put a price tag on, it is these things we most often take for granted, and the cost of maintaining and defending them is Freedom—this is my job and my motivation.

I certainly don't benefit from monetary remunerations, our accommodations most often are made of the ground we walk on and the MREs we eat would not be considered as edible staples by most people's standards. The luxury of a shower or a cold glass of water are things that are most often, taken for granted, still I believe that our rewards are much greater. When I see innocent children laughing on their way to school, not worrying about the brutalities of war, destruction or hatred, my heart smiles. Sunday mornings sitting in the pew at church I understand what the definition of Freedom really is. Our Flag flying so proudly above every building stands for everything we are defending. To have the opportunity to continue my education, have a career, a home, vehicles and a family—that "wows" me. Our country is so spectacular, so beautiful, so amazing, so incredible and so untainted compared to that of not only my destination, but also so many others. I am proud to be a part of a mission that will make a difference not only in our generation, but our world. I have Faith that we will endure, and we will succeed in this war on terror. For me, there is an Honor and Pride that goes along with that.

I find strength in knowing that I am a part of an organization that is determined to end terrorism and overwhelmed with the confidence within us that we will succeed. Our Nation or any other Nation should never again have to feel the agony we felt on September 11th. I believe in God, our Marine Corps and our Country. Conclusively, what I feel about being deployed to Iraq and the sacrifices that will go along with it, is that I am proud to defend a Flag whose colors will never run, a military that will never falter and proud to serve such an amazing Nation. God Bless America and Semper Fidelis.

SJ TESKE, SGT USMC

HYBRID CARS

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 2004

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, rising global temperatures. Dangerously polluted air. A hamstrung foreign policy. Our dependence on fossil fuels contributes to countless problems, and California is on the frontline of many of them.

The first step out of this morass may be hybrid cars. With double the gas mileage of standard cars and far lower tailpipe emissions, they could dramatically reduce our unsustainable levels of energy consumption. I believe we should do everything possible to encourage hybrid use, which is why I support recent efforts to let hybrid drivers use the carpool lane regardless of the number of passengers in the car. A pending bill in the California legislature institutes a pilot program along these lines: 70,000 permits for hybrid users to access the lane, with a review of the program once 50,000 permits have been distributed.

Federal law currently prohibits such a program, but the transportation bill working its way through Congress removes this ban and

allows local jurisdictions to decide the issue for themselves. I support this change as a sensible and flexible way to encourage hybrid use. In fact, the House version of the bill originally required that hybrids be charged a toll to use the lane, a provision I considered unnecessary and heavy-handed. I proposed an amendment to remove this requirement, and guided this amendment to House passage.

The strongest criticism of this proposed change is that it will lead to overcrowded carpool lanes. We should take this concern seriously, since the carpool lane was created as much to relieve traffic congestion as to improve air quality. But there are a number of reasons to think this problem will not materialize or will be manageable if it does.

First, hybrids account for less than one half of one percent of new cars sold today. While it is true that car makers will soon be expanding their hybrid product lines considerably, it is estimated that hybrid cars will still amount to less than five percent of new car sales by 2013. Many of these cars will be hybrid sport utility vehicles that will not meet the Federal transportation bill's strict fuel efficiency standard for access to the carpool lane.

For that matter, Caltrans has estimated that carpool lanes around the state are at two-thirds of their maximum capacity. There is room for adding hybrid cars.

Of course, the goal is to encourage widespread adoption of hybrid technology. In some sense, we should hope that the lane will become more crowded, because it will be a sign that the incentive is working. That is why a flexible solution is essential. Local jurisdictions should monitor their own carpool lanes and impose restrictions as needed. The California bill perfectly embodies this approach: rather than diving in head first, the proposed program tests the waters with a limited number of permits.

Some have argued that once the lane is open to hybrid drivers they will not submit to new restrictions, even if a crowded carpool lane makes such restrictions necessary. This naturally assumes that access to a clogged carpool lane is worth fighting for. More important, it suggests an approach to governing that would limit us from trying new ideas; we must not avoid taking action for fear of our own success.

Allowing hybrids in the carpool lane is a bipartisan, problem-solving move toward cleaner air, and it will cost taxpayers little or nothing to implement. We should proceed forward in a cautious way, understanding that other goals are at stake but that freeing ourselves from the straightjacket of fossil fuels is worth the effort.

RHODE ISLAND'S SENIORS
CENTERS

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 2004

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, almost 60 years ago, the nation's first senior center opened in New York, marking the beginning of the senior center movement. Today, almost 10 million older Americans participate in senior centers across the country. In my district alone, the First District of Rhode Island, we are fortunate to have 24 senior centers. I visit these centers often, and when I do,