

common-sense, good government legislation. Constituents will appreciate the fact that Republicans are listening to their concerns and taking positive, productive steps to reach solutions.

There is much work to do, and we are methodically getting that work done. It may not be flashy, but it is responsibility in action, and Americans appreciate this. Republicans will continue to tackle the tough issues of the day rather than pass the buck on to future generations. Americans may not read about it in their newspapers or hear about it on the nightly news; however, solutions are happening here and now.

Mr. Speaker, success is defined in terms of solutions, not in terms of rhetoric, and solutions are what Republicans are bringing to the American people.

□ 1015

IN HONOR OF TODD VENETTE

(Mr. BOOZMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mourn the loss of a great American, Todd Venette, whose life was cut short by a terrorist attack in Iraq.

Todd, a former Marine, was helping Iraq's young democracy as a government contractor when he was killed by a terrorist car bomb in Baghdad. As his friends and family would tell you, Todd was a selfless person who volunteered to reenlist shortly after the war in Iraq started. When he completed his tour, his dedication to the mission led him to return to Iraq as a government contractor.

A giving person, a mentor, and a servant are among the words that have been used to describe Todd. As a firefighter in Russellville, Arkansas, Todd helped protect the community. His service to the people of Russellville did not end there. Todd was instrumental in establishing a wrestling program for kids at the local Boys and Girls Club, putting his talents to work as a mentor to shape the lives of young people of Russellville in a positive way.

Mr. Speaker, Todd touched many people in his short life. I ask my colleagues to keep Todd's family and friends in their thoughts and prayers during these very difficult times.

RECOGNIZING JIM LONGWORTH

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Triad Today for being awarded the Spectrum of Democracy Award for Responsible Election Coverage by the North Carolina Center For Voter Education. The program is aired in the Fifth Congressional District on Sinclair Broadcast-

ing's WXLV/WUPN station covering the Winston-Salem/Greensboro/High Point metropolitan area.

Triad Today was created October 2003 by veteran television broadcaster, author, and columnist Jim Longworth. It is the Piedmont Triad's only local television talk show. Its guests have included Senators and Congressmen, mayors and sports celebrities like Richard Petty. But most of the time it serves the community by disseminating information about the issues that matter the most to the community, like health care, public safety, and government.

But it was another kind of public service for which Triad Today was recently recognized. During the 2004 election cycle, Jim Longworth distributed free blocks of air time on his show to scores of congressional and gubernatorial candidates. His action helped raise citizen awareness of candidates and issues and encouraged more people to participate in the political process. For this, Mr. Longworth and Triad Today were awarded the Spectrum of Democracy Award.

Mr. Speaker, the press has a responsibility to fulfill its role as the fourth estate, that is, to serve as a guardian of democracy and defender of the public interest. I am pleased to congratulate Triad Today for its outstanding commitment to keeping the community informed.

REPUBLICANS RETURN CONTROL TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, Ronald Reagan once said that the government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: if it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it; and if it stops moving, subsidize it.

I believe the American people, not the government, have a better view of our economy. By working to remove the economic barriers of taxation, litigation and regulation, House Republicans are returning control of the economy to the American people. The 109th Congress has passed legislation this year which will permanently repeal the death tax, decrease the deficit, strengthen American borders, prevent frivolous lawsuits, improve our highways, and provide our country with a comprehensive energy policy.

In my home State of South Carolina, the unemployment rate continues to decrease and over 1,300 new jobs have been created since March. This great news is positive proof that the Republican leaders are creating more jobs, growing the economy, and returning control to the American people.

In conclusion, God bless our troops and we will never forget September 11.

THE HISTORY OF MEMORIAL DAY

(Mr. SHIMKUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, as we prepare to celebrate Memorial Day, let me give a brief history lesson. We know that Southern families decorated the graves of their fallen friends after the Civil War on what was known as Decoration Day.

However, it was a former Member of Congress, a Democrat-turned-Republican, an individual who got elected to the Senate, General John A. Logan, who gets credit for memorializing Memorial Day as he established the Grand Army of the Republic and issued General Order 31 which formerly established Memorial Day.

General Logan was from Illinois in the deep southern part of the State. He was a congressman, a U.S. Senator and a vice presidential candidate. He is memorialized with a statue here in Washington, DC and a statue in Raleigh, North Carolina, where he kept Union soldiers from burning down the city. He also has a community college named after him in the southern part of the State of Illinois.

As we remember the men and women who have fallen in combat, let us also remember our soldiers from all wars and the folks that made it possible for us to have and celebrate Memorial Day, and one of those individuals is General John A. Logan.

HONORING OUR VETERANS

(Mrs. MILLER of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, shortly after the conclusion of the Civil War, a group of veterans began a tradition known as Decoration Day. The day was set aside to decorate the graves of the men who had perished during battle, and it was believed Decoration Day was always during the month of May because flowers needed for the occasion were finally blooming. Two centuries later, Decoration Day is now Memorial Day, but two core traditions remain: we honor those who died protecting our Nation, and we still do so in May when the flowers are blooming.

Today, as our Nation spends its third consecutive Memorial Day at war, we remember the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice defending the precious gift of liberty. We honor the people who have left behind husband, wives, children and parents, as well as the riches and celebrations of life, to fight for the freedoms of all Americans; and we should remain always mindful of that symbolic tradition of Decoration Day, that flowers will bloom, a beautiful America will bloom from the sacrifices made by our fallen veterans.

Mr. Speaker, we give thanks for the service of our veterans; and to those who served and paid the ultimate price, we give our deepest thanks.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2528, MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 298 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 298

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2528) making appropriations for military quality of life functions of the Department of Defense, military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. Points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI are waived. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. When the committee rises and reports the bill back to the House with a recommendation that the bill do pass, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATHAM). The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 298 is an open rule providing for consideration of H.R. 2528, the Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act of 2006. The rule allows for 1 hour of general debate, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. It waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. It waives points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI, prohibiting unauthorized appropriations or legisla-

tive provisions in an appropriations bill.

It authorizes the Chair to accord priority and recognition to Members who have preprinted their amendments in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, and it provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Under the rules of the House, the bill shall be read for amendment by paragraph.

Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to present for consideration the rule for the very first Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs Appropriation bill. This important subcommittee was formed to take an all-inclusive look at the programs related to the quality of life for the brave servicemen and -women who currently serve America in the Armed Forces, their families and those men and women who sacrificed so much for our freedom in the past.

I also believe the bill before us achieves this important goal in a fiscally responsible manner. The new subcommittee held 14 hearings this year covering a wide range of issues pertaining to their new jurisdiction, and I believe their product is a strong one.

The underlying bill totals \$121.8 billion of which \$85.2 billion is discretionary and \$36.6 billion is mandatory. The discretionary funding level represents a \$1 billion increase above the President's request and \$5.9 billion above last year's enacted level. The bill funds the Department of Veterans Affairs at \$68.1 billion, \$2.3 billion above the fiscal year 2005 enacted level, and \$635 million above the 2006 budget request.

Particularly important is the \$21 billion for veterans medical services, \$1.6 billion above the 2005 enacted level and a billion dollars more than the budget request. This is an 8.5 percent increase over last year's level, and an 18.2 percent increase in medical services from fiscal year 2004.

Perhaps most importantly, and what I heard the most about from the veterans back home in northwest Georgia, is that this bill does not contain any new fees for veterans medical services or prescription drugs. The bill restores funding for long-term care to the level it was in the fiscal year 2005 appropriation legislation, and the bill directs the Secretary to work with the National Association of State Veterans Homes to generate an agreeable policy to make the program function more effectively for the veterans and for the taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, there are two State veterans homes in Georgia that are hugely important to many aging citizens and their families, and I am personally grateful for this measure.

Additionally, the bill includes language directing the Department to spend more than \$2.2 billion on specialty mental health care in fiscal year 2006, an important issue that many Members of Congress brought to the attention of the chairman. The subcommittee also included report language directing the VA to double the

funding available for mental health research.

For the Department of Defense, the bill provides a total of \$53.5 billion, and within this total is funding for military construction, for family housing construction and maintenance, basic allowance for housing payments, facilities maintenance, modernization, and environmental restoration.

Also included in this bill is \$20 billion for the Defense health program. This is an increase of \$1.8 billion above the fiscal year 2005 enacted level, and it is \$192.3 million above the 2006 Presidential budget request.

This amount will sufficiently allow for ongoing preparation of our brave soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines while caring also for their families at home.

□ 1030

Finally, the subcommittee has allowed for greatly enhanced interaction between the Department of Defense and the VA to explore joint ventures that can enhance a continuity of services provided between the two departments.

Mr. Speaker, in a tough budget year such as this, we have a responsibility to make sure that scarce resources are allocated in the most effective and efficient manner possible. This bill achieves that goal.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge Subcommittee Chairman WALSH, Ranking Subcommittee Member EDWARDS and, of course, Chairman LEWIS for their vision and hard work on this bill. I look forward to this debate, and I encourage my colleagues to support the rule and the underlying bill.

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, this is the first year that the House will consider a military quality of life-VA appropriations bill. As a result of the subcommittee realignment adopted earlier this year by the Appropriations Committee, military construction, Defense Department health programs and all veterans' programs are now contained in this one appropriations bill.

I want to commend Chairman WALSH and Ranking Member EDWARDS for the bill that they have crafted. Both gentlemen are well known for their skill at reaching out and working in a bipartisan manner and this bill reflects that collaboration as well as their deep commitment to our uniformed men and women and their families, both those in current service and those who have honored our Nation with past service.

Regrettably, while H.R. 2528 is a significant improvement over the President's shameful budget for veterans' health care, even this bill will not get the job done for the men and women who are depending on the Department