

and his personality. He received beef jerky, bubble gum, NASCAR magazines, and Dallas Cowboy T-shirts.

Eric said that the Iraqi people were grateful to Americans for their sacrifice in Iraq. Sergeant Duckworth also said it was his destiny and his belief that he should be an American soldier. He shared that belief with his mother in their last conversation they had together before he was killed in Iraq.

Madam Speaker, Eric's father spoke of his pride in his son's firm belief and dedication to the mission in Iraq. Eric's father, Michael, said Eric believed in his purpose, and his children, his nieces, his nephews will all grow up in a better world because of Eric's dedication to America.

So not only Eric, but the whole Duckworth family felt it was important that Staff Sergeant Eric Duckworth serve in the United States Army overseas. Sergeant Duckworth's service to his family and the Army and this country will always be remembered. Of course he is one of those few proud American heroes.

Madam Speaker, this is a photograph of Staff Sergeant Eric Duckworth. He was a real person that lived and died for the rest of us. His service reminds me of the lyrics to a song written by Toby Keith that is titled, "The American Soldier." Part of those lyrics say, "I will always do my duty, no matter what the price. I have counted up the cost, but I know the sacrifice. I don't want to die, but if dying is asked of me, I will bare that cross with honor, because freedom doesn't come free. I'm an American soldier, an American soldier."

Staff Sergeant Duckworth, America appreciates your sacrifice on the alter of freedom for the rest of us, and we also appreciate the sacrifice of the entire Duckworth family down in Houston, Texas. We are sympathetic and grieve with this family, but are proud of their son who served in the United States Army.

And that's just the way it is.

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

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

TAKING CARE OF AMERICA'S VETERANS

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, tonight I would like to discuss briefly another case of one of our very valiant soldiers who has returned to Ohio and numbers himself among the walking wounded.

My question to the President of the United States, my question to Mem-

bers of this Congress, is what is wrong with the government of this country when we cannot move the bill we passed in this House that increased veterans spending by 18 percent, get it through the other body and to the President of the United States to sign? What is wrong with the way we govern that the President of the United States cannot call the leader of the other body and say, "Move the bill so we can take care of the over 100,000 wounded that are coming home to us"?

The soldier I would like to talk about is only one of many that I met last Sunday who returned home from Iraq and is not being treated. This is a soldier who saw duty as a member of the 983rd Army Engineering Battalion, Combat, Heavy Duty, in Iraq, saw conflict, came home wounded, and is not getting treatment.

Here is what happened. There was an accident involving a truck and IEDs over there in Iraq and this particular soldier had a severe spinal cord injury and injuries to his head. In addition to that, since returning home, has had grand mal seizures, epileptic seizures. He never had that before he went to Iraq.

The military said, "There is something wrong with him. We will give him a 60 percent disability. But we won't give him 100 percent disability, because maybe he got those injuries from playing football in high school." Football in high school? He never had seizures until he went to Iraq and got injured.

So the military says, "Well, we will try to fix your neck." He goes through an operation in a hospital several hours away. It is very difficult for him to return there, because he doesn't have regular employment at this time and he is dealing with PTSD on top of everything else.

Now, why doesn't the government of the United States make it easy for wounded veterans, and we are not talking about 25 million people, we are talking about somewhere between 100,000 and 150,000 Americans to get cared for closest to home? Why can't we do that? Why can't the President of the United States, he is Commander-in-Chief of our Armed Forces, and this Congress, work together in the national interest to take care of all the soldiers that are coming home to us wounded?

In that particular unit that I visited on Sunday, there are many, many, many, many servicemembers who have PTSD. Why are they being asked to go 2½ hours away from home, spend an entire day waiting in line at a hospital, and then maybe coming back home again and wasting a day when they don't get paid at work, if they have a job? Why can't we take care of them close to home? We are not talking about 25 million people. We are talking about a very discrete set of Americans who put their lives on the line for us, and yet we can't find a way to care for them?

I hope the President of the United States has somebody listening to this tonight, because as Commander-in-Chief, it would be very easy to call over to that other body and to move our Department of Veterans Affairs bill out of this Congress, up Pennsylvania Avenue, get it signed, and with dispatch get the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of Veterans Affairs and say, "Work with the Congress. Work with the individuals who are here. Let's get these ill veterans to the care they need."

Why do we make it so hard? Why do we put the burden on the veteran? I had one veteran come up to me and say, "Congresswoman, my knee is all messed up. I had an accident over there. Why did the DOD discharge me before fixing my knee?" Now he has got to take weeks and weeks off of work, which he is unwilling to do, to try and go get an operation at a hospital very far from where he lives, and he doesn't have a support system in place.

Why would we do that? Why would the DOD not find a way to take a valourous veteran who is part of a combat engineering battalion and take care of him? Why do we let him fall between the cracks between the DOD and the VA? It is our responsibilities and the President's responsibility to care for these veterans, and we had best get at it.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. CLARKE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky 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 Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO 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 California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

SUPPORT VETO OVERRIDE ON SCHIP

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

Ms. HIRONO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to override the President's veto of the Children's Health Insurance Program reauthorization. The bill we sent him earlier this month would provide health