

and his representative for supporting this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the Apalachicola National Forest is the largest of Florida's three national forests. It contains 564,000 acres, and its rivers and streams provide a steady freshwater flow to some of the most productive coastal bays and estuaries known for shellfish and other commercial seafood. Portions of the forest are in wet lowlands and they abound with cypress, oak and magnolias. Watching wildlife, hunting and fishing are popular recreation activities in this beautiful national forest. Visitors to the forest also enjoy swimming, picnicking, boating, and camping.

The Apalachicola National Forest is truly a national treasure, and I am very proud that this legislation will help strengthen and sustain one of our Nation's most valuable natural assets.

As the chairman and the ranking member have said, this enables the national forest to sell a piece of property that really lies right on the south side of Tallahassee, Florida, in Leon County. It actually comes up to the beltway, or what we call the Capital Circle and is surrounded on three sides by commercial development. It is detached from the rest of the national forest, and so it is really, as you have heard earlier, an unmanageable piece of land. And with those proceeds, we are going to use the proceeds to go and purchase some privately held holdings within the confines of the 564,000 acres, what we commonly know as "inholdings," and that is the only purpose that those funds can be used for. There are about 2,000 acres of inholdings, privately held lands within the Apalachicola National Forest, and that is what those funds, Mr. Speaker, would be used for.

I want to thank Mr. Joe Baca, the Forestry Subcommittee chairman, and his staff director, Lisa Shelton, for helping guide this legislation through the subcommittee process. And also I want to thank my friend, the majority leader, Mr. HOYER, for scheduling. I encourage our colleagues to pass this legislation.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1374.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill just considered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

□ 1230

EXPRESSING HEARTFELT SYMPATHY FOR THE VICTIMS AND FAMILIES OF THE SHOOTINGS IN OMAHA, NEBRASKA, ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2007

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 856) expressing heartfelt sympathy for the victims and families of the shootings in Omaha, Nebraska, on Wednesday, December 5, 2007.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 856

Whereas the community of Omaha, Nebraska has suffered through a tragic event at the Westroads Mall that resulted in the loss of 9 lives and the wounding of several others;

Whereas on December 5, 2007, a troubled young man entered a department store in the Westroads Mall in Omaha, Nebraska carrying a rifle;

Whereas the young man began to randomly fire his rifle at shoppers and store clerks within the Von Maur department store and other locations within Westroads Mall;

Whereas the result of this shooting spree resulted in the deaths of Gary Scharf, John McDonald, Angie Schuster, Maggie Webb, Janet Jorgensen, Diane Trent, Gary Joy, and Beverly Flynn;

Whereas Fred Wilson, Michelle Oldham, Jeff Schaffert, and Brad Stafford were wounded as a result of the shootings;

Whereas the first responders, officers of the Omaha Police Department, Douglas and Sarpy County Sheriff's Department, and Omaha Fire Department, arrived at the Westroads Mall within minutes and secured all entrances and exits to the mall and discovered a number of deceased persons, including the shooter;

Whereas on December 6, 2007 Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman ordered that all United States and State flags in Nebraska be flown at half-staff through Sunday, Dec. 9; and

Whereas the grieving and celebration of the lives of those lost in this senseless tragedy will be with the greater Omaha community for months and years to come: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the United States House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its heartfelt sympathy for the victims and families of the shootings in Omaha, Nebraska on Wednesday, December 5, 2007; and

(2) conveys its gratitude to the city and county officials, and all the police, fire, sheriff, and emergency medical teams who responded swiftly to the scene and secured the mall and surrounding area.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) and the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I join my colleagues in consideration of H. Res. 856, which expresses heartfelt sympathy for the victims and families of the shootings in Omaha, Nebraska, on Wednesday, December 5, 2007. H. Res. 856, which was introduced by Representative LEE TERRY on December 12, 2007, has the support of 72 Members of Congress.

The community of Omaha, Nebraska, experienced a shooting spree at the hands of a troubled teenager carrying a rifle on December 5. Sadly, nine people died, and four others were wounded in the Westroads Mall. Thankfully, first responders, the Omaha Police Department, Douglas and Sarpy County Sheriff's Department, and Omaha Fire Department all arrived within minutes of the attacks to secure all entrances.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to express great sympathy for the community's tragedy and all of the lives lost. I commend my colleague for sponsoring this measure, and I urge the swift passage of the resolution.

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

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, as we on a bipartisan basis support this resolution, I would yield to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY) such time as he may consume.

Mr. TERRY. I thank my friend, the gentleman from California, as well as the Government Reform Committee, for making sure that this got to the floor in such a timely manner.

December 5, 2007: that will be a day forever etched in Omaha's memory as the day a lone gunman took the lives of eight innocent people at the Westroads Mall, the Von Maur store, during the holiday shopping season. But it will also be remembered as a day that revealed the true character of Omaha.

Tragedy, no doubt, reveals the true meaning of unity in any community. Although I will never understand the senseless events that took place in my hometown on December 5, I stand here as a proud citizen, Congressman of that district, because it's in times like these it doesn't matter what party you belong to, what your political beliefs are, your race, creed, or color. People come together and they ask what can we do to help the city and the eight innocent people. I think this is not only the spirit of Omaha, or what defines the Omaha area, but also I think it is what exemplifies the spirit of America, and it is that spirit that we remember in each of the victims and the first responders.

Let me introduce the eight innocent lives that were lost on that day. There was 53-year-old Dianne Clavin Trent,

described by her family as a gentle, generous, soft-spoken woman who loved the Lord. She loved to shop and was always smiling. She had worked in customer service at Von Maur for about 8 years.

We have 65-year-old John McDonald, retired from Northern Natural Gas, whose daughter in fact worked with me in my law office. John was one of the heroes, when he left his place of safety to come out and start yelling, some people described it as rather passionately, at the gunman, to distract him from turning around, and a few feet away was a room where 12 other innocent people were holed up. John was shot. Amazingly, though, he was the last victim before the gunman turned the gun on himself.

The next victim, 48-year-old Gary Scharf, who just stopped by Von Maur to pick up some Christmas presents before catching a flight out of Omaha. He grew up on a ranch outside Curtis, Nebraska, where his funeral was held. He was a proud father who leaves behind a 19-year-old son.

Fifty-six-old Gary Joy was someone everyone could count on. He loved his job and liked to write poetry. His family followed his instructions to have his organs donated. They say it was just like Gary, to help someone else. His love was with us again, if not only in spirit.

There was 36-year-old Angie Schuster, born on Valentine's Day. Her boyfriend planned to give her an engagement ring this Christmas. The priest at her funeral called Angie and her soon-to-be fiance's love the "real thing."

We have 67-year-old Janet Jorgensen, who just celebrated her golden anniversary, 50 years of marriage to her husband Ron just a few months ago. She went above and beyond at Van Maur, as there were many times she would shop for customers or deliver items to customers' homes. She was the seamstress and cake-maker of the family; and for her three children and eight grandchildren, she will be missed.

There was 47-year-old Beverly Flynn. She took a part-time job at Von Maur because she was a mother of three beautiful girls. She was also a real estate agent, and her trademark was planting rosebushes in the yard of every new homeowner.

The youngest victim, 24-year-old Maggie Webb, was the new store manager of Von Maur, one of Omaha's finest department stores. Coworkers described her as one of the nicest people they had ever worked for, someone whose whole face lit up when she smiled. A lot of people will miss her service and smile.

Last, I want to thank our first responders. The spirit of Omaha showed itself through the efforts of our first responders. The first phone call from the mall came to 911 dispatchers at 1:42. No voice was on the line. All that was heard were gunshots. What an eerie call.

By the time the first responders arrived, just under 6 minutes later, the Omaha sheriff opens the doors and enters the store. What a heroic effort by our police officers, paramedics, firefighters, and others, when they got to the mall and saw such a grisly scene. The images they saw will likely haunt them for the rest of their lives. I thank the men and women who came to face the horror. Thank you for keeping us safe and saving lives. I also want to praise the spirit of Omaha for coming together after this tragedy.

In closing, I am deeply saddened by the senseless act from a troubled and disturbed teenager. It's something our city will never forget. It has scarred the very heart of our community. But I am proud of our community for its reaction and the way we came together to support the victims and begin the healing of our city.

Thank you once again to Government Reform for allowing this resolution to come forward and be part of the continuing healing in Omaha.

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

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from the First Congressional District of Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY).

Mr. FORTENBERRY. I thank the gentleman from California for yielding, and I also wish to thank my colleague, Congressman TERRY, for introducing this important resolution.

As we have heard, Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, December 5, the enthusiasm of the holiday season came to an abrupt halt with an act of senseless brutality at the Westroads Mall in Omaha, Nebraska.

Mr. Speaker, as the Nation mourns the eight victims who were killed and the three who were wounded, and, I should add, I appreciate Mr. TERRY's lengthy description of these innocent persons and their lives, I think it is also important and appropriate to recognize their uncommon heroics and great sacrifices that are now just coming to light. If there is a comfort in the midst of this difficult time, it is the beauty of the human spirit and the good that stood in the midst of this horror and violence.

Dianne Clavin Trent of Omaha was a 53-year-old former airline flight attendant who had worked for 8 years in customer service at the Von Maur store in the Westroads Mall. As we have now learned, Dianne did not flee when she saw the gunman. She stood. She dialed 911 and gave a description of him, and then he turned on her.

Gary Scharf, 48 years old, of Lincoln, Nebraska, my hometown, was an agricultural chemical sales manager in the mall to buy a dress shirt. When he heard the gunshots, Gary also called 911. It appears then that he ran from where he was safe up to where the shooting was taking place. As he ran up the escalator, he yelled out, "I called 911" in an apparent attempt to

distract the gunman. He also pulled a woman off the escalator out of harm's way before the gunman turned on him.

Mr. Speaker, I happened to know Gary and I am proud to call him a friend.

John McDonald was a 65-year-old grandfather and retired natural gas company manager living in Council Bluffs. When the rampage began, John took cover with his wife in the customer service area. As the gunman entered the customer service area, John stood and confronted him, and he too was shot. As now seems apparent, John's courage may have saved the lives of many other people nearby.

Dianne, Gary and John, innocently shopping one minute, decided in an instant to let go of a natural tendency to self-preservation and to make a great sacrifice for their fellow man. Others may have acted similarly in ways that we may never know.

Mr. Speaker, I thought you and the American people should know of this new information. God bless all those who lost their lives or were injured that day, and God bless their loved ones.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, once again, I express the deep condolences and regrets of, I know, the entire House for the Omaha tragedy, particularly coming at this time when the whole country comes together in great love and respect.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 856.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

HONORING LOCAL AND STATE FIRST RESPONDERS, AND THE CITIZENS OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST IN FACING THE SEVERE WINTER STORM OF DECEMBER 2 AND 3, 2007

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 851) honoring local and State first responders, and the citizens of the Pacific Northwest in facing the severe winter storm of December 2 and 3, 2007.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows: