

Second Marine Expeditionary Force out of Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

In March of last year, this dedicated soldier was called to duty in Iraq for the second time and once again had to leave his family to serve his country. On the morning of May 5th of that year, a roadside bomb struck Master Sergeant Mack's vehicle in Al Anbar Province, Iraq. In a flash, an outstanding 23-year Marine Corps career was over and he was killed.

A passionate family man, Sergeant Mack's wife remembers him as a person who put his family first and made sure the family participated in many activities together. His primary goal in life was to be a mentor for his children and to all children, according to his wife. He leaves behind his wife, mother and two children. I might just add, obviously he put his country first, too.

Madam Speaker, in recognition of his service to his community and country as a Postal Service mechanic and Marine, we feel it is fitting to name the postal facility located at 3701 Altamesa Boulevard in Forth Worth, Texas, in honor of Master Sergeant Kenneth Mack.

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

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I want to take note of the fact that this was probably a member of the Reserve or National Guard, because for over 20 years he had been a member of the Postal Service, which also comes under the jurisdiction of this committee.

I think it bears underlining how much of the armed services of the United States today is made up of the post office, civil servants, first responders, often needed at home, but always willing to go where their country needs them. I find this a particularly deserving measure and urge passage of the bill.

Madam 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 pass the bill, H.R. 3988.

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.

ARMY PFC JUAN ALONSO
COVARRUBIAS POST OFFICE
BUILDING

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3720) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 424 Clay Avenue in Waco, Texas, as the "Army PFC Juan Alonso Covarrubias Post Office Building".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3720

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. ARMY PFC JUAN ALONSO
COVARRUBIAS POST OFFICE BUILD-
ING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 424 Clay Avenue in Waco, Texas, shall be known and designated as the "Army PFC Juan Alonso Covarrubias Post Office Building".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Army PFC Juan Alonso Covarrubias Post Office Building".

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

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues in consideration of H.R. 3720, which names the postal facility in Waco, Texas, after Army PFC Juan Alonso Covarrubias.

H.R. 3720, which was introduced by Representative CHET EDWARDS on October 7, 2007, was reported from the Oversight Committee on December 12, 2007, by voice vote. This measure has been cosponsored by 31 Members and has the support of the entire Texas delegation.

The bill is named after a servicemember who served and died as an airborne paratrooper in the Vietnam war in 1969. As a member of the Army Selective Service, he served in Thua Thien, South Vietnam. Through his efforts and sacrifice, he was awarded the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, and Bronze Star Medal. His name appears on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC. I urge swift passage of this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHAYS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, on April 19, 1948, an American hero was born. His name was Juan Alonso Covarrubias. He was raised in Waco, Texas, but moved to Dallas, where he was drafted in 1968 into the United States Army. At the age of 20, he served courageously in Vietnam as an airborne paratrooper. It was there on April 24, 1969, in the Thua Thien Province, where he tragically lost his life while defending his country.

Army Private First Class Covarrubias was buried with full military honors on April 4, 1969. Among his awards and decorations for his remarkable achievements are the Bronze Star

Medal, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Expert Badge and Rifle Bar, Marksman Badge with Auto Rifle Bar, Sharpshooter Badge and Machine Gun Bar.

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His service has also been acknowledged at the Waco Vietnam Veterans Memorial and on the veterans wall in Washington, DC.

Madam Speaker, let us recognize the courageous service and ultimate sacrifice of Army Private First Class Juan Alonso Covarrubias by renaming the post office located at 424 Clay Avenue in Waco, Texas, in his honor.

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

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as he may require to the Member from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) who sponsored this resolution.

Mr. EDWARDS. Madam Speaker, let me first thank my colleagues for joining with me in honoring this great American. I rise today in support of H.R. 3720, which salutes the service and sacrifice of Army Private First Class Juan Alonso Covarrubias by naming a U.S. Post Office in Waco, Texas, my hometown, in his honor.

For generations to come, citizens in Waco will be reminded that Mr. Covarrubias in the prime of his life in 1969, in the words of Lincoln, gave his "last full measure of devotion" to country.

In doing so, Mr. Covarrubias joined the hallowed hall of heroes who, throughout our Nation's history, have given their lives and duty to country. Juan Alonso Covarrubias was born on April 19, 1948. He was raised in Waco and, as mentioned, later moved to Dallas. In 1968, he answered his country's call to duty. He served in the Army's famed 101st Airborne Division and arrived in Vietnam on November 28, 1968, as a young 20-year-old airborne paratrooper.

On March 24, 1969, just 1 month after the birth of his daughter, Tammy, this young father gave his life so very far from home. It is that type of incredible sacrifice that should remind us all that we are the land of the free, because we are still the home of the brave.

With full military honors, Mr. Covarrubias was buried in Waco on Good Friday in 1969. While his final resting place may be there at Waco Memorial Park, I have faith that his spirit will touch the lives of others who will be inspired by this young man's love of country.

Mr. Covarrubias is honored at the Waco Vietnam Veterans Memorial and on the Veterans Wall in Washington D.C. He earned the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, the Bronze Star Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, Expert Badge with Rifle Bar, Marksman Badge with Auto Rifle Bar, and the Sharpshooter Badge with Machine Gun Bar.

Upon the passage of this bill into law, thousands of Waco citizens who visit the U.S. Post Office at 424 Clay Avenue, just blocks away from the Waco VA regional office, will be touched by the life and sacrifice of the young man raised in their neighborhood.

It is my hope that Hispanic Americans, who have time and again served our Nation in combat with distinction, will take special pride in knowing that Private First Class Covarrubias will forever stand as a symbol of all Hispanics who so patriotically served America in uniform.

I especially want to thank my friend, a Vietnam veteran and a great veterans leader, Robert Gamboa, for working on this legislation to ensure that Mr. Covarrubias's service would never be forgotten.

Madam Speaker, I believe the families and loved ones of our servicemen and women are truly the unsung heroes and heroines in our Nation's defense. That is why I want to express my respect to the family of Mr. Covarrubias, his 97-year-old father, Juan Covarrubias; his brother, Gilbert; his sister, Irene Covarrubias Ramirez; and his daughter, Tammy Covarrubias Boyett.

I would also like to say to the Covarrubias family, which sacrificed so much for the American family, that a grateful Nation owes you a great, deep debt of gratitude.

I would like to say to Tammy that while you never got to know your father in person, I hope you will always be proud that he loved you so much that he was willing to sacrifice his life for the country in which his little girl would be raised. Surely he must look down upon you now from a special place in heaven reserved for those who would lay down their lives for their neighbors.

To Private Covarrubias's father, I would say, myself, as the father of two young sons, that no father should ever have to see his own son buried. But I hope you take comfort and pride in knowing that the spirit of your son that you helped bring into this world will be touching and inspiring the lives of others long after we are gone.

Juan Alonso Covarrubias is an American hero who gave his life in defending our country in Vietnam. We humbly recognize that we could never fully repay him or his family and loved ones for their loss. But I hope and pray that honoring him in this way will celebrate his dedicated service and preserve his memory.

Madam Speaker, with honor and respect for the life of Juan Alonso Covarrubias, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3720.

Ms. NORTON. Madam 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 pass the bill, H.R. 3720.

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.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS A MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THOSE PERSONS, GROUPS AND COMMUNITIES THAT ARE IMPOVERISHED, DISADVANTAGED OR OTHERWISE IN POVERTY

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 198) expressing the sense of Congress that the United States has a moral responsibility to meet the needs of those persons, groups and communities that are impoverished, disadvantaged or otherwise in poverty, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 198

Whereas poverty can be seen as a deep, structural problem that implicates our value system and our educational and economic institutions;

Whereas poverty may be defined as the lack of basic necessities of life such as food, shelter, clothing, health care, education, security, and opportunity;

Whereas policy initiatives addressing poverty have not kept pace with the needs of millions of Americans;

Whereas many experts believe that the lack of an equitable distribution of housing choices across the country leads to isolation and concentrated poverty;

Whereas the number of Americans living in poverty has risen by over 5,000,000 since 2000;

Whereas there were 37 million Americans living in poverty in 2005;

Whereas the official poverty rate in 2005 was 12.6 percent;

Whereas 24.9 percent of African Americans, 21.8 percent of Hispanics, 25.3 percent of Native Americans, 10.9 percent of Asian Americans, and 8.3 percent of Whites lived in poverty in the United States in 2005;

Whereas in 2005 a family of 4 was considered poor under the U.S. Census Bureau's official measure if the family's income was below \$19,971;

Whereas the poverty rate for children 18 years and younger (17.6 percent) remained higher than that of 18-24 year-olds (11.1 percent) and that of people 65 and older (10.1 percent) in 2005; and

Whereas the number in poverty increased for people 65 and older by almost 400,000 since 2000: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that the United States should set a national goal of cutting poverty in half over the next 10 years.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within 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. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues in consideration of H. Con. Res. 198, as amended, which expresses the sense of Congress that the United States has a moral responsibility to meet the needs of those persons, groups and communities that are impoverished, disadvantaged or otherwise in poverty.

H. Con. Res. 198 was introduced by Representative BARBARA LEE on August 1, 2007, and was amended and reported from the Oversight Committee on December 12 by a voice vote. The measure has the support and sponsorship of 80 Members of Congress and reminds each of us of the important role we play in the battle against poverty.

Madam Speaker, I want to continue with certain of my remarks in the RECORD, but I would like to make other remarks at this time.

We have just come from the celebration of the birth of Martin Luther King, Jr. His signature issues, of course, were war and peace and poverty, falling only behind civil rights. It's clear that he achieved what he desired, certainly much of what we desired, because during the 1960s there were three seminal civil rights bills passed, long-time goals of African Americans, other people of color, and many in this Chamber.

But two of King's goals remain completely without remedy. One, of course, is war and peace, and you can imagine where he would have been on the war in Iraq. But perhaps, most telling, is that we celebrated Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday at a time when the gap between rich and poor is considerably wider than when King died.

Therefore, I am not sure whether the gentlewoman from California had in mind that we would bring this bill up right after Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, but there it is, and that makes it all the more timely.

As it turns out, though, Madam Speaker, the state of the economy has rendered this issue high on the national agenda for the first time in many years. For the first time, the entire Congress will be looking or should be looking at those who have the least in our society and why. I am afraid it's not because of their high priority. They are the lowest voting group. They sometimes are invisible. But the fact is that economists across the board have said that we need to enact a stimulus package yesterday, and that in order for it to have any effect, and, in fact, not be effective when it might do more harm than good, we need to get the stimulus package in the pockets of people who can spend the money immediately.