

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield such time as he may consume to the sponsor of this legislation, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS).

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 295, which I introduced. I would like to thank Chairman SKELTON and Ranking Member HUNTER for allowing this resolution to come to the floor. I also want to thank Mr. COURTNEY and, of course, Mr. ROGERS.

Among the many things that make our Nation so great is our strong and valiant military. The strength, courage, and dedication of the men and women in uniform keep us safe at home from threats abroad. While Congress rightfully has and continues to recognize these men and women, so too should we honor their family members who serve as constant pillars of strength for them.

Behind each and every one of the more than 2 million individuals serving in the United States Armed Forces is a multitude of family members, be it mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, spouses, aunts, uncles, extended family, offering encouragement and providing the emotional and physical support our defenders need to successfully protect our Nation. These family members make daily sacrifices as they forgo time with their loved ones and face increased worry and uncertainty as members of the Armed Forces serve extended tours abroad and engage in more frequent training missions.

Even under the most difficult circumstances, when one of our soldiers is wounded in action, these families willingly take on the role of caregiver. They selflessly postpone their personal goals and rearrange their lives to meet the physical and emotional needs of their loved ones as they transition back to civilian life.

Our members of the Armed Forces are able to exhibit the level of strength and devotion that is their trademark, in part because of the network of support that they know they have at home. That is why I have introduced H. Con. Res. 295, which recognizes the integral role the families of our servicemembers play in defense of our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor and privilege that I rise today to express my deepest appreciation to the immediate and extended families of the members of the Armed Forces for their unwavering support that they provide to our Nation's heroes. I urge all my colleagues to do the same by supporting this resolution.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) that the House suspend the

rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 295.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. 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.

RECOGNIZING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTEGRATION OF THE ARMED FORCES

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 297) recognizing the 60th anniversary of the integration of the United States Armed Forces, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 297

Whereas the United States has always had strong Armed Forces made up of courageous men and women serving the ideals of duty, honor, and country;

Whereas the Armed Forces were unfortunately once a place of segregation of the races;

Whereas despite segregation, minority members of the Armed Forces, such as the Tuskegee Airmen, who trained at historic Moton Field in Macon County, Alabama, demonstrated honor and bravery above and beyond the call of duty;

Whereas the bravery and sacrifice of all members of the Armed Forces regardless of race during World War II and prior conflicts is a matter of national honor;

Whereas the integration of the Armed Forces beginning in 1948 was a seminal event in our Nation's history and instilled the democratic ideal of equality in the military; and

Whereas the continued bravery and dedication of every member of the Armed Forces continues to be a source of pride to every American: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of Congress to honorably and respectfully recognize the historic significance and to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of President Truman's Executive Order 9881 signed on July 26, 1948 that declared it to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin thereby beginning the process of ending segregation in the United States Armed Forces.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) and the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 297, which recognizes the 60th anniversary of the beginning of the integration of the Armed Forces.

Our military men and women are representative of the fabric of American society. They originate from every region of the world and represent the beautiful diversity of our planet. They bring forth with them a wide array of diverse talents and skill sets that has long made the U.S. military the superpower it is today.

House Concurrent Resolution 297 celebrates the 60th anniversary of President Harry Truman's 1948 executive order declaring that the equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the Armed Forces was the policy of the President. We celebrate this seminal event in our Nation's history for installing the democratic ideals of equality in our military and our country.

During the Second World War, the Tuskegee Airmen broke the color barrier within the Armed Forces to become the first black pilots, navigators, and bombardiers. It was the impenetrable code created from the Navajo language and utilized by the Navajo Code Talkers that helped save lives in the Pacific. Japanese American soldiers volunteered to serve in uniform while their families were held in concentration camps in the United States. It was the ingenuity of refugee scientists escaping anti-Semitism in their homeland that led to the American acquisition of nuclear technology. Diversity has made our Armed Forces and our Nation safer and stronger.

Unfortunately, our Armed Forces was once a place of discrimination and segregation. Many Americans of African, Asian, and Hispanic descent who served in the Armed Forces struggled against frequent episodes of racism and bigotry. Often these American servicemembers felt that they were fighting two wars, one against a foreign enemy and the other against racism from within their own ranks.

Despite great adversity, Americans of minority descent proudly served with honor and bravery, above and beyond the call of duty. We in Congress recognize their contributions and honor them for their sacrifices. The bravery and sacrifice of all members of the Armed Forces, regardless of race, color, or creed, will always be a matter of national honor.

Today the multi-racial makeup of our troops is a testament to the democratic ideals that all Americans hold dear, that all men and women are created equal. Our diverse forces serve as a proud example for the rest of the world in these times of racial and religious intolerance.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this important resolution.

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

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of this resolution commemorating the 60th anniversary of the beginning of integration in the United States Armed Forces.

□ 1515

Throughout the course of our Nation's history, the men and women of the armed services have defended our liberties with bravery, honor and sacrifice. But because our Nation racially segregated its military prior to 1948, generations of African Americans selflessly served our Nation with the knowledge that they were fighting abroad for many of the freedoms that they were frequently denied here at home. Despite this injustice, not only did African Americans serve honorably to fight for all our freedoms, they did so with dignity and bravery that earned many of them our Nation's top military honors.

One of the most important events in our Nation's history that helped move our country toward a more integrated America occurred on July 26, 1948, when President Harry S. Truman signed Executive Order 9981. This important order, which we acknowledge with this resolution today, ordered that there be equality of treatment with all persons in the armed services regardless of race, color, religion or national origin.

Even though it took years to accomplish the complete integration of the armed services, it was Executive Order 9981 that began the process.

Of the many units that served with distinction, I particularly would like to recognize the contributions of the Tuskegee Airmen, who trained at historic Moton Field in my congressional district in Alabama.

As most of us know, over the course of World War II, the Tuskegee Airmen became one of the most highly decorated units in the Armed Forces. These brave pilots destroyed more than 1,000 German aircraft while accumulating an unprecedented record of flying more than 200 bomber escort missions over central and southern Europe.

These brave Americans served without the loss of a single bomber to enemy aircraft and returned home with some of our Nation's highest military honors. But they also returned home to a racially segregated America. It's that injustice, and the steps our Nation has taken to help right that wrong, that we are helping recognize today. I'm also delighted that this body will help further recognize the occasion with a ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda later this month.

I would like to thank Speaker PELOSI, Majority Leader HOYER, and Chairman SKELTON for allowing this resolution today. I'd also like to thank my good friend and colleague from Florida, Mr. KENDRICK MEEK, for his strong support of this resolution.

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to my friend and colleague, the distinguished chairman of the Armed Services Committee, the gentleman from the State of Missouri, the same State that brought us President Harry Truman, Mr. IKE SKELTON.

Mr. SKELTON. I thank my friend from Connecticut for yielding and take this opportunity to mention the fact that my fellow Missourian, President Harry S. Truman, on the 26th day of July, 1948, signed Executive Order 9981 establishing the "policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services with regard to race, color, religion, or national origin." That executive order also established the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in our armed services.

On the 23rd of this month, our Congress will recognize the 60th anniversary of the beginning of the process of integration for our military.

African American men and women have served this Nation with honor, courage, commitment, even as they were denied the basic constitutional freedoms promised to all Americans. Their successful integration of forces paved the way for further integration of women, Asians, Hispanics, and other ethnic minorities.

The cosmopolitan make-up of our armed services is a testament to the American value that we hold dear, that all men are created equal. It is also a reflection of our society that we should treat all individuals, regardless of their race, their color, or national origin with respect and with dignity. And with these days of conflict, our forces, our military forces of our country, are an example of what can be achieved by respecting one's differences and working together to achieve a common goal.

House Concurrent Resolution 297 recognizes the 60th anniversary. I applaud those who have sponsored it, and I applaud the fact that we are taking it up today and recognizing the importance of this anniversary.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time at this time so I will yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to my friend and colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey who serves on the Education and Labor Committee, Mr. PAYNE.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much for yielding.

Let me commend the sponsor of this great resolution and also let me just commend Representative SKELTON for the outstanding work that he has done for so many years in the Armed Services Committee.

I stand in support of this resolution, H. Con. Res. 297, because as we all know, there were many, many African Americans who have fought valiantly

through many of the wars. I'm very proud to have an uncle who just passed away 2 years ago, 3 years ago, who was in the invasion of Normandy. I used to recall as a young boy receiving the letters that he would send that were photocopied and made about the size of your hand where anything they felt was strategic was blacked out. And my Uncle John was a staff sergeant. As I mentioned, he was in the invasion of Normandy. And his wife, Ruth Garrett, who is still alive, worked in Picatinny Arsenal in New Jersey for the war effort making weapons for our armed services. He was very proud when the World War II monument was opened, and he proudly sat with his uniform and his cap and his medals and made us very, very proud of his service. Even today, one of my employees, Richard Turner, is serving in Iraq.

But there have been African Americans who have served for so many years. It took Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt to fly with the Tuskegee Airmen for them to finally allow the Tuskegee Airmen to fly in combat because there was resistance to that. And as we know, the first person, as a matter of fact, to die in the Revolutionary War was Crispus Attucks back in 1770 on March 5 when he and four other patriots were taken down by the British to start the Revolutionary War in the Battle of Bunker Hill where we had Crispus, and where we had Salem Poor who fought at the battle of Bunker Hill. And we can go on and on.

A neighbor of mine, Needham Roberts and Sergeant Henry Johnson, captured 30 German soldiers in World War I and kept them captive for over a month. And people wondered how two soldiers could have kept so many enemy soldiers at bay. And so I am so proud to have this recognition and certainly pay tribute to Harry S. Truman. He was a person who had said "the buck stops here." He was from Missouri. He said that he'll take the heat, and he did.

And so I would just like to once again commend so many of the men and women who continue even today to show their appreciation and strength for our Nation as they serve valiantly in the United States Armed Services.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, it is with deep pride that I rise to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the integration of the Armed Forces. As I stand here today, our forces around the world are united in their efforts to preserve our liberty; however, it was not long ago that the men and women of the Armed Forces faced forced division, even while protecting our unity.

African Americans have been essential to the creation and preservation of our Nation. These valiant men and women fought abroad for freedom and security in segregated units, while their own families were subject to oppression and inequality on the home front. Despite this, African-American troops still honored the ideals of the United States and courageously defended the country; many of them would go on to earn top military honors.

Fortunately the United States military would not remain so divided. On July 26, 1948,

President Harry Truman signed Executive Order 9981, mandating the equal treatment of all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin. In addition to beginning the process of immigration, Executive Order 9981 also established the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services. While it would take years for the integration of the armed services to be completed, it was Executive Order 9981 which began to pave the path to unity.

The Revolutionary War was spurred by a document, the Declaration of Independence, which proclaimed, "All men are created equal". Many African Americans fought in the Revolution, while experiencing unequal treatment. Another document, Executive Order 9981, authored by President Truman, was able to begin the integration of the armed services, which ended this pervasive inequality and segregation. The signing of Executive Order 9981 was a pivotal moment in our history and I wholeheartedly support its commemoration.

I commend my colleagues, Representatives MIKE ROGERS and KENDRICK MEEK, for bringing this legislation to the floor.

Mr. COURTNEY. 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 Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 297, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. 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.

REGULATORY IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2007

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 3564) to amend title 5, United States Code, to authorize appropriations for the Administrative Conference of the United States through fiscal year 2011, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the Senate amendment is as follows:

Senate amendment:

On page 2, lines 9 through 11, strike "\$1,000,000 for fiscal year 2008, \$3,300,000 for fiscal year 2009, \$3,400,000 for fiscal year 2010, and \$3,500,000 for fiscal year 2011" and insert "\$3,200,000 for fiscal year 2009, \$3,200,000 for fiscal year 2010, and \$3,200,000 for fiscal year 2011".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SCHIFF. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the Federal regulation process is one of the most important ways by which our Nation implements public policy. Each year, agencies issue thousands of regulations to promote safety in our lives, from the food we eat, to the cars we drive, to the air we breathe.

Although regulations play a critical role in protecting so many aspects of our daily lives, there is no independent, nonpartisan entity that Congress can rely upon to help us ensure that these regulations are working as intended.

The Administrative Conference of the United States was just such an entity, a public-private think tank that provided invaluable guidance to Congress about how to improve the administrative and regulatory process.

First authorized by President John F. Kennedy, the Conference made numerous recommendations over the course of its 27-year existence, many of which were enacted into law. The conference was last funded into in 1995. H.R. 3564, the Regulatory Improvement Act of 2007, would reauthorize it for 3 years.

Some might ask why we are reauthorizing an entity that has been out of existence for so long. Let me mention three important reasons. First, the Conference can save taxpayer dollars, in fact, millions of dollars. When it was in existence, it helped agencies implement many cost-saving procedures and make numerous recommendations to eliminate excessive litigation costs and long delays.

Just one agency alone, the Social Security Administration, estimated that the Conference's recommendation to change that agency's appeal process yielded approximately \$85 million in savings. Indeed, Justice Stephen Breyer testified before the Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law about the "huge" savings to the public resulting from the Conference's recommendations. Justice Antonin Scalia likewise agreed that it was an enormous bargain.

Second, the Administrative Conference promoted innovation among agencies. For example, it convinced 24 agencies to use alternative dispute resolution for issues concerning the private sector. The Conference also spearheaded implementation of the Negotiated Rulemaking Act, the Equal Access to Justice Act, and the Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act, governing consumer product warranties.

The Conference played a major role in encouraging agencies to promulgate

smarter regulations. It did this by working to improve the public's understanding and participation in the rule-making process, promoting judicial review of agency regulations, and reducing regulatory burdens on the private sector.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, Congress needs the conference. Experience with the Congressional Review Act proves that there are limitations in Congress' ability to provide aggressive oversight of the regulatory process.

Congressional recognition of the Conference's significant contributions to the regulatory process is probably best evidenced by the fact that legislation assigning responsibilities to it continues to be introduced in nearly every Congress, including the current one.

The Congressional Research Service advises that reactivation of the Conference now would come at "an opportune time," especially in light of efforts by the White House to augment its involvement in the regulatory process.

There are few entities that have enjoyed more bipartisan support than the Administrative Conference, and understandably so. It is all about promoting good government.

I commend my colleague, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law, CHRIS CANNON of Utah, for his leadership in continuing to pursue reauthorization of the conference.

Last October, the House passed this bill on suspension by voice vote without amendment. The Senate late last month finally acted and passed the bill with a small amendment which essentially reauthorizes the Conference at a level of funding in the amount of \$3.2 million.

I urge my colleagues to concur in the Senate amendment so we can send this bill to the President.

I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1530

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

I thank my friend from California for his work on this bill, and thank the chairman of the committee and also the ranking members of the subcommittee and committee.

I am delighted to see us conclude today our consideration of H.R. 3564 which would reauthorize the Administrative Conference of the United States. The bill we consider today was amended slightly by the Senate which required this action by us today. But I strongly urge the House to concur in the Senate's amendment today. I also urge the Appropriations Committee and the House to appropriate funds promptly to ACUS. We need this exemplary agency once again to become a living, breathing entity and reality.

So why is that? As the distinguished Member from Utah (Mr. CANNON) remarked when we originally voted out the bill, and quoting from prior adage,