

From this bill we can expect to see a surge in American adoptions globally, and a decrease in global child homelessness and poverty. By implementing this bill we are able to create jobs for government workers processing individual cases, child care providers, school teachers and many others who provide direct services aimed at youth.

I stand today with Senator AMY KLOBUCHAR and other members of Congress re-affirming my support of S. 1376. By enacting this legislation, we are able to boost the morale of frustrated parents who may have spent years in the adoptive process and provide children with stable homes, all the while, creating jobs in communities at a time when they are needed the most.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in support of S. 1376.

Mr. POE of Texas. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. 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 Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 1376.

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.

ADJUSTING TIME PERIODS FOR SERVICEMEMBERS ABROAD IN CASES REGARDING PERMANENT RESIDENT STATUS

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6396) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to toll, during active-duty service abroad in the Armed Forces, the periods of time to file a petition and appear for an interview to remove the conditional basis for permanent resident status.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CONYERS. 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 Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I seek to withdraw the motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The motion with respect to H.R. 6396 is withdrawn.

MARINE SERGEANT MICHAEL H. FERSCHKE, JR. MEMORIAL ACT

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill

(H.R. 6397) to amend section 101(a)(35) of the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide for a marriage for which the parties are not physically in the presence of each other due to service abroad in the Armed Forces of the United States.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6397

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Marine Sergeant Michael H. Ferschke, Jr. Memorial Act".

SEC. 2. MILITARY MARRIAGES LACKING PHYSICAL PRESENCE.

Section 101(a)(35) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(35)) is amended by inserting before the period at the end "(except for failure to consummate the marriage caused by physical separation due to the service abroad of one of the contracting parties in an active-duty status in the Armed Forces of the United States)".

SEC. 3. COMPLIANCE WITH PAYGO.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled "Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation" for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the House of Representatives, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CONYERS. 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 before the House.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker and Members, the Marine Sergeant Michael Ferschke, Jr. Memorial Act, introduced by Representative JOHN DUNCAN, is a simple but, I think, important measure that will help active duty members of our Armed Forces serving overseas—as well as their spouses. Under current immigration law, when a marriage takes place between two persons who cannot both be physically present during the ceremony, the marriage is deemed not valid until it is consummated. There are no exceptions to this provision, even in cases where it sometimes results in clear injustice. And so we learned about this legal requirement through the case of Sergeant Ferschke, a United States Marine stationed at Camp Schwab in Okinawa, Japan, who, in March of 2007, while on the base, met

a Japanese woman named Hotaru Nakama at a birthday party for a mutual friend.

□ 1500

They dated for over a year before Sergeant Ferschke was deployed to Iraq. Shortly before his departure, they learned that they were going to have a baby, and they spoke about getting married, moving back to the United States and raising a family together. Two months after Sergeant Ferschke arrived in Iraq, the couple was married through a ceremony conducted over the telephone; but 1 month later, Sergeant Ferschke tragically, in combat, gave the ultimate sacrifice.

The United States military recognizes this marriage, and Mrs. Ferschke has been assisted in raising their son by the payment of a death gratuity, but the marriage, itself, cannot be recognized under our immigration laws because it was never consummated after the marriage ceremony.

Now, this legislation doesn't entirely eliminate the consummation requirement. It simply eliminates the requirement for active duty members of our Armed Forces who are serving abroad by creating a narrow exception in cases where the failure to consummate the marriage is caused by a physical separation due to active duty military service abroad by one of the parties to the marriage. This is a reasonable provision that will provide some measure of support and comfort to members of our Armed Forces serving abroad.

So I commend our colleague JOHN DUNCAN for introducing this measure. It was championed by our Immigration Subcommittee chairwoman, ZOE LOFGREN, and our ranking member, LAMAR SMITH, and JIM MCGOVERN. I thank them for their strong bipartisan support of the measure.

I urge support of this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POE of Texas. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I support H.R. 6397, and I want to commend Mr. DUNCAN from Tennessee for introducing this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, under the Immigration and Nationality Act, if a U.S. citizen dies while serving honorably in an active duty status in the United States Armed Forces as a result of injury or disease incurred in or aggravated by combat, the citizen's alien spouse can still seek permanent residence as an immediate relative of a U.S. citizen. However, the INA also provides that the term "spouse" does "not include a spouse by reason of any marriage ceremony where the contracting parties thereto are not physically present in the presence of each other unless the marriage shall have been consummated."

This provision recently came to the attention of Congress through the case of Hotaru Ferschke. Mrs. Ferschke is the widow of late Marine Corps Sergeant Michael Ferschke. Hotaru was born in Okinawa, Japan, and met Sergeant Ferschke there in 2007 when he was stationed at Camp Schwab.