

LIMIT CONGRESSIONAL TERMS

HON. BOB STUMP

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to again introduce a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution to limit the terms of Members of the House of Representatives. I do so on the first day of the 106th Congress to underscore my belief that this legislation is one of the most important reforms the new Congress can pursue.

My legislation would limit Members of the House to three four-year terms. I have long maintained that the current system of unlimited two-year terms frustrates our ability to advance legislation that is in the Nation's best interest. We have seen first-hand that reelection pressures can paralyze Members. All too often, Members succumb to special interests and cast their votes in favor of parochial causes, instead of what is best for the country. Under the system of nation-wide term limits that I am proposing, Members would have a new perspective on governing. They would have a sense of independence in knowing that they will be in Washington for a limited time and would no longer be beholden to special interest and contributors.

Mr. Speaker, I also believe that term limits must be enacted nationally to be truly effective. Some of my colleagues, who I admire and respect, have chosen to abide by self-imposed term limits. While their actions are clearly well-intentioned, I believe they are placing their states and districts at a disadvantage. Under a system of piecemeal term limits, unaffected states will build an inordinate amount of seniority and power.

Mr. Speaker, the courts have ruled that nothing short of a constitutional amendment can limit congressional terms. Last Congress, we failed to agree on term limit language to send to the 50 states for ratification. We should not repeat this mistake in the 106th Congress. I strongly urge all of my reform-minded colleagues to cosponsor my proposed amendment.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MILITARY RETIREE HEALTH CARE TASK FORCE ACT

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to introduce the Military Retiree Health Care Task Force Act of 1999. This legislation will establish a Task Force that will look into all of the health care promises and representations made to members of the Uniformed Services by Department of Defense personnel and Department literature. The Task Force will submit a comprehensive report to Congress which will contain a detailed statement of its findings and conclusions. This report will include legislative remedies to correct the great injustices that have occurred to those men

and women who served their country in good faith.

Let us not forget why we are blessed with freedom and democracy in this country. The sacrifices made by those who served in the military are something that must never be overlooked. Promises were made to those who served in the Uniformed Services. They were told that their health care would be taken care of for life if they served a minimum of twenty years of active federal service.

Well, those military retirees served their time and expected the government to hold up its end of the bargain. They are now realizing that these were nothing more than empty promises.

Those who served in the military did not let their country down in its time of need and we should not let military retirees down in theirs. It's time military retirees get what was promised to them and that's why I am introducing this legislation.

THE FILIPINO VETERANS SSI EXTENSION ACT, H.R. 26

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce H.R. 26, the Filipino Veterans SSI Extension Act.

For the last several Congresses, I have introduced the Filipino Veterans Equity Act, a bill which would provide full veterans benefits to those veterans of the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines.

Although hearings were held on this bill last year, the prospect of legislative action on a comprehensive benefit package for Filipino veterans appears unlikely. Therefore, I am offering this measure in part to provide some relief for those Filipino veterans residing in the United States who currently receive supplemental security income benefits.

Under current law, individuals who receive SSI benefits must relinquish those benefits if they choose to leave the country. This bill would permit those who were members of the Filipino Commonwealth Army and recognized guerilla units during World War II to continue to receive SSI benefits if they elect to return to the Philippines.

These benefits would be reduced by 50 percent if the individual veteran returned to the Philippines, to reflect the lower cost of living and per capita income of that nation.

It is estimated that several thousand veterans would be affected, many of whom are financially unable to petition their families to immigrate to the United States. Should this bill be adopted, these veterans would be able to return to their families in the Philippines while bringing a decent income with them.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this worthwhile measure.

H.R. 26

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

SECTION 1. PROVISION OF REDUCED SSI BENEFIT TO CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS WHO PROVIDED SERVICE TO THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE PHILIPPINES DURING WORLD WAR II AFTER THEY MOVE BACK TO THE PHILIPPINES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding sections 1611(b), 1611(f)(1), and 1614(a)(1)(B)(i) of the Social Security Act—

(1) the eligibility of a qualified individual for benefits under the supplemental security income program under title XVI of such Act shall not terminate by reason of a change in the place of residence of the individual to the Philippines; and

(2) the benefits payable to the individual under such program shall be reduced by 50 percent for so long as the place of residence of the individual is in the Philippines.

(b) QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL DEFINED.—In subsection (a), the term "qualified individual" means an individual who—

(1) as of January 1, 1990, was eligible for benefits under the supplemental security income program under title XVI of the Social Security Act; and

(2) before August 15, 1945, served in the organized military forces of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines while such forces were in the service of the Armed Forces of the United States pursuant to the military order of the President dated July 26, 1941, including among such military forces organized guerrilla forces under commanders appointed, designated, or subsequently recognized by the Commander in Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, or other competent military authority in the Army of the United States.

HONORING MY FRIEND, BASEBALL LEGEND NOLAN RYAN, ON HIS ELECTION TO THE HALL OF FAME

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay honor to my long-time friend, Nolan Ryan, on the announcement of his election to the Baseball Hall of Fame. I've known Nolan for many years, and I knew him as a kind, generous man who seeks to do what is right and just. It seems there are so few heroes for kids today, especially in athletics, but I can sincerely commend Nolan Ryan as a true hero of our times, a role-model for our youth, and a man worthy of honor and respect.

Nolan was born in Refugio, Texas, a historic town in my congressional district, but he was destined for the national stage. His successful career spanned 27 years, taking him from rural Texas to the dug-outs of the New York Mets, the California Angels, the Houston Astros and the Texas Rangers. He pitched a record seven no-hitter games, but his real fame comes from having pitched 5,714 strikeouts.

Nolan told newspaper reporters yesterday that he never viewed himself as a "hall of famer." For once, I have to disagree with my friend. He is Hall of Fame material not only for his prowess on the field, but for his strong character and unwavering dedication to his family, his friends, his beliefs, and his God.