

SUPPORT H.R. 2280, VETERANS BENEFITS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1999

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Committee on Veterans' Affairs marked up H.R. 2280, the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 1999. I would like to take this opportunity to inform my colleagues of a very important provision of this much-needed bipartisan legislation for our Nation's veterans. That provision is the expansion of the fund-raising authority of the American Battle Monuments Commission to expedite the establishment of the World War II memorial in our Nation's Capital. This memorial, to one of this Nation's greatest generations, is long overdue.

Mr. Speaker, of the 16 million Americans that answered their Nation's call to duty and sacrificed to protect humanity against tyranny and aggression, fewer than 7 million are alive today. We are losing them at the rate of 1,000 of these courageous veterans each and every day. We cannot wait if we are to honor these great men and women while they are still with us.

I encourage all Americans to donate what they can to the World War II memorial and my colleagues to support this important legislation. It is truly time to say thank you and to provide a permanent tribute and inspiration so future generations of Americans will be reminded of the sacrifices that were necessary to preserve the freedoms and opportunities that we enjoy today.

SUPREME COURT IS OUT OF TOUCH

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, the first amendment says there is freedom of speech, and that freedom of peaceable assembly shall not be abridged. The Supreme Court ruled that this language permits dissidents to burn our flag. Beam me up. I believe the Founding Fathers are rolling over in their graves. From school prayer to flag burning, the Supreme Court is out of touch. They are wrong, and Congress must reverse that wrong. In America, the people govern, not the Supreme Court, and Congress should pass a law to protect our flag. A Nation that does not protect and honor their flag is a Nation that will not survive.

I yield back any common sense left in this Congress.

SUPPORT H.R. 1218, CHILD CUSTODY PROTECTION ACT

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, at my alma mater, Southwest High School in Miami, a student with a headache did not receive an over-the-counter aspirin to relieve her pain because the school nurse did not have a signed parental medical waiver; a teenager who wanted to pierce her ears was not able to because she did not have a parental consent form; and a school field trip accompanied by teachers and chaperones left behind a student because he failed to get a parent's signature. How ironic is it that friends and peers of these same teenagers are undergoing dangerous life-altering and potentially fatal medical procedures without parental consent or even notification.

Yesterday, the Committee on the Judiciary approved my bill, H.R. 1218, the Child Custody Protection Act, which will prevent nonparental adults who deliberately circumvent State parental consent or notification laws so that someone else's daughter or perhaps the teenager whom they have raped could obtain an abortion.

Young girls face complications and perhaps even death from botched abortions that their parents may never know about. This bill will put an end to the exploitation of young, immature, vulnerable girls. I hope the House will soon favorably vote on the Child Custody Protection Act.

ON GUN SAFETY AND MANAGED CARE REFORM LEGISLATION

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I think the question this morning is what is our legislative agenda? Last week this House missed an enormous opportunity to pass real gun safety legislation. The only thing we did was prolong the time that criminals can get guns in their hands, and 13 of our children die every day by gun violence. As a mother, I will never give up on passing real gun safety legislation in this House, and we are going to do it.

Mr. Speaker, I will also not stop the fight for a Patients' Bill of Rights that responds to the needs of seniors and families and children that need real health care in America.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is what is our legislative agenda? Are we here for the American people? Or are we just here for special interests?

RECOGNIZING HASKELL SLOUGH SALMON HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECT

(Mr. METCALF asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, recently I attended a demonstration of the Haskell Slough Salmon Rehabilitation Project in my district. Private landowners working cooperatively with government agencies and volunteer groups have been able to restore approximately 3½ miles of old riverbed into prime salmon habitat by excavating 6,000 feet of stream channel, thus connecting 11 existing ponds.

The efforts of private citizens donating their time to projects like this one are absolutely vital as we work to rehabilitate salmon runs. Everyone involved with the undertaking should be proud of what they are doing and what they have already accomplished. All around the State, we are mustering community support for projects like the one at Haskell Slough. These voluntary community efforts are paying big dividends in the salmon rehabilitation effort.

MANAGED CARE REFORM DISCHARGE PETITION

(Mr. GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we began signing a discharge petition to bring the HMO reform bill to the floor of the House, simply because of the refusal to bring up the Patients' Bill of Rights for debate on this floor. The American people have been very clear about their desire for meaningful HMO reform. It is estimated that 122 million Americans who have insurance do not have these same patient protections.

In my home State of Texas, we passed health care legislation similar to the Patients' Bill of Rights, which has proven to be very successful. However, we still have 8 million insured people in Texas who fall under ERISA, which preempts Texas law, who do not have these basic patient protections.

This is not about politics, it is about fairness, protection and accountability. The American people deserve a Patients' Bill of Rights that eliminates gag clauses, open access to specialists, external and timely appeals, coverage for emergency room care for families to go to the closest emergency room, and accountability for medical decisions.

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Mr. Speaker, the American people cannot afford any more delays. We need to support the Patients' Bill of Rights. Let us sign that discharge petition today.

U.S. MILITARY FORCES FALLING UNDER SEVERE STRAIN

(Mr. ROGAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1