

tell them about Walter Payton. After all, what parent wouldn't want their child to grow up to be like number 34. He was a role model in his public life and as a professional athlete and more importantly in his life off the field as a husband, father, and community leader. Walter, thanks for the memories.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great football player and person, Walter Payton. As his old Chicago Bears coach, Iron Mike Ditka, said the day of his passing, some might have been better runners, some might have been better receivers, some might have been bigger or faster, but no one was a better football player than Walter Payton.

Most everyone knows that Sweetness holds the NFL record for rushing yards, total yards, combined yards, and most rushing yards in a game, 275. But what made Payton a great football player was his total package—the blocking, the running, the receiving, and the durability—he only missed one game his entire career, during his rookie season when the coaches held him out despite Payton's insistence on playing through an injury. He was also the Bears emergency kicker, punter, and quarterback—he once played quarterback in 1984 when all of the Bears quarterbacks were injured.

While many people throughout the nation remember Payton along with the dominant 1985 "Super Bowl Shuffle" team, true Chicagoans remember the high-kicking Payton in the Bears' lean years, when he carried the team on his shoulders. Walter was a source of pride for Chicagoans in the late 70's and early 80's, and the city identified with the hard-working, lunch-pail attitude that Payton brought to the field.

Walter was a role model on and off the field. He owned many businesses and started a charitable organization, the Walter Payton Foundation. Payton quietly helped collect toys and clothes for children who spent the holidays away from their own families, usually because of abuse or other mistreatment. For some children, the toys were the only gifts they got.

Walter was also a religious man. His former teammate, Mike Singletary, said that Walter found an inner peace the day of his death when the two read scripture together.

Mr. Speaker, it came as a surprise when Walter was diagnosed with his rare liver disease. Still, those who followed Walter's career on and off the field believed that he would overcome the disease just as he had overcome many opponents on the field and in the boardroom. So the big shock came with news of his death. The nation grieved the loss of a sports hero, but Chicago mourned the loss of an icon who touched many.

When Payton was once asked how he wanted to be remembered, he replied, "I want people to say, 'Wherever he was, he was always giving it his all.'" Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that up in heaven, Walter Payton is giving it his all.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, House Resolution 370.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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**RECOGNIZING AND HONORING  
MAYOR JOE SERNA, JR., AND  
EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES OF  
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TO HIS FAMILY AND PEOPLE  
OF SACRAMENTO**

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 363) recognizing and honoring Sacramento, California, Mayor Joe Serna, Jr., and expressing the condolences of the House of Representatives to his family and the people of Sacramento on his death.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 363

Whereas Joe Serna, Jr., was born in Stockton, California, on September 3, 1939;

Whereas Joe Serna, Jr., was the loving husband of Isabelle Hernandez-Serna and devoted father of Phillip and Lisa;

Whereas Joe Serna, Jr., was the son of Gerania and Jose Serna and the brother of Maria Elena Serna, Reuben Serna, and Jesse Serna;

Whereas Joe Serna, Jr., grew up the son of an immigrant farm worker, and was widely recognized as ambitious with an irrepressible drive to succeed;

Whereas Joe Serna, Jr., experienced a pivotal point in his life when he became a successful football player on the Lodi Flames as a sophomore qualifying to play on the varsity squad;

Whereas Joe Serna, Jr., graduated from Lodi High School and went to work, where he later lost his job because he endorsed a strike at the trailer manufacturing facility where he was employed, and decided to further his education, beginning at junior college in Stockton, California, then transferring to Sacramento City College and finally to California State University, Sacramento, where he graduated in 1966;

Whereas Joe Serna, Jr., joined the Peace Corps in Guatemala, where he became involved in the election of a Mayan Indian as mayor of a small town, providing him with a first-hand education regarding the importance of electoral politics;

Whereas Joe Serna Jr., spent more than a decade working with migrant farm workers under the guidance of his role model, Cesar Chavez, and organized food workers and coordinated election campaigns;

Whereas Joe Serna, Jr., began teaching classes on government and ethics at California State University, Sacramento, and became the primary caregiver for his children when his first marriage ended;

Whereas Joe Serna, Jr., was elected to the Sacramento City Council on November 3, 1981, where he served until he was elected mayor on November 3, 1992;

Whereas Joe Serna, Jr., was known as an elected official with profound vision for the future and the energy to implement that vision, who could build coalitions, ignite community involvement, and succeed in achieving his goals;

Whereas Joe Serna, Jr., leaves a legacy in Sacramento of downtown revitalization and growth, more parks and places for

Sacramentans to gather and enjoy their families and neighbors, a better public school system, more jobs, more community police, and a higher quality of life; and

Whereas Joe Serna, Jr., faced many challenges in his life, and eventually succumbed to his greatest challenge, the fight against cancer: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved,*

**SECTION 1. HONORING MAYOR JOE SERNA, JR.**

The House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes and honors Sacramento Mayor Joe Serna, Jr.—

(A) as a profoundly successful leader whose drive and energy inspired thousands,

(B) for his many lifetime contributions to Sacramento, the State of California, and the Nation, and

(C) for selflessly devoting his life to the advancement of others through activism, public service, education, and dedication; and

(2) extends the deepest condolences to Mayor Joe Serna's wife, Isabelle, his son, Phillip, and his daughter, Lisa, as well the citizens of Sacramento, California, for the loss of their dedicated mayor.

**SEC. 2. TRANSMITTAL OF ENROLLED COPY TO THE FAMILY OF MAYOR JOE SERNA, JR.**

The Clerk of the House of Representatives shall transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to the family of Joe Serna, Jr.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 363.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 363. This resolution honors the recently departed Mayor Joe Serna, a good friend of many of us in this chamber.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, Sacramento Mayor Joe Serna, Jr., was the oldest of four children in a farm-worker family. All four children worked with their parents picking crops and all four went on to careers in public service.

□ 1700

Joe Serna went from picking grapes and tomatoes as a youngster to becoming the first Latino mayor of a major California city. A follower of the late farm labor leader Cesar Chavez, Serna served on the Sacramento-area support committee for the United Farm Workers and was a former member of the Sacramento Central Labor Council. In his youth, he served in the Peace Corps

in Guatemala as a community development volunteer specializing in cooperatives and credit unions. He became a professor of government at Cal State in Sacramento where he earned the distinguished faculty award in 1991.

Dubbed the "activist mayor," Joe Serna is credited with revitalizing Sacramento's downtown and reforming the Sacramento city unified school district. Under Serna's leadership, the Sacramento City Council agreed to public-private partnerships to entice developers to build in downtown Sacramento. Serna commissioned a blue-ribbon group to analyze the underperforming school district, then recruited a reform slate of school board candidates.

That slate won and has contributed to the improvements in Sacramento's school district. In 1996, Serna is quoted as saying, my biggest ambition is to be the best mayor I can be so that the next ethnic person who comes along, the next African-American kid or Mexican-American kid who wants to be a mayor can become the mayor, and it won't be a big deal. Joe Serna has left a legacy that certainly makes that true. My condolences and sympathies go out to the Joe Serna family and friends and the hundreds of lives he touched as the mayor of Sacramento.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to allow my good friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. Matsui), to control the remainder of the time on our side.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland? There was no objection.

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I think it would be appropriate if I were to reserve the balance of my time and allow the senior member, the gentleman from Sacramento, to speak.

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

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I would first like to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE) for actually yielding time to me before he makes his remarks, and certainly I want to thank the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), the chair of the committee, certainly the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), the ranking member and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) for putting this matter on the floor at this particular time.

Before I begin my remarks, I would like to mention that the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE), the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE), and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD) have cosponsored this legislation. We certainly appreciate the bipartisan effort on putting this on the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in great sadness to pay tribute to a very distin-

guished leader, to one of the most outstanding public servants that I have known and to a true friend. On Sunday, November 7, the mayor of Sacramento, Joe Serna, lost his courageous battle with kidney cancer. As the Sacramento community mourns his loss, I ask all my colleagues to join with me in saluting his career and his efforts as one of the most extraordinary persons that I have ever known.

Joe was only 60 years old when he passed on that November day. Joe was the son of immigrant farm workers from whom he learned the values and work ethics that exemplified his career. His sister said during the rosary service last week that when his mother brought Joe home, she put him in a crate because they could not afford a crib. From that kind of beginning, he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in social science in government from Sacramento State College in 1966, and he received a higher degree at the University of California at Davis in political science.

Always wanting to serve others, he entered, as the gentleman from Maryland said, the Peace Corps and worked in Guatemala as a community development coordinator and volunteer specializing in cooperatives and credit unions. Upon his return, he continued his service to others by becoming a teacher. He joined the faculty at Cal State University Sacramento; and in 1969, became a full professor in government. The energy he brought to life was transferred to his students in the classroom; and in 1991, he received the distinguished faculty award at Cal State University.

Continuing his calling in public service, he was elected to the Sacramento City Council in 1981, reelected in 1985, and again in 1989. In 1992, he was elected mayor of Sacramento and was reelected by huge margins in 1996. He leaves a proud legacy of leadership and accomplishments. Most significantly, he worked throughout his career to revitalize Sacramento's downtown. He initiated the Sacramento Downtown Partnership Association, the Art in Public Places program, and the Thursday Night Market, all of which have made the downtown area a thriving gathering place for all Sacramentoans.

As a result, in 1995 the mayor received the Economic Development Leadership Award from the National Council for Urban Economic Development. But his legacy was most proud in the area of public education. As the gentleman from Maryland had said earlier, in response to the erosion of our community's education system, Mayor Serna established the Mayor's Commission on Education and the City's Future, a coalition of business and civic leaders.

The Mayor's Commission successfully led the recall of members of the board of trustees of the Sacramento

City Unified School District and elected a new board. I am pleased to say that the achievement results since that time of our high school, middle school, and grammar school children have increased, which indicates that his efforts were not in vain but will help future generations of children in Sacramento.

His education drive was one of many challenges that are identified under his leadership. For example, when the National Basketball Association Sacramento Kings threatened to leave Sacramento, he began negotiating with the Kings organization, members of the city council and community leaders to forge a role in keeping that basketball franchise in our community, not so much for the purpose of having a major sports franchise but because he knew that having a major sports franchise would create an enthusiasm in the community and bring all segments of our community together.

When our military base closed, the Sacramento Army Depot and had 3,000 employees, Joe rather than curse the darkness, he lit a candle. He immediately sought businesses down in Los Angeles and actually brought up a high-tech industry and business that created 6,000 jobs for many people who were then on public assistance programs and now are gainfully employed.

Over the past three decades, he served on numerous commissions, too many for me to mention today. But just as an example of his diverse leadership, he was co-trustee of the Crocker Art Museum. He was a member of the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Commission. He was on the Board of the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency, the Metropolitan Cable Television Commission, and the Air Quality Board of Sacramento County.

But beyond his accomplishments, he was known simply as an elected official with a profound vision for the future and an energy to implement that vision. He knew how to build coalitions, ignite community involvement, and succeeded almost always in achieving his goals. Because of this vision, he leaves a proud legacy in Sacramento's downtown redevelopment area of growth, a stronger public school system, more jobs, more community police and certainly a higher quality of life.

His parting has left a major void for all of us in Sacramento County, people of all walks of life. Four thousand people attended his service last week, people in business suits, and people that were dressed as ordinary citizens. I wish to extend on behalf of this institution our deepest sincerity and heartfelt wishes to Mayor Serna's wife Isabelle, his son Phillip and daughter Lisa and his mother Gerania. I, along with the City of Sacramento and the people of California, mourn with them.

Mr. Speaker, the City of Sacramento has suffered tremendously from the loss of one of our most distinguished and visionary leaders as well as one of our best citizens. We will all miss him very much.

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

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I rise today to echo the remarks of my friend from Sacramento. It is interesting to note that as you go through life, you meet certain individuals whose personalities or their achievements or their vibrancy stay with you.

Of all the things that Mayor Serna accomplished during his many years of service, perhaps the most lasting will be his legacy as a teacher. He was a professor of political science at Sacramento State University. I cannot tell you how many young people I have run into who, with a Cheshire smile on their face, remember their long debates in class with Mayor Serna about this or that issue and how much they took away from that time.

As a young man, I came back from school and Mayor Serna, then a city councilman, had been recently elected to the city council. While we were not of the particularly same political persuasion on many things, he came one day to the city council meeting, he saw me sitting in the back of the hall. During a break he came back, put his hand on my shoulder and said, just like a normal person, which he was, are you doing all right? I said, yes, I am, and thank you for asking. At that, he went on about his way.

That was Joe Serna. The ability just to reach out, put his hand on your shoulder, regardless of where you came from. He did not care. He just wanted to know whether he could help. Again, of all the lessons that I take from my acquaintance and friendship with Joe Serna, it is that we are all teachers. Some are further along the curve than others. For some, maybe the curve has ended as it has with Joe. But for the rest of my days, I will remember Joe Serna as a teacher.

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 363, a resolution honoring the late Joe Serna, Jr., Mayor of Sacramento, California, and to express my deep sympathies to his wife, Isabel, and his children, Philip and Lisa.

Mayor Serna was the embodiment of the American dream. He rose from his roots as a farmworker in the 1960's to become the first Latino mayor of California's capitol city. He often told how his parents, poor Mexican immigrants who worked the fields, brought him home from the hospital in a cardboard box.

Joe Serna eventually left those fields to pursue a life of public service but no matter how high he rose in public office, he never forgot his roots. A loyal member of the United Farm Workers Union, Joe organized one of the state's first food caravans to feed striking grape pickers. Union President Arturo Rod-

riquez described Joe best when he said: "He continued in every way he could to fight for the low-income (people), for the farmworkers, for the people that, for whatever reasons, were not being provided the respect and dignity they deserved."

For over 20 years, Mayor Serna helped lead the great City of Sacramento. He served as a member of the City Council from 1975 to 1992 and was elected Mayor in 1992. It was a Mayor that his many accomplishments proved him a true leader.

He may best be remembered for his leadership of a movement to reform the city's public schools. Dissatisfied with the leadership of the school board, he led a movement to recall many of its members and to establish a program of reform that focused on upgrading the schools with a \$191 million school bond.

His creative leadership did not stop there. Determined to reinvigorate downtown Sacramento, he established the City's Neighborhood Services Department, which consolidates city services to support and enhance programs for healthy, thriving neighborhoods. He also appointed the city's first Council of Economic Advisors to help frame the city's economic agenda and founded the Mayor's Summer Reading Camp, a literacy program for underprivileged students.

Joe Serna was, first and foremost, a god and decent man who wanted nothing more than to represent the people of Sacramento to the best of his abilities. His close friend and political advisor, Richie Ross, said of him: "He was never thought of in Sacramento as anything other than Mayor Joe, everybody's mayor."

Today, the House of Representatives joins the Serna family and the people of Sacramento in sharing their grief over the loss of Mayor Joe Serna, a distinguished American who will be remembered forever.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, November 7 the Mayor of Sacramento, and my good friend Joe Serna, lost his courageous battle with kidney cancer.

Joe grew up the son of an immigrant farm worker, where he was taught the honorable values and hard work ethic that exemplified his career. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in social science/government from Sacramento State College in 1966 and attended graduate school at UC, Davis, majoring in political science.

Always wanting to serve others, in 1966 Mayor Serna entered the Peace Corps, working in Guatemala as a Community Development volunteer specializing in cooperatives and credit unions. Upon his return to the States, he continued his service by pursuing one of the most noble of all professions—he became a teacher. He joined the faculty at CSU, Sacramento, in 1969 becoming a professor of Government. Of course the energy he brought to life was readily transferred to his students in the classroom, and in 1991 he received the Distinguished Faculty Award.

Continuing his lifelong calling to public service, Joe Serna was first elected to the Sacramento City Council in 1981 and reelected in 1985 and 1989. He was then elected mayor of Sacramento in 1992 and again in 1996.

As Mayor, Joe Serna left a proud legacy of leadership and accomplishments. He worked

throughout his career to revitalize Sacramento's downtown which included initiating the Sacramento Downtown Partnership Association, the "Art in Public Places" program, and the Thursday Night Market. In 1995, Mayor Serna was selected by the National Council of Urban Economic Development to receive their annual Economic Development Leadership Award.

He also established the Mayor's Commission on Our Children's Health and the Mayor's Commission on Education and the City's Future, which led to a new Sacramento City Unified School District Board of Trustees. As part of his active role in improving the Sacramento City School District, he founded the Mayor's Summer Reading Camp, a literacy program for below average scoring second and third grade students.

Over the past three decades Mayor Serna was a member of numerous organizations including the Regional Transit Board of Directors and the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Commission. He was the Co-trustee of the Crocker Art Museum Association and an Advisory Board Member of Senior Gleaners, Inc. He was a former Chair of the Sacramento City/County Sports Commission, member of the Board of the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency, member of the Sacramento Metropolitan Cable Television Commission and Sacramento Air Quality Management Board. From 1970 to 1975, Joe Serna was the Director of the United Farmworkers of America's Support Committee in Sacramento County. Mayor Serna also served as a two-time presidential appointed member of the Board of Directors of "Freddie Mac."

Mayor Serna was known as an elected official with profound vision for the future and the energy to implement that vision. He knew how to build coalitions, ignite community involvement, and succeed in achieving his goals. Because of this vision, he leaves a proud legacy in Sacramento of downtown revitalization and growth, a stronger public school system, more jobs, more community police, and a higher quality of life.

What made Mayor Serna such a remarkable leader was his ability and willingness to listen to the community and make himself available to all voices that wanted to be heard. In an era when following the politically expedient route is commonplace, Mayor Serna was never afraid to fight for what he believed in if he knew it was the right thing to do. He never compromised his values and always brought a sense of honor and dignity to the Sacramento community.

On behalf of my family and my constituents, I offer my condolences to Joe's wife Isabel, his son Philip and his daughter Lisa.

[From the San Francisco Chronicle, Nov. 8, 1999]

Sacramento Mayor Joe Serna Jr., who rose from his roots as a farmworker to become Sacramento's first Latino mayor in modern history, died yesterday of kidney cancer and complications from diabetes.

Serna, 60 had briefly slipped into a diabetic coma Wednesday and asked to return home from the hospital Friday. He died at 3:47 a.m. surrounded by his family, said Chuck Dalldorf, a spokesman for the mayor.

Serna was a city councilman for 18 years and became mayor in 1992. He may best be

remembered for helping reinvigorate downtown Sacramento and reforming his city's public schools by campaigning on behalf of new school leadership and a \$191 million school bond.

"Joe led a movement to recall a large number of school board members, elect a reform slate, adopt a reform program and upgrade standards," said Phil Isenberg, a former Sacramento mayor and state assemblyman.

Serna was a loyal friend of the late Cesar Chavez, and the United Farm Workers Union since the 1960s, when he organized one of the state's first food caravans to feed striking grape pickers.

"He continued in every way he could to fight for the low-income (people), for the farmworkers, for the people that, for whatever reasons, were not being provided the respect and dignity they deserved," said United Farm Workers Union President Arturo S. Rodriguez.

Serna also transcended ethnic politics, according to close friend and political adviser Richie Ross.

"He was never thought of in Sacramento as anything other than Mayor Joe, everybody's mayor," said Ross.

#### BORN IN STOCKTON

Serna was born in Stockton and used to tell how his parents, poor Mexican immigrants who worked the fields, brought him home from the hospital in a cardboard box. He grew up in Lodi, picking grapes and tomatoes as a youngster to help support his family.

He earned his bachelor's degree from Sacramento State University, and attended graduate school at the University of California at Davis. He served in the Peace Corps in Guatemala as a community development volunteer specializing in cooperatives and credit unions.

Serna dubbed himself an "activist" who hoped to "be the best mayor I can be so that the next ethnic person who . . . wants to be mayor can become the mayor, and it won't be a big deal."

#### STRONG LEGACY

"Joe was a true giant in the Latino community, and a visionary leader for all of Sacramento," said Lt. Gov. Cruz Bustamante in a statement. "He leaves a great legacy of public service, whether he was standing in the fields fighting for farmworker rights or visiting the White House advocating for the city he so dearly loved."

Serna served on the Sacramento-area support committee for the United Farm Workers, and was a former member of the Sacramento Central Labor Council.

He also served on an array of municipal bodies, including the Sacramento Regional Transit board of directors, the Employment and Training Agency, the Metropolitan Cable Television Commission, and the Air Quality Management Board.

Serna and his wife Isabel have two grown children, Philip and Lisa. The family lived in Sacramento's Curtis Park neighborhood.

The mayor announced to the public in June he would not seek a third term because of his deteriorating health.

Since Serna died with more than a year left in his term—a year and a day to be exact—a special election will be held to determine a successor.

Serna's supporters expect a large turnout Wednesday, particularly from among farmworkers, for a funeral march from Cesar Chavez Plaza across from Sacramento City Hall to the Cathedral for the Blessed Sacrament.

Serna's family requested that all donations be directed to the UFW union.

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, as chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and as a fellow Californian, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 363, honoring the life of Joe Serna, Jr. I commend my colleague, Representative BOB MATSUI, for sponsoring this important resolution.

I want to express my deepest sympathies to Joe Serna's family and the residents of the City of Sacramento for his passing.

Mayor Serna's death is mourned not only by his family, friends, and the residents of Sacramento, which he so proudly represented, but also by countless individuals for whom he served as a role model by setting an example of what can be achieved through hard work, dedication, and determination to better not only one's own life, but the lives of others.

Joe Serna grew up in Northern California, the son of Mexican immigrant farm workers. Serna worked his way through junior college to become a college teacher, as well as a passionate activist who spent more than a decade working with migrant farm workers under the guidance of his role model, Cesar Chavez.

In 1981, Serna, was elected to the Sacramento City Council where he served until 1992, when he was elected as the first Latino Mayor of Sacramento.

During his tenure as Mayor, Serna developed a reputation as a leader who stood up for the things he believed in, such as quality job opportunities, strong families, good schools, and empowering the communities and people he represented. The City of Sacramento and its residents have truly benefited and will continue to benefit from Joe Serna's vision and leadership.

Joe Serna was a great leader and a great man and he will be truly missed.

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARR of Georgia). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, House Resolution 363.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2116, VETERANS MILLENNIUM HEALTH CARE AND BENEFITS ACT

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the conference report on the bill (H.R. 2116) to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a program of extended care services for veterans and to make other improvements in health care programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

(For conference report and statement, see prior proceedings of the House of today.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. STUMP) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. STUMP).

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the conference report on H.R. 2116.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act is the most comprehensive legislation to be acted on in behalf of America's veterans in decades. H.R. 2116 includes landmark legislation mandating access to VA nursing home care for severely disabled veterans and requiring the VA to provide more veterans with alternatives to nursing home care. This legislation also authorizes the VA to pay for emergency care service for veterans who do not have insurance or access to Medicare. Additionally, we are elevating the health care priority for veterans who receive the Purple Heart and providing greater access to VA health care for military retirees.

□ 1715

The Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefit Act also includes many benefits, including providing special borrowing authority to the American Battle Monuments Commission to assure that groundbreaking on the national World War II Memorial can take place on Veterans' Day next year; making it easier for surviving spouses and children of ex-POWs to qualify for compensation and naming this provision for Mr. Bill Rolen of the American Ex-POWs, who passed away this past September; improving the Montgomery GI Bill benefits for officers who began military service as enlisted personnel and veterans preparing to take entrance examinations; and requiring the VA to begin planning for six new additional cemeteries in recognition of the demographic realities facing our veterans population; and, adding a rare form of lung cancer to the conditions presumed in law to be service connected due to exposure of ionizing radiation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this conference report, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman of our committee and salute him for his outstanding leadership. This conference agreement is due in