June 13, 2000

Mr. Speaker, please join me in voting in favor of House Concurrent Resolution 266, expressing the sense of Congress regarding the benefits of music education.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, growing up along the United States/Mexico border, music has always had a profound influence on my life. Music, like art, dance, and drama are windows through which we view culture. Music is one of those gifts that helps bridge cultural, social, and political gaps between people.

In our schools, I truly believe that music education enhances intellectual development and enriches the academic environment for children of all ages. I think that an investment in music education is an investment in the health and well-being of our society. Music education gives our children the opportunity to explore and experience something that has deep meaning and significance to all of us. This is critically important and should not be taken lightly.

The notes and scales in the musical scores are the threads that help us build and maintain the tapestry of culture. We all gain value through music, and we, as the 106th Congress, should support music education as an integral part of our educational curriculum. I urge my colleagues to support House Concurrent Resolution 266, expressing the sense of the Congress regarding the benefits of music education.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution agreed to. A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

RECOGNIZING AWARD OF MEDAL OF HONOR TO PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUTER) is recognized.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to a great man, a man of immense stature to the history of this Nation, a strong, moral family man and a visionary conservationist, a man who distinguished himself in peace and in war and who would set the first great American voice of the 20th century and our 26th President, Theodore “Teddy” Roosevelt.

My esteemed colleague the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAZIO) initially brought this case to my attention in 1997. As chairman of the House Committee on Armed Services’ Subcommittee on Military Personnel, I worked with the gentleman from New York and former Pennsylvania Representative Paul McHale, the Roosevelt family, representatives of the Theodore Roosevelt Association, authors and historians to correct a historical oversight. Our crusade has been to see that then Colonel Teddy Roosevelt be posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions at the Battle of San Juan Heights during the Spanish American War.

On July 1st of 1898, Colonel Roosevelt led the First United States Volunteer Cavalry Regiment, the Rough Riders into action alongside Army regulars at San Juan Heights outside Santiago, Cuba. During the battle, the Rough Riders encountered a regular Army unit that was reluctant to press the attack. Roosevelt boomed, “Step aside and let my men through,” then proceeded to lead his men through a hail of enemy gunfire during the assault up Kettle Hill, one of two hills comprising San Juan Heights. His leadership was so compelling that many of the regular Army officers and men fell in line with the Rough Riders.

Mr. Speaker, Colonel Roosevelt’s heroic performance on that day is well documented, but I believe it is enlightening to review some of the historical details:

Number one. Roosevelt’s actions demonstrated an utter disregard for his own safety and were consistent with the actions of those that were awarded the Medal of Honor during the Spanish American War. Of the 22 officers and soldiers who were awarded the Medal of Honor that day, 21 received it because they gave up cover and exposed themselves to enemy fire. Once the order to attack was received, Colonel Roosevelt mounted his horse and rode up and down the ranks in full view of enemy gunners. During the final assault on Kettle Hill, he remained on horseback, exposing him to the withering fire of the enemy. If voluntary exposure to enemy fire was the criteria for award of the Medal, then Colonel Roosevelt clearly exceeds the standard.

By driving his Rough Riders through the ranks of a stalled regular Army unit to pursue the attack on Kettle Hill, Roosevelt changed the course of the battle. This is what a decoration for heroism is all about, the raw courage to make decisions and put your life in jeopardy to win the battle.

His decisive leadership in pressing the attack saved American lives and brought the battle to a successful conclusion.

The extraordinary nature of Colonel Roosevelt’s bravery was confirmed by two Medal of Honor awardees who recommended him for the Medal of Honor on that day: Major General William Shafter and Colonel Leonard Wood, original commander of the Rough Riders and later military governor of Cuba. Both men were eminently qualified to judge whether Roosevelt’s actions qualified him for the award. The Army thought so much of these two men that they named forts after them.

Yet despite the preponderance of evidence and the endorsement by these two Medal of Honor awardees, the War Department never acted upon their recommendation. President Theodore Roosevelt publicly criticized. Seeking to quickly defuse the issue, the McKinley administration reversed course and brought the troops home. The then Secretary of War, Russell Alger, presented the public embarrassment that he received as a result of the criticism from the hero of San Juan Heights, Teddy Roosevelt. Lacking records to substantiate why the decoration was disapproved at the time, I believe that Secretary Alger had the opportunity and motivation to deny Teddy Roosevelt the Medal of Honor by simply just not acting on it.

Mr. Speaker, the Medal of Honor is this Nation’s highest military award for bravery in combat. Since 1863, more than 3,400 extraordinary Americans have been awarded the Medal of Honor by the President in the name of the Congress. President Theodore Roosevelt’s name would be an honorable name in the hallowed of lists. His raw courage and the fearless, bold decisiveness that he demonstrated while leading his Rough Riders up Kettle Hill on horseback altered the course of the battle, saved American lives and epitomized the selfless service of all Medal of Honor awardees.

On February 22, Secretary of Defense William Cohen forwarded a memorandum to President Clinton recommending that Theodore Roosevelt be posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. I join the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAZIO) and former Representative Paul McHale in commending the Department of Defense following the lead of Congress by choosing to acknowledge President Roosevelt’s heroic leadership and courage under fire during the Spanish
American War. He will join 109 other soldiers, sailors and Marines who were awarded the Medal of Honor for their actions during that conflict.

However, it troubles me that for some inexplicable reason that President Clinton has delayed acting upon Secretary Cohen’s recommendation. I urge President Clinton to announce the award now.

AWARDING MEDAL OF HONOR TO PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Indiana.

Mr. BUYER. Moreover, it is my sincerest hope that the award ceremony will be conducted here in Washington as befits a celebration that honors a truly larger than life American. Last year, I spoke about Teddy Roosevelt today and noted his direct descendant, Teddy Roosevelt Jr., and I endorse the Roosevelt family’s desire that President Roosevelt’s Medal of Honor permanently reside next to his Nobel Peace Prize in the Roosevelt Room of the White House. That is the working room of the West Wing just off the Oval Office. I can think of no better tribute to the greatness of President Roosevelt than to bring together in one room the accolades that he received as both a warrior and as a peacemaker.

What finer example could we offer the leader of our Nation, what better inspiration for our future Presidents to strive for excellence in their quest of the greater understanding.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend Congress for its work to secure the Medal of Honor for Teddy Roosevelt. We have attempted to right a historical wrong and we have come to learn more about why Theodore Roosevelt was one of our greatest historical figures.

He displayed the qualities of a great leader: courage, cunning, intellect, boldness and charisma all founded on deep moral purpose. His courage and the enthusiasm that his courage generated motivated his Rough Riders on the battlefield at San Juan Heights and inspired a generation of Americans as they emerged from the chaos of the late 19th century.

Mr. Clinton, we urge you to avoid further delay and expeditiously award the Medal of Honor to Colonel Theodore Roosevelt.

Mr. LAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Indiana, and I want to begin by acknowledging his terrific work in terms of bringing this issue to the forefront of this Congress and all of his partnership with me in these last 3 years as we have been fighting for this sense of justice. People say why do we care about giving Theodore Roosevelt the Congressional Medal of Honor 102 years after he earned it. I think it comes down to simple justice. The fact is that Theodore Roosevelt is one of our greatest Americans. His face appears on Mount Rushmore. He has been known as one of America’s greatest Presidents. Before that, he was a Governor of the State of New York. He was a great conservationist and a reformer.

He was the architect of the modern Navy, and in many ways help shape American foreign policy as we entered the global age. But it is for none of those reasons that Theodore Roosevelt deserves the Congressional Medal of Honor. It is for the facts that the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER) has laid out.

On that day, on July 1 of 1898, when a volunteer Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt led his men up a hill, a strategic hill on high ground that saved many American lives that day, and contrary to public belief, a popular belief the Rough Riders, who Lieutenant Colonel led, went forward that day without their horses and they faced an enemy much better positioned than the Spaniards in securing the high ground. They faced an enemy with munitions and with arms far superior to that which they had, including machine guns, which were only a few years later in World War I create such mass destruction; but even at that point in 1898, these guns were trained down on them.

Alongside Roosevelt and his Rough Riders advanced the 9th and 10th colored Cavalry Regiments, the famed Buffalo Soldiers of the Indian Wars. And I will say to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER), to all of those in the Chamber, the Spanish hurt was expected neither from nor by superior. In the end the blood was American.

Up the steep hill, the Rough Riders climbed facing a withering fire from the trenches blow up the steep hill, climbed with men from the rear ranks, taken the place of the fallen, up that steep hill they climbed led by their be-robed, mastached leader, Colonel Roosevelt.

In the finest military tradition, Teddy Roosevelt led the way. Rather than pushing his men forward from behind, he pulled them forward from in front. By his own conspicuous courage, Roosevelt inspired his men to conquer their fear, to climb those heights against the forces of evil enemy.

In placing themselves in dire danger, Roosevelt animated his men to move towards that trench that belched the venomous fire. By his leadership, by dint of his personal example, Roosevelt propelled his troops to capture the Spanish defenses. Of the 490 men who started to climb that hill that day, 89 were killed or wounded. One of those wounded was Colonel Roosevelt.

And I would say to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER), who has served our Nation in uniform and I have great respect and admiration for him because of that, there is no greater service than I think an American can render to put his life on the line and cause freedom in America’s interests. This is what Colonel Roosevelt did as a volunteer. He displayed extraordinary courage, and that was documented at the time by his superiors and his contemporaries. So this is not something where Congress is reaching back and recreating history. We have a strong historical record. There was a voluminous brief that was submitted by me 3 years ago with the assistance of the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER). The fact is that there is plenty of evidence, plenty of evidence that suggests that Roosevelt was denied for political reason.

Now is a time to correct that record to see that justice is done and for President Clinton to give him due, the Congressional Medal of Honor. We can upon the President to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to include in the RECORD a part of that brief, if I can, which documents the historical record.

Congressman Rick Lazio submitted the following argument for the Award of the Congressional Medal of Honor for President Theodore Roosevelt on September 9, 1997.

Theodore Roosevelt Deserves the Medal of Honor

INTRODUCTION

The 100th Anniversary of the Spanish-American War has raised public interest in this important segment of American History. The Spanish American War is for many a direct demarcation of the emergence as a world power. Inextricably entwined in this coming of age on the world stage is the history and efforts of President Theodore Roosevelt, as the leader of the First Volunteer Cavalry Regiment known more commonly as the Rough Riders, played a significant and heroic role in Cuba. This victory catapulted both Roosevelt and the United States onto the world stage and the eventual position of leadership we enjoy today.

The focus here is not on Theodore Roosevelt, leader of the Rough Riders and his gallant charges to secure the San Juan Heights. Theodore Roosevelt was unjustly overlooked for the Congressional Medal of Honor. His application, when taken in the context for awarding America’s highest military honor at that time, was deserving of the serious consideration than it was given. Many attribute this oversight to political squabbles of the times as well as prejudice in favor of the regular army regiments. The Centennial of this historic effort is an appropriate time to correct this injustice.

NARRATIVE

Theodore Roosevelt’s service in the Spanish American War began with an offer of a commission from Secretary of War Russell Alger as Lieutenant Colonel in a regiment commanded by Colonel Leonard Wood in April of 1898 after the United States declaration of war on Spain retroactive to April 21, 1898. The Regiment was designated the 1st United States