

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. JIM DeMINT**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 21, 2000*

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Speaker, last week, I was detained in my district and missed rollcall votes No. 258–269. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on all but rollcall vote No. 267. On rollcall vote No. 267, I would have voted “nay”.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 21, 2000*

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained during the following vote. If I had been present, I would have voted as follows:

On June 15, 2000, rollcall vote 279, on the Nethercutt amendment to keep in place the fund limitation proposed to be loosened by the Dicks amendment which would subsequently require the Forest Service and BLM to complete a regulatory flexibility analysis as required by law for the Interior Columbia Basin Project, I would have voted yea.

## POCONO LIONS CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF SERVICE

**HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 21, 2000*

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to the Pocono Lions Club in Pocono Pines, Pennsylvania. The Lions are celebrating their 50th anniversary at a dinner on June 24, and their record of service is truly deserving of honor and recognition by the House of Representatives.

In the fall of 1949, a group of Pocono-area men met at Johnny's Inn in Pocono Summit to discuss the possibility of forming a Lions Club dedicated to serving some of the needs of the community. Bill Lewis and John Desanto, who became the Pocono club's first president, were the original group leaders. Bill Lewis is the lone surviving charter member and remains very active in the Lion's activities to this day.

The Pocono Lions are a group of community-minded people who pool their talents in behalf of local, national and international needs. Their members are mostly retired businesspeople who enjoy the social aspects of the club while also returning something to the community that has been home to them and their families for many years.

Their largest fundraiser is their annual auction, held on the fourth Saturday in August, although they hold several other events throughout the year to contribute to the community. They like to say that they make money and then give it away. Some of their recent dona-

tions include \$3,500 to the Pocono Regional Police, \$5,000 in scholarships for local high school students and \$500 to the Salvation Army for its building fund.

The Pocono Lions will be inducting four new members at their 50th Anniversary Charter Night, who will be joining the current membership of about 45 in their active fulfillment of the Lions motto: “We Serve.”

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to call to the attention of the House of Representatives the fine work that the Pocono Lions do for their community, the nation and the world, and I send my best wishes on the occasion of their 50th anniversary.

## INTRODUCTION OF AMERICAN GOLD STAR PARENTS ANNUITY ACT

**HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 21, 2000*

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues from New York, Representative MCNULTY, and my colleagues from California, Mr. FILNER and Mr. ROHRBACHER, to introduce the American Gold Star Parents Annuity Act of 2000.

This legislation would create a new annuity of \$125 per month for all current and future Gold Star Parents. Gold Star Parents are those individuals who have lost a child, who was an active duty member of the Armed Forces, to either enemy fire in a recognized conflict or to an act of terrorism.

The annuity is for each set of parents, to be divided equally if they are not longer married, should one parent be deceased, the surviving parent would receive the full amount of the annuity. The income from this annuity will be completely tax free.

Receipt of this annuity is contingent on the parents being awarded a Gold Star, for which eligibility is determined by the Secretary of Defense. The bulk of the recipients will be members of the American Gold Star Mothers.

The American Gold Star Mothers is an organization that had its beginnings in World War I. During that conflict, a blue star was used to represent a person serving in the United States' Armed Forces. As American casualties mounted in 1917, silver stars were used to represent those who had been wounded, and Gold Stars were used for those who had died in the service of their country.

On June 4, 1928, a group of twenty-five mothers residing in the Washington, DC vicinity, met to provide plans for the founding of a national organization. The American Gold Star Mothers was officially incorporated on January 5, 1929.

Membership was initially open only to mothers who had lost a son or daughter in World War I, but was later opened to those who had lost a child in World War II, Korea, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf conflict.

These additions have parallel congressional modifications to the U.S. Code to permit the Secretary of Defense to award gold star pins to the parents of deceased veterans of those conflicts as well as those who lost children in terrorist attacks on U.S. Armed Forces.

Since its founding, the American Gold Star Mothers has played a vital role in the healing process for those who had lost a child. Through bringing together individuals that share a common tragedy, this organization has helped all of its members realize that they are not alone in their grief.

Furthermore, the Gold Star Mothers have also performed the important service of assisting veterans of the last century's military conflicts and their descendants with the presentation of claims before the Veterans' administration. They also perform thousands of hours of volunteer service in VA hospitals, offering assistance and conflict to hospitalized veterans and their families.

Mr. Speaker, our nation has always sought to look after the surviving spouse and children of a service-member who has been killed in action. Often overlooked however, are the parents of the deceased service-member. This is unfortunate since the parents are usually the two people who have had the greatest role in shaping that person, and have had the greatest impact on his or her life. Yet beyond heartfelt condolences, the parents receive very little from the Government that their child chose to patriotically serve as a member of the Armed Forces.

While nobody would claim that the Government does not have some obligation to the widowed spouse and the killed soldier's children, very few have argued on the behalf of the parents who lose their children to war. Only those parents who relied on their child as a primary means of support currently receive any benefit when their child is killed in the line of duty.

This legislation seeks to change this reality. It offers a small annuity to any parent, mother or father, regardless of need, as a sign of appreciation for the ultimate sacrifice made by their child in the defense of freedom and liberty.

**§ 1126. Gold star lapel button: eligibility and distribution**

(a) A lapel button, to be known as the gold star lapel button, shall be designed, as approved by the Secretary of Defense, to identify widows, parents, and next of kin of members of the armed forces—

(1) who lost their lives during World War I, World War II, or during any subsequent period of armed hostilities in which the United States was engaged before July 1, 1958;

(2) who lost or lose their lives after June 30, 1958—

(A) while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States;

(B) while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or

(C) while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict in which the United States is not a belligerent party against an opposing armed force; or

(3) who lost or lose their lives after March 28, 1973, as a result of—

(A) an international terrorist attack against the United States or a foreign nation friendly to the United States, recognized as such an attack by the Secretary of Defense; or

(B) military operations while serving outside the United States (including the commonwealths, territories, and possessions of the United States) as part of a peacekeeping force.