

H.R. 1249, PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS COPING WITH CROP DISEASES AND VIRUSES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I recently introduced H.R. 1249, to ensure that farmers who suffer crop losses due to plant viruses and plant diseases are eligible for crop insurance and noninsured crop assistance programs and that agricultural producers who suffer such losses are eligible for emergency loans.

Pandemics of plant viruses and diseases regularly destroy the crops of entire farms and often the crops of entire geographic areas. A single plant virus or disease outbreak can send farms into bankruptcy; often, farmers are left without any means of recovering. Agriculture producers can qualify for emergency loans when adverse weather conditions and other natural phenomena damage cause farm property damage or production losses, but, under current law, crop viruses and diseases are not considered "natural disasters" and thus are not eligible for these types of loans.

For example, in Hawaii in 1999, the State ordered the eradication of all banana plants on the entire island of Kauai and in a 10 square-mile area of the island of Hawaii in an effort to eradicate the banana "bunchy top" virus. A court order required compliance, and farmers were ordered to destroy their entire farms and livelihood without any compensation. These farmers did not qualify for emergency loans or disaster assistance, and many were left with no other option but to sell their farms.

Today, Hawaii's papaya industry is faced with another outbreak of the ringspot virus. The only way to get rid of this virus is to destroy diseased plants, but farmers are reluctant to do so because of the financial loss involved. As a result, the disease spreads, with disastrous consequences to neighboring farmers and the rural economy.

The survival of our nation's farmers is largely dependent upon the unpredictable whims of mother nature. We provide our farmers with assistance when adversely affected by severe weather, but that is not enough. Emergency loans and disaster assistance must be made available to farmers for crops suffering from calamitous plant viruses and diseases.

H.R. 1249 would enable farmers to qualify for crop insurance programs, noninsured assistance programs, and low-interest emergency loans when devastated by crop losses due to plant viruses and diseases.

I invite my colleagues to cosponsor this worthy legislation, and I urge immediate consideration of H.R. 1249 in the House.

BUDGET PASSED TODAY SUPPORTS OUR SOLDIERS AROUND THE WORLD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately it sometimes takes a tragedy

such as the loss of our pilots in Europe this week, or the recent deaths of the National Guard members killed in Georgia to remind us of the risks associated with military service in our country. In time of war, we realize the individual sacrifices made for the common good. But we should also recognize the efforts made every day by our soldiers around the world.

I believe the budget for our military forces which was passed by the House today is focused on our soldiers. The legislation would increase military pay by 4.6 percent and increases pay and other compensation by \$1.4 billion in fiscal year 2002.

It provides \$3.9 billion for the first year of an expanded health care package for over-65 military retirees. It also allows for an additional \$400 million to improve the quality of housing for military personnel and their families by providing new construction, renovation of existing housing, and measures to reduce out-of-pocket housing expenses.

The budget also provides funds for research and development to help guarantee that U.S. forces will go into the field with the tools they need to ensure victory and minimize casualties. At the completion of the current review, which is occurring on the scope and role of the U.S. Armed Forces, we will have a better idea what our needs are for the next decade, and I look forward to the results of that review.

Mr. Speaker, I am from Iowa, and Iowans have a proud tradition of service in the Armed Forces. Back in the Civil War, Iowa had a population of 670,000, but we sent 78,000 soldiers to fight. Nearly 13,000 never returned home; 28 were honored with the Medal of Honor for their service. The Medal of Honor for gallant service in our country's wars since then has been awarded to another 50 Iowans and to 36 men and women who have grown up in Iowa. Exemplary of Iowa sacrifice in the armed services were the five Sullivan brothers from Waterloo, Iowa, who served on the USS Juneau. George, Francis, Joseph, Madison and Albert Sullivan had a motto. They said, "We stick together." And they all died together in the Battle of Guadalcanal.

Mr. Speaker, since the Civil War, more than 1.1 million American men and women have given their lives for our Nation. I think most Americans recognize the debt that we owe those men and women throughout history. I also believe it is important to think about the daily sacrifices made in smaller measure by our soldiers. Every day they risk their lives. Every day many of them miss loved ones who are thousands of miles away. In today's volunteer service, every man and woman does it by choice. We should be proud of the service that they give to America every day.

Mr. Speaker, we should think of our soldiers when we make decisions re-

garding our military and its force structure. They should be paid a fair wage. Benefits should be commensurate. They should be well equipped, well supplied, well trained and they should be deployed wisely.

Their services must be used wisely and not overused. Our military is currently stretched pretty thin. This causes problems with the quality and supply of our equipment and with our personnel retention. Today our military is deployed in 138 countries around the world. Since 1990, we have dramatically reduced our military spending while we have asked our forces to do much more. This leads to an unhappy equation. Inadequate funding for training and material plus increased deployments equals problems with morale, equipment readiness, retention and recruitment.

Mr. Speaker, the mission of the Reserves has changed over the years. During the Cold War, reservists and guardsmen were considered on call to respond to World War III or some catastrophic event. During the 1980s, they contributed less than 1 million manhours per year. Today reservists are called upon to perform day-to-day operations and to support various ongoing missions. For example, the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve combine to provide the U.S. Transportation Command with 52 percent of its total available aircraft, including 55 percent of the tankers and 64 percent of the tactical airlift. Air Force Reserve flight crews average 110 days of active duty a year.

Beginning last April 2000 and continuing for six rotations, the Army National Guard will be sent to Bosnia to provide combat troops and support division headquarters operations.

Why is there such an increased reliance upon our Reserves and the Guard? Well, because our Active Forces have been reduced by 35 percent since 1990, but overseas deployments have increased by 300 percent. A total of 265,000 reservists and National Guardsmen participated in Operation Desert Storm. And in other operations, since 1995, 19,000 reservists were called to duty in Bosnia, 5,600 were called to duty in Kosovo, and 8,000 were called to Haiti.

Mr. Speaker, in calendar year 1999, the Reserves and National Guard were called to fulfill nearly 750,000 manhours in foreign campaigns. If we break it down, we see reservists and guardsmen spent in Bosnia, 334,000 hours; in Kosovo, 313,000 hours; and Iraq, 145,000 hours.

The Reserves and Guard are accounting for more of our national defense needs than ever before. This comes with some positive and some negative consequences. On the positive side, it is a testament to their abilities. It means that the Reserve and the Guard are more respected and appreciated than ever before. An increased dependence

also results in some increased funding within the defense appropriations, and it forces the Reserves to improve their abilities to respond to crises quickly and efficiently; and those are all good effects.

However, increased reliance also means a lot of pressure is placed on Guard and Reserve personnel. An Air Force Reserve air crew member who works at his regular job 221 days a year and serves 110 days of active duty has only 34 days off to spend with his family, and that leads to many individuals leaving the Reserves. It also places a lot of pressure on employers who are a key element of Guard and Reserve service. Most employers patriotically accept an employee who serves 1 week-end a month and 2 weeks in the summer. They support a Desert Shield/Desert Storm type of deployment because this happens only once in a generation. But how many 6-month or 9-month peacetime rotations to Bosnia will employers put up with?

For example, starting in 1995, Iowa reservists have been called on to serve in Bosnia. In September of last year, soldiers from the Iowa National Guard Company A, 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry were ordered to active duty. They were deployed in Southwest Asia to support U.S. forces that are enforcing the Iraqi no-fly zones. About 100 Iowans were called to service, coming from Waterloo, Charles City, Dubuque, Oelwein, Hampton and Iowa Falls, to assist with security duties at Patriot missile sites. Currently Company C, 1st Battalion, 168th Infantry, with about 100 members from Denison and western Iowa, is deployed in to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait for similar duty.

Mr. Speaker, the Iowa Air National Guard has been involved in deployments as well. The 132nd Fighter Wing was deployed to Incirlik Air Base in Turkey to support Operation Northern Watch no-fly zone operations over northern Iraq during fiscal year 1999 and fiscal year 2000. They are scheduled to return to the Persian Gulf region this summer to support Operation Southern Watch.

Each of these deployments involves approximately 200 pilots and crew members and 6 Iowa-based F-16C "Fighting Falcon" fighter aircraft. The deployments are approximately 6 weeks in duration. There is also a detachment of National Guard based in Davenport of Company F, 106th Aviation unit which has personnel in Paraguay. Over the last 2 years, Iowa National Guard units have deployed for active service and for training purposes in over 15 nations.

Mr. Speaker, often such deployments involve 9-month rotations for the troops. Nine months is a long time to be away from your families. If any of my colleagues have children, you know that nine months makes a huge difference in a person's life. It is a long

time to be away from your regular job. How does absence effect promotions on the job? How does a 9-month absence affect your family? The impact it has on the recruitment and retention to the Reserves in the Iowa National Guard is significant.

Mr. Speaker, these concerns bring to mind a larger issue. If the Nation continues to accumulate missions around the world as it has over the last 10 years, we are going to have to reevaluate the size of our Active-Duty Force. The last administration's strategy of making the U.S. the guarantor of democracy around the world has involved the U.S. in a wide variety of peace-keeping missions that are of at least questionable national security, and that has had an adverse effect of our ability to fight two major theater wars simultaneously or to respond to a real national security threat. A Congressional Budget Office report in December 1999 found that, "Peace missions could be taking a toll on the military's ability to pay for routine operations, maintain the combat skills for conventional wars and keep its equipment and personnel ready and available for such wars."

In May 1999, the GAO, which is the investigative arm of Congress, found that nonwar operations have adversely affected the military capability of units deployed in Bosnia and Southwest Asia.

In addition, those units that stay in the U.S. have to pick up the work of the deployed units. These deployments are having a serious impact on our Nation's ability to defend itself. During Operation Allied Force in Kosovo, we came dangerously close to running out of certain types of cruise missiles. If North Korea had decided to attack South Korea during that period, we might not have been able to respond as effectively.

And these overseas deployments are not cakewalks. Armed conflicts continue to erupt in the Balkans. Just this week there was open warfare in Macedonia: Ethnic tensions remain high in the region, and American soldiers are stuck in the middle.

In Iraq, the situation for our Air Reserve and Air Guardsmen are equally dangerous.

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The American public is not always aware of how often our pilots, active, Reserve, or Guard, are targeted by Iraqi air defense systems and forced to take evasive actions.

Iraq is not a secure environment. The Balkans are not a secure environment. The longer we have soldiers deployed to these theaters, the greater the risk.

So what can we do? Well, first of all, I have to commend our Reservists for their commitment and their devotion.

Second, our allies should bear more of the responsibility. Last April, I

voted for an amendment that would withhold 50 percent of the funding for Kosovo operations until the President certified that our allies were complying with at least 75 percent of their commitment to the operation. Unfortunately, the amendment was defeated, but we must do things like this to make sure that our allies are picking up their share of the burden.

Third, we have to realistically understand that we cannot be everywhere at the same time. We have to regain control over the deployment of our military personnel.

Fourth, we must ensure that our spending bills provide for our main priorities. We must ask ourselves, does funding provide for our military personnel? Are they adequately paid? Do they receive medical care? Are they provided appropriate living accommodations? Does funding provide for our current equipment and weapons needs?

We just had a talk on that from the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON).

Does funding provide for needed new weapons? The Quadrennial Defense Review is currently underway and the President has also ordered a top-to-bottom department review directed by Andrew Marshall, head of the Pentagon's Office of Net Assessment. The review of our military must also focus on how America views its role in the world. We must make sure that we build an armed force that fits with the role our Nation chooses to play in the world arena.

We must be prepared to fight the next war. Our forces have to be mobile. They have to be flexible, and they have to be well trained. They have to be able to respond to a world where the most serious threats may not always be armored divisions or fighter wings, which brings us to one threat that we must be willing and able to face.

Terrorism is a horrible fact of life today. We need to be prepared to strike swiftly and strongly in response to acts of terror. We also need to take actions to prevent terrorist attacks that view innocent civilians as acceptable targets.

Since the demise of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, the United States has been dealing in unfamiliar territory. With the fall of communism and the victory of democracy, America stands alone as the sole superpower of the world and that makes us a tempting target for terrorists and also causes the world to look to us to take a lead in dealing with terrorism.

Our military and indeed our society must be willing to make tough choices when we face threats from state-sponsored terrorism and also from groups not associated with individual countries but with broader causes or ideologies such as radical fundamentalism.

We need a clear, consistent policy, one that backs up diplomacy, international intelligence, international co-operation and clearly stated policies on reprisals, with the military readiness and forces to make them a sure and deadly deterrent.

One thing should be absolutely clear. If we make the decision to commit our troops overseas to an armed conflict, we must give them the means and support to win.

Flying over our soldiers is the American flag. Hundreds of thousands of Americans have died in battle under the Stars and Stripes. The flag is a symbol of freedom and democracy. It should be protected from desecration. I favor a constitutional amendment that would protect it from being defiled and degraded. Surely it is not too much to ask that the symbol under which so many men and women have proudly given their lives be afforded basic respect.

I was never in combat. I am a retired lieutenant colonel in the United States Army Reserve Medical Corps, but I was proud to wear the uniform and the flag is something special to me. That is why I think we should pass an amendment to protect the flag.

Let me close by saying something about our veterans. Congress today recognized their sacrifices. Today the House passed a budget which includes a 12 percent increase for the Department of Veterans Affairs. The budget calls for a \$5.6 billion increase over last year's budget for the VA, including an additional \$1 billion above that which was proposed by the administration. The funding increase is needed due to underfunding by the past administration.

I believe the increase will allow the Veterans Administration to begin to address a backlog in cases and to provide funding to cover unmet services for our Nation's veterans.

I also recently cosponsored legislation to improve outreach programs carried out by the Department of Veterans Affairs by more fully informing veterans of benefits available to them. The legislation would direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to prepare an annual plan for the conduct of outreach activities to provide veterans and dependents information concerning eligibility for Department benefits, health care services, and application requirements when they first apply for any such benefit.

It is very important that we make our veterans aware of the assistance that is available to them.

The bill is appropriately called the Veterans Right To Know Act, and I call upon my colleagues to support it.

Just this week the House passed the Veterans Opportunities Act of 2001. The legislation also seeks to inform service members of the benefits that are available. The bill requires that before an

individual leaves the service, they are counseled and educated regarding the programs available to assist veterans. This program will help make servicemen and women more aware of the opportunities which are available to them in civilian life.

The legislation also expands the Veterans Administration's current work-study program and increases the maximum allowable annual ROTC award for benefits under the Montgomery GI bill. For the first time, veterans will be given financial support in pursuing education in the private sector. In today's world, the best technological training is not always in the traditional college setting.

I have also joined more than 70 of my colleagues in cosponsoring the Retired Pay Restoration Act of 2001. This is legislation that would allow retired individuals who suffer from a service-connected disability to receive their disability compensation without having it deducted from their military retirement pay. The legislation is supported by the American Legion, the Disabled American Veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Retired Officers Association, the Retired Enlisted Association, the Uniformed Service Disabled Retirees and the Military Order of Purple Heart; also the Non-commissioned Officers Association, the Jewish War Veterans, the National Association of Uniformed Services, AMVETS, and the Military Family Association.

For heaven's sakes, let us pass this, too. It is essential to the vitality of American democracy, the most successful experiment in self-government in the world's history, that we remain vigilant of our freedoms and that we have the proper respect for our fellow citizens in the armed services. So I take this opportunity to offer my thanks to the men and women in uniform.

ARTWORK COMMEMORATING WOMEN IN THE CAPITOL COMPLEX

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CRENSHAW). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, during this women's history month, it is with great pleasure that I rise to announce that I have today introduced a resolution expressing the sense of this House of Representatives that artwork displayed in our Capitol, the upcoming Capitol Visitors' Center and the office buildings of the House of Representatives should better represent the contributions of women to American society. I am pleased to be joined by 16 of our colleagues as original cosponsors and encourage all of our other colleagues to join in this effort.

Mr. Speaker, the majority of our Nation's residents are female. The moth-

ers and grandmothers of America have carried life forward in our Republic now for over 2 centuries. Females, in fact, outnumber males, according to the 2000 census estimates, by 6 million: 140 million women, 134 million men.

The statue of a woman called Freedom crowns the dome of our Capitol building. Sixty-four Members of the House and 13 Members of the Senate are now women. We pledge allegiance to a flag that was designed by a woman. Sojourner Truth was committed to freedom and the abolition of slavery in the mid-1800s. Rosie the Riveter symbolized the contributions of women to our victory and the victory of freedom in World War II. Rosa Parks has been a major inspiration of every American concerned about civil rights. Our own colleague, now retired Geraldine Ferraro, became the first woman to be the candidate of a major political party for the office of vice president.

One would think that given the contributions that women have made to the world and to our Nation, as mothers, scientists, educators, astronauts, political leaders, mentors of our youth, having artwork in our Capitol that commemorates their contributions would be automatic. But sadly, in this year of 2001, this simply is not the case. In fact, less than 5 percent of the artwork displayed in all of these buildings displays or honors the contributions that women have made to America. It really is a shocking figure.

In 1995, I sponsored a resolution to establish a Commission on Women's Art in the Capitol. Then in 1997, I sought to include a directive in the report on the fiscal 1998 legislative branch appropriation bill to direct the Architect of the Capitol to prepare a plan for the procurement and display of art that is more fully representative of the contributions of American women to our society. I was told by then chairman of the Committee on House Oversight, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), that he believed this language was not necessary and would usurp the authority of the Joint Committee on the Library and the Fine Arts Board, and nothing happened.

In 1998, I was successful in getting a similar statement of support included in the fiscal 1999 legislative branch appropriations bill; and then in 1999, I similarly introduced House Resolution 202, a resolution virtually identical to the one that I am now introducing in this new 107th Congress.

Mr. Speaker, our parents have taught us that those things worth having are worth fighting for. Today we renew that fight. We renew this fight with the recognition that we are planning on constructing a new Capitol Visitors' Center that has the opportunity to appropriately represent the contributions of women, as well as men, from the very beginning of that annex's construction.