

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT FOR
H.R. 1292—SPECIALLY ADAPTED
HOUSING CORRECTION

HON. STEVE BUYER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2005

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, Chapter 21 of title 38, United States Code, provides for grants to adapt or acquire suitable housing for certain severely disabled veterans, including veterans who are unable to ambulate without assistance. The maximum grant amount for a severely disabled veteran is \$50,000.

Public Law 108-183 extended eligibility for the adaptive housing grant to severely disabled servicemembers who have not yet been processed for discharge from military service, but who will qualify for the benefit upon discharge due to the severity of their disabilities. Prior to Public Law 108-183, qualifying servicemembers were not allowed to apply for or receive the grant until they were actually discharged from military service.

Section 401 of S. 2486, Public Law 108-454, extends eligibility for specially adapted housing grants to veterans with permanent and total service-connected disabilities due to the loss, or loss of use, of both arms or above both elbows.

An inadvertent error occurred in the drafting of the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004, which the Committee discovered too late to be corrected without jeopardizing passage of the same bill in both the House and Senate before adjournment. The error resulted in the omission of the change made by Public Law 108-183 for catastrophically disabled servicemembers. H.R. 1292 serves to correct that oversight.

Mr. Speaker, this is a necessary correction to ensure the Department of Veterans Affairs continues to assist those severely disabled servicemembers who require their homes be adapted to their disability. I urge my colleagues to support it.

HOUSE DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE
COMMISSION RESOLUTION

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2005

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was pleased to vote in support of the resolution (H. Res. 135) sponsored by U.S. Representative DAVID DREIER from California. Adoption of this measure will establish the House Democracy Assistance Commission.

This new internal commission of House members will work closely with our legislative counterparts in other fledgling democracies to encourage the development of democratic processes and institutions. In addition, it will expand information exchanges and the sharing of first-hand knowledge of the inner workings of functioning democracies. Finally, this new commission will provide recommendations to the Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development on what types of

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material assistance, such as modern automation, information technology, and library systems will most help our counterpart parliamentarians to more effectively perform their vital tasks of representation and democratic participation.

The work that this commission will perform has already been validated in prior similar efforts. Between 1990 and 1996, the informal "Frost-Solomon Task Force" provided invaluable technical assistance and equipment to Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Russia. The creation of this new commission will build upon that solid precedent in enhancing democratic institution-building where democratic engagement and republican government are new to what had previously been undemocratic societies.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION
TO AWARD THE CONGRESSIONAL
GOLD MEDAL TO THE TUSKEGEE
AIRMEN

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2005

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce my recent introduction of legislation to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the Tuskegee Airmen. The Congressional Gold Medal was first awarded over 200 years ago to Americans whose courage and determination in battle exemplified the spirit of our nation.

In keeping with this tradition, I am honored to join with Senator LEVIN in concurrently introducing this legislation to bestow Congress' highest honor to this deserving group of individuals.

The Tuskegee Airmen overcame segregation and prejudice to become one of the most highly respected fighter groups of World War II. In so doing, they helped to destroy the racist conceptions of their time, and set in motion the eventual desegregation of the Armed Services.

Before 1940, African Americans were barred from flying for the U.S. military. However, the great threat posed by the Nazis, and the demands of Black Americans for full citizenship, including the right to fight for their country as patriots, persuaded the American government to provide an opportunity for African Americans to serve, even though in segregated units.

The Airmen completed 15,500 missions, destroyed 260 enemy aircraft, sank one enemy destroyer, and demolished numerous enemy installations. They also would have the World War II distinction of never losing a bomber under their escort, despite flying in some of the enemies' most heavily defended areas.

During their World War II service, the Airmen would earn 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 744 Air Medals, 8 Purple Hearts, and 14 Bronze Stars. At the war's end they had not only helped to defeat the Germans, they helped to set in motion the eventual desegregation of the armed services a few years later.

The Tuskegee Airmen were patriots in the truest sense of the word. Their belief in them-

selves, and in the promise of America, gave them the strength to overcome incredible obstacles, and accomplish what was then considered impossible. Their courage inspired a generation, and their determination strengthened a nation.

The Tuskegee Airmen deserve an honor befitting their contribution to our country, so I respectfully urge my fellow colleagues to support this legislation.

IN CELEBRATION OF ARTS
ADVOCACY DAY 2005

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 15, 2005

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Arts Advocacy Day. As Congress considers the budget and appropriations bills for fiscal year 2006, the importance of the arts should be recognized for a number of reasons.

First, the arts contribute significantly to local economic development. As of January 2005 in the Eleventh Congressional District of Ohio there were 1,212 arts-related businesses that employed 10,174 people. This data, from Dun & Bradstreet, indicates that between 2004 and 2005, arts-related businesses grew at a faster rate than total U.S. business growth. At the same time, as total U.S. jobs shrank by 1.9 percent, the decline in arts-related businesses was 0.8 percent, in other words less than half that rate. Arts-related businesses are clearly good for business and good for the economy. But the arts have greater effects than these.

An examination of SAT scores from the College Board in the period 2002 through 2004 reflects a startling effect. Data from Ohio students that studied Art History, Dance, Drama, Music, Photography/Film, or Studio Art reflected higher Verbal and Math SAT scores than students that didn't study any of these subjects. To further quantify this effect, let me provide an example: Ohio students in music performance reflected a Mean Verbal SAT score of 554 in 2004 and a Mean Math score of 552. In contrast, Ohio students not exposed to arts courses demonstrated a 2004 Mean Verbal SAT score of 497 and a Mean Math score of 511. This forty point differential benefit is very easy to understand. Nationally, similar effects were reflected in the test scores of students that studied a variety of arts disciplines: Art History, Dance, Drama, Photography/Film, or Studio Art.

As schools focus on raising test scores, the importance of arts cannot be overstated. But conflicting attitudes and practices exist in Ohio's schools. A 2000 survey by the Ohio Alliance For Arts Education reflected that more than 70 percent of those surveyed in Ohio's public schools believed that music and visual arts are as important as other academic subjects. Yet, in practice over 11 years, public schools demonstrated overall reductions in arts and music education. Fewer private schools (than public schools) required achievement in the arts as a graduation requirement. But a higher percentage of private schools believed that creative writing, music,

March 16, 2005