

gun violence and limit injury and death to Americans as a result of unlawful firearm use.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, this legislation is long overdue. For years, there have been inconsistencies in the manner in which manufacturers pay their taxes. Under current law, firearm and ammunition manufacturers pay excise taxes into the fund on a bi-weekly basis. All other manufacturers pay on a quarterly basis. This legislation will change this inconsistency and bring a little commonsense into our crazy tax system.

I am pleased to be a cosponsor of H.R. 510, to amend the Internal Revenue Code to require that the payment of the manufacturers' excise tax on recreational equipment be paid quarterly. The frequency of tax payments for the firearm and ammunition manufacturers is a burden on the industry. In fact, some manufacturers are forced to secure short-term loans to pay their taxes, thus incurring additional expenses and adding to administrative overhead. The end result is that money is diverted away from core business areas to finance tax payments.

Through this legislation, firearm and ammunition manufacturers will now be able to reinvest more funds into researching and developing new products, purchasing new manufacturing machinery, and increasing marketing and outreach to the hunting and sport shooting community. The federal government will get their taxes, on a quarterly basis as it does from every other manufacturer, so no revenue will be lost.

I urge my colleagues to support the Firearms Excise Tax Improvement Act.

Mr. KIND. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5552, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### HOMEBUYER ASSISTANCE AND IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2010

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5623) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the homebuyer tax credit for the purchase of a principal residence before October 1, 2010, in the case of a written binding contract entered into with respect to such principal residence before May 1, 2010, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5623

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Homebuyer Assistance and Improvement Act of 2010".

#### SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF HOMEBUYER CREDIT FOR CERTAIN PURCHASES PURSUANT TO BINDING CONTRACTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 36(h) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking "paragraph (1) shall be applied by substituting 'July 1, 2010'" and inserting "and who purchases such residence before October 1, 2010, paragraph (1) shall be applied by substituting 'October 1, 2010'".

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Subparagraph (B) of section 36(h)(3) of such Code is amended by inserting "and for 'October 1, 2010'" after "for 'July 1, 2010'".

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to residences purchased after June 30, 2010.

#### SEC. 3. APPLICATION OF BAD CHECKS PENALTY TO ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 6657 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) by striking "If any check or money order in payment of any amount" and inserting "If any instrument in payment, by any commercially acceptable means, of any amount"; and

(2) by striking "such check" each place it appears and inserting "such instrument".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATES.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to instruments tendered after the date of the enactment of this Act.

#### SEC. 4. DISCLOSURE OF PRISONER RETURN INFORMATION TO STATE PRISONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subparagraph (A) of section 6103(k)(10) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) by inserting "and the head of any State agency charged with the responsibility for administration of prisons" after "the head of the Federal Bureau of Prisons"; and

(2) by striking "Federal prison" and inserting "Federal or State prison".

(b) RESTRICTION ON REDISCLOSURE.—Subparagraph (B) of section 6103(k)(10) of such Code is amended—

(1) by inserting "and the head of any State agency charged with the responsibility for administration of prisons" after "the head of the Federal Bureau of Prisons"; and

(2) by inserting "or agency" after "such Bureau".

(c) RECORDKEEPING.—Paragraph (4) of section 6103(p) of such Code is amended by inserting "(k)(10)," before "(l)(6)," in the matter preceding subparagraph (A).

(d) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The heading of paragraph (10) of section 6103(k) of such Code is amended by striking "OF PRISONERS TO FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS" and inserting "TO CERTAIN PRISON OFFICIALS".

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to disclosures made after the date of the enactment of this Act.

#### SEC. 5. AMENDMENT OF TRAVEL PROMOTION ACT OF 2009.

(a) TRAVEL PROMOTION FUND FEES.—Section 217(h)(3)(B) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1187(h)(3)(B)) is amended—

(1) by striking "subsection (d) of section 11 of the Travel Promotion Act of 2009." in clause (ii) and inserting "subsection (d) of the Travel Promotion Act of 2009 (22 U.S.C. 2131(d))."; and

(2) by striking "September 30, 2014." in clause (iii) and inserting "September 30, 2015.".

(b) IMPLEMENTATION BEGINNING IN FISCAL YEAR 2011.—Subsection (d) of the Travel Promotion Act of 2009 (22 U.S.C. 2131(d)) is amended—

(1) by striking "For fiscal year 2010, the" in paragraph (2)(A) and inserting "The";

(2) by striking "quarterly, beginning on January 1, 2010," in paragraph (2)(A) and inserting "monthly, immediately following the collection of fees under section 217(h)(3)(B)(i)(I) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1187(h)(3)(B)(i)(I)).";

(3) by striking "fiscal years 2011 through 2014," in paragraph (2)(B) and inserting "fiscal years 2012 through 2015.";

(4) by striking "fiscal year 2010," in paragraph (3)(A) and inserting "fiscal year 2011.";

(5) by striking "fiscal year 2011," each place it appears in paragraph (3)(A) and inserting "fiscal year 2012."; and

(6) by striking "fiscal year 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, or 2014" in paragraph (4)(B) and inserting "fiscal year 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015".

#### SEC. 6. PAYGO COMPLIANCE.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled "Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation" for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) and the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, millions of American families have taken advantage of the home buyer tax credit, giving a much-needed boost to home sales at a time when our housing market needed it most. In a word, this tax credit has worked. It gave a boost to our economic recovery, and it helped first-time buyers achieve their dream, the American Dream of owning a home.

Today's legislation helps ensure the credit works for people who have followed the terms of the incentive. Under current law, taxpayers that entered into a written, binding contract to purchase a home prior to May 1, 2010, are eligible for the home buyer tax credit so long as the sale was completed prior to July 1, 2010. The bill would extend this closing date from prior to July 1, 2010, to prior to October 1, 2010. As a result, taxpayers that entered into a written, binding contract prior to May 1, 2010, will have until September 30, 2010, and I emphasize that, until September 30, 2010, to complete their home purchase transactions.

This legislation also takes important steps to eliminate instances of fraud that were recently discovered by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration relating to prison inmates. Last year, the Oversight Subcommittee chair, Mr. LEWIS, took the lead in examining issues of abuse, and this clearly is one, and so this bill addresses this abuse very effectively.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is a necessary step to extend this benefit to those who qualify and the need to facilitate their purchases, and also, it addresses the issue of fraud. This legislation is fully paid for, and I strongly encourage my colleagues to support the bill and follow through on our commitment to thousands and thousands of home buyers who have followed the rules and now should be able to follow through with their purchase.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 5623.

Last November, Congress extended the home buyer credit. Mr. Speaker, for buyers who entered into a binding contract by the end of April this year but only if they closed on their house by the end of June. I agree with my colleague from Michigan on the need for this extension, but only those who closed on their houses by the end of June would be eligible.

The slow grinding gears of bureaucracy have left many potential home buyers who could build equity and build for the future out in the cold on this, and by doing this extension, we buy an appropriate amount of time for those who have signed contracts by the April deadline but haven't closed yet to be able to close. In short, we just need a little more time.

This bill does not extend the deadline for signing a contract to buy a home. The contract still must have been signed before the deadline at the end of April, but it does provide relief for those home buyers who haven't yet been able to close but who might be depending on the tax credit for their down payment or closing costs. It seems unfair to leave those home buyers in limbo even though they tried to comply with the rules. Denying them the tax credit could cause the deal to collapse, which would put downward pressure on home prices and exacerbate the problems with the housing market.

□ 1420

Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to see that this bill responds to a recent report from the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration, who found that almost 1,300 incarcerated prisoners claimed over \$9 million in tax credits for homes they supposedly purchased while in prison.

The bill would improve information sharing between the IRS and State prison systems so that the IRS could obtain information on just who is claiming to have bought a home. Refundable tax credits always attract fraud, and we need to do better to prevent people from claiming benefits to which they are not entitled.

I think this legislation includes sensible changes to improve the administration of the home buyer tax credit, and I urge an "aye" vote.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, it is now my special privilege to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania, KATHY DAHLKEMPER.

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 5623, the Homebuyers Assistance and Improvement Act of 2010.

I particularly would like to thank the leader, Chairman LEVIN, for helping advance this legislation, which will extend tomorrow's closing deadline for those eligible for the home buyer tax credit.

The National Association of Realtors estimates that 180,000 families, including over 5,800 in my home State of Pennsylvania alone, signed contracts for new homes by the April 30 deadline, but have not yet finished their closings. One realtor in my district estimated that there are 20 of these such closings which have not been able to be completed yet. Due to the turmoil in the housing market and the overwhelming success of the tax credit, lenders and Federal programs have not been able to keep up with the demand, and that is what has created the backlog.

The Homebuyers Assistance and Improvement Act will provide time to clear this bottleneck and to make sure that these new homeowners are not punished for delays that are out of their control.

As our economy continues on a slow yet steady path toward recovery, we have a responsibility to promote policies that aid in that growth. The Homebuyers Assistance and Improvement Act will do just that, so I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5623.

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to a distinguished member of the Ways and Means Committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER).

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to applaud the inclusion in this bill of a provision that enhances information sharing between the IRS and State prisons.

Recently, the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration issued a report, finding that at least 1,295 prisoners received \$9.1 million in home buyer tax credits for homes they reported purchasing while incarcerated. We must put a stop to this fraud.

I am a long-time supporter of increased data sharing among agencies to ensure that prisoners do not illegally obtain taxpayer-funded benefits. In the 1996 welfare reform bill, I championed a program that authorized incentive payments to penal institutions for providing information on newly incarcerated individuals. This data sharing gave the Social Security Administration the information they needed to prevent checks from going to jailed beneficiaries, which saved taxpayers over \$5 billion.

Currently, the IRS shares information with Federal prisons but not with State prisons. The bill before us would change that, and I support its passage.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to insert any extraneous material in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, now it is my privilege to yield 2 minutes to a very vigorous Representative, the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS).

Ms. TITUS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Homebuyers Assistance and Improvement Act of 2010.

The first-time home buyer tax credit has helped bring stability to the struggling housing market in southern Nevada. In total, over 25,000 Nevadans have collected about \$200 million from the credit, which has dramatically reduced the State's excess housing inventory.

In southern Nevada, short sales have become more and more common as lenders and owners are able to avoid the arduous and costly process of foreclosure, and buyers can then purchase homes slightly below market value.

Unlike the traditional sale of a property between an owner and a buyer, however, a short sale must be approved by the holder of the mortgage. In many cases, although a purchase price is agreed to by the seller and the buyer, the lender may not approve the sale for months. Certainly, this has been the case in Nevada. As a result, many first-time home buyers have entered into agreements for short sales prior to the April 30 deadline, but have not yet been able to close on the purchase prices prior to the upcoming June 30 deadline.

According to local experts, the Homebuyers Assistance and Improvement Act of 2010, which is before us now, will extend to October 1, the date by which a purchaser must close a sale of a home in order to obtain the home buyer tax credit. This will allow approximately 3,800 first-time home buyers in southern Nevada to receive the credit. It is a fair solution that will help consumers who have met all of the eligibility requirements for the credit but who have had the timely processing of their loans held up through no fault of their own.

So I thank the chairman for his assistance in moving this forward, and I urge my colleagues to support the legislation.

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as she may consume to the distinguished member of the Ways and Means Committee, the

gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE).

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. I thank the gentleman from Kentucky.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the bill before us, the Homebuyers Assistance and Improvement Act of 2010.

For reasons known only to them, our Democrat colleagues in the Senate have been unable or unwilling to reach a compromise addressing the bipartisan concerns about the bundle of extensions still pending across the Capitol. Due to this failure of basic leadership, the National Flood Insurance Program was allowed to expire, as well as a number of other programs.

I mention the Flood Insurance Program specifically because realtors in my district are calling my office morning, noon and night on behalf of clients who cannot close on their new homes without an extension in the Flood Insurance Program. Remember, it is Florida. You need flood insurance. Subsequently, quite a few of these individuals are going to be missing the homebuyer tax credit that they were told they would qualify for.

Say what you will about the tax credit, but in my view, if the government says it is going to do something, like anybody else, it had better follow through. Frankly, at this point, I'm not sure that the Democrat majority is even capable of doing that. If you can't muster up enough votes to ram your agenda through, despite opposition from your own Members, or you are faced with the prospect of actually having to pay for something—isn't that unique?—this government comes to a screeching halt.

On most issues, my constituents and I think this liberal legislative meltdown is a blessing; but on matters where families and small businesses have made financial decisions based on the expectation that the government would keep its word, we do demand and deserve action.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle have control of the White House, and they have the majorities in both houses of Congress. They need to stop blaming everybody else and get their act together for the sake of the American people.

Mr. LEVIN. Before I recognize the next distinguished gentleman, I just sit here. Even on a bipartisan supported bill, we get such partisan rhetoric. I hope everybody listens to it.

It is now my privilege to yield 2 minutes, or as much time as he may consume, to a very active Member of Congress, the gentleman from the proud State of Mississippi (Mr. CHILDERS).

Mr. CHILDERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Homebuyers Assistance and Improvement Act of 2010.

This bill is important for home buyers who have met the requirements of the first-time homebuyer tax credit program but who are now not able to close on their new homes due to circumstances which are out of their control.

□ 1430

With the passage of this act, over 1,500 home buyers in my great State of Mississippi will be able to take advantage of the Homebuyers Tax Credit program, making homes more affordable for families and individuals and creating much-needed jobs.

As a veteran realtor for over 30 years, I have seen firsthand the ups and downs associated with the housing market. Recent signs of recovery in the market are certainly encouraging, but we must follow through and sustain the progress linked to the initial benefits of the homebuyer tax credits.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and to support the prospective homeowners in America.

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I would encourage all of my colleagues to support H.R. 5623 to continue and extend this program for those who signed up before the April 30 close.

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

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD a letter from the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, Mr. THOMPSON, to me dated June 29, 2010, and a letter from me as chairman of the Ways and Means Committee to Mr. THOMPSON.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, June 29, 2010.

Hon. SANDER M. LEVIN,  
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means,  
House of Representatives, Longworth House  
Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing you regarding the "Homebuyer Assistance and Improvement Act of 2010."

This legislation contains provisions within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Homeland Security. I recognize and appreciate your desire to bring this legislation before the House in an expeditious manner and, accordingly, have waived further consideration of the measure. I have done so with the understanding that waiving consideration of the bill should not be construed as the Committee on Homeland Security waiving, altering, or otherwise affecting its jurisdiction over subject matters contained in the bill which fall within its Rule X jurisdiction.

Further, I request your support for the appointment of Homeland Security conferees during any House-Senate conference convened on this or similar legislation. I also ask that a copy of this letter and your response be placed in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of this bill.

I look forward to working with you on this legislation and other matters of great importance to this nation.

Sincerely,

BENNIE G. THOMPSON,  
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,  
Washington, DC, June 29, 2010.

Hon. BENNIE THOMPSON,  
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security,  
Ford House Office Building, Washington,  
DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON, Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 5623, the Homebuyer Assistance and Improvement Act of 2010.

I appreciate your willingness to work cooperatively on this legislation, and I acknowledge that there are provisions within the bill that are within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Homeland Security. I agree that your inaction with respect to this bill does not in any way prejudice the Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future.

I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during consideration of H.R. 5623.

Sincerely,

SANDER LEVIN,  
Chairman.

I can close very briefly. This bill is meritorious. It deserves bipartisan support, and I hope very much it will receive it. We owe this to the people who have essentially followed the rules who are caught by a closing date.

This is a credit. There is often question about, is the effort of the recovery program and like programs working? This is an example of it working, and in fact working so actively that now it is necessary and I think correct that we make sure that people who have advantaged themselves of it correctly are able to follow through.

So I urge a strong vote.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank Congress members DAHLKEMPER, KRATOVIL and CHILDERS for introducing this important and much-needed piece of legislation.

The mortgage crisis continues to affect millions of Americans, and has greatly interfered with the American dream of home ownership. It is imperative that we help everyday Americans in their effort to remain afloat in light of the ongoing effects of the economic meltdown. For these reasons, I support the proposed amendments to this Act which will extend the closing deadline for the First-Time Homebuyer tax credit to September 30, 2010.

The housing market is an area that was, perhaps, the most largely affected by the economic crisis. As of January, 2010, there were 315,716 foreclosures on properties in the United States reported just within the month. Additionally, 1 in every 409 U.S. housing units received a foreclosure filing in the same month. Texas received the sixth highest number of foreclosure filings in January, 2010. As of March, 2010, the foreclosure rate in Houston, Texas had increased by almost ten percent from the previous month. Although our economy appears to be on the path to recovery, these statistics are still cause for concern.

The programs set in place to counteract the effects of the economic downturn have attracted many ordinary Americans who are desperate to keep their homes. The first-time homebuyer tax credit, specifically, represented

positive steps to guide ordinary Americans towards financial recovery. However, it is important to allow all who are eligible, and especially all who require the help, to benefit from the tax credit by extending the closing deadline. There has been a delay in processing due to all the new mortgages that have resulted from the tax credit. However, ordinary Americans who have attempted to obtain new mortgages, and are sincerely in need of the aid provided through the tax credit should not be punished for the backlog that resulted from factors entirely outside of their control.

We are all familiar with the ongoing effects of the economic meltdown. Jobs have been lost, homes have been foreclosed upon, and many have been left with no source of income or livelihood. In addition, many Americans have been stripped of the ability to achieve a goal that they have, in certain instances, worked decades to attain—owning a home. Extending the tax credit will provide everyday citizens with an opportunity to realize this dream, even in the midst of a recovering economy.

Mr. LEVIN. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5623, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### RECOGNIZING HEROIC EFFORTS OF WEST VIRGINIA NATIONAL GUARD AND LOCAL RESPONDERS

Mr. CRITZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1153) recognizing the heroic efforts of the West Virginia National Guard and local responders for their work rescuing 17 individuals from a downed military helicopter on a rugged, snow-covered mountain on the Pocahontas-Randolph county line.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

##### H. RES. 1153

Whereas the West Virginia National Guard and local responders safely and successfully rescued 17 individuals from a downed military helicopter on a rugged, snow-covered mountain on the Pocahontas-Randolph county line;

Whereas, on February 18, 2010, the West Virginia Army National Guard HH-60 Blackhawk helicopter, gallantly piloted by Bluefield, West Virginia, native Major Kevin Hazuka, located the downed aircraft in extremely adverse weather conditions;

Whereas two West Virginia Army National Guard Flight Medics, SSG Nicole Hopkins and SPC Casey Dunfee, were lowered to the landing site to assess the situation and to provide assistance to the injured through the night while emergency response and rescue teams worked their way to the survivors;

Whereas a C-130 Hercules aircraft from the 130th Airlift Wing of the West Virginia Air National Guard orbited the crash site to facilitate communications;

Whereas Snowshoe Mountain Ski Resort provided two snowcats and personnel that were invaluable to the safe evacuation of the injured;

Whereas local West Virginia civilians generously donated the use of their snowmobiles that enabled first responders to reach the site;

Whereas a Shavers Fork Volunteer Fire and Rescue Unit went as far as they could with special equipment and snowmobiles along a railroad grade to where it was still about a 45-minute trek in 5 feet of snow, straight up the side of a mountain with an approximate 50-degree pitch;

Whereas Valley Head Fire Department, Northern Greenbrier EMS, Greenbrier County Ambulance, White Sulphur Springs EMS, Cass Rescue, and Greenbank National Radio Astronomy Observatory operations staff all provided direct critical support for the effort;

Whereas the Pocahontas County Emergency Management, West Virginia State Police, Pocahontas County Sheriff's Department, Pocahontas County 911, and the U.S. Forest Service provided coordination and support efforts; and

Whereas the Bartow-Frank-Durbin Volunteer Fire and Rescue attempted an approach to the crash sight from the North side with support from State of West Virginia Departments of Natural Resources and Highways, neighboring Randolph and Tucker County Sheriff Departments and EMS units, Elkins, Harmon, and Huttonsville/Mill Creek Volunteer Fire Departments, and the American Red Cross: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) honors the heroic efforts of the West Virginia National Guard and local first responders;

(2) recognizes the countless volunteers, families, and neighbors who assisted in rescuing the 17 individuals; and

(3) recognizes the courage, ability, incredible determination, and willingness of West Virginians to lend a neighborly hand.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. CRITZ) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

##### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CRITZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 1153, recognizing

the heroic efforts of the West Virginia National Guard and local responders for their work rescuing 17 people from a downed military helicopter on a rocky, snow-covered mountain on the Pocahontas-Randolph county line. I would like to thank my colleague from West Virginia, Mr. RAHALL, for putting this resolution together.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to spend this time recognizing the individuals and organizations involved in the execution of this tremendous rescue.

On February 18, 2010, a West Virginia Army National Guard HH-60 Blackhawk helicopter, skillfully piloted by a native of Bluefield, West Virginia, Major Kevin Hazuka, located the downed aircraft in extremely difficult circumstances. The snow and ice of the Pocahontas-Randolph county line at the time was treacherous, and the valor of Major Kevin Hazuka should be commended by all.

I would like to commend Staff Sergeant Nicole Hopkins and Specialist Casey Dunfee, two West Virginia Army National Guard flight medics. Sergeant Hopkins and Specialist Dunfee were lowered to the site in order to provide medical care throughout the night as rescue workers labored their way to the survivors.

Thanks are also deserved to the pilot of the 130th Airlift Wing of the West Virginia National Guard who assisted by orbiting the crash site in a C-130 Hercules aircraft in order to facilitate vital communication.

Volunteers, civilians, service men and women alike all gave a hand to help rescue the survivors. The Snowshoe Mountain Ski Resort assisted by providing invaluable machinery and staff to help evacuate the injured.

Local West Virginians helped by donating snowmobiles that enabled first responders to reach the site. The Shavers Fork Volunteer Fire and Rescue Unit was instrumental in using special equipment and snowmobiles to clear a path to the location of the crash.

The Valley Head Fire Department, Northern Greenbrier EMS, Greenbrier County Ambulance, White Sulphur Springs EMS, Cass Rescue, and Greenbank National Radio Astronomy Observatory staff all provided extremely vital support for the effort. In addition, the Pocahontas County Emergency Management, West Virginia State Police, Pocahontas County Sheriff's Department, Pocahontas County 911, and the U.S. Forest Service also lent a hand in order to help assist the victims of the crash. The coordination and support they provided was also invaluable.

Finally, the Bartow-Frank-Durbin Volunteer Fire and Rescue made a valiant attempt to approach the crash site from the north side with support from the State of West Virginia Departments of Natural Resources and Highways, neighboring Randolph and Tucker County Sheriff Departments and