

Veterans Act that I rise today at the request of First Selectman Kurt Miller, the Board of Selectmen, and the Town of Seymour to officially submit the following town resolution into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

Whereas, During the Vietnam War, the United States military sprayed 22 million gallons of Agent Orange and other herbicides over Vietnam to reduce forest cover and crops used by the enemy; these herbicides contained dioxin, which has since been identified as carcinogenic and has been linked with a number of serious and disabling illnesses affecting thousands of veterans; and

Whereas, The United States Congress passed the Agent Orange Act of 1991, to address the plight of veterans exposed to herbicides while serving the Republic of Vietnam; the Act amended Title 38 of the United States Code to presumptively recognize as service-connected certain diseases among military personnel who served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1975; this presumption has provided access to appropriate disability compensation and medical care for Vietnam veterans diagnosed with such illnesses as Type II diabetes, Hodgkin's disease, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, prostate cancer, Parkinson's, multiple myeloma, peripheral neuropathy, AL Amyloidosis respiratory cancers, and soft tissue sarcomas and others yet to be identified; and

Whereas, Pursuant to a 2001 directive, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs policy has denied the presumption of a service connection for herbicide-related illnesses to Vietnam veterans who cannot furnish written documentation that they had "boots on the ground" in-country, making it virtually impossible for countless United States Navy, Marine and Air Force veterans to pursue their claims for benefits; moreover, personnel who served on ships in the "Blue Water Navy" in Vietnamese territorial waters were, in fact, exposed to dangerous airborne toxins, which not only drifted offshore but washed into streams and rivers draining into the South China Seas; and

Whereas, The United States Navy has been excluded ever since, Agent Orange has been verified, through various studies and reports, as a wide spreading chemical that was able to reach Navy Ships through the air and waterborne distribution routes; and

Whereas, Warships positioned off the Vietnamese shore routinely distilled seawater to obtain potable water, a 2002 Australian study found that the distillation process, rather than removing toxins, in fact concentrated dioxin in water used for drinking, cooking, and washing; this study was conducted by the Australian Department of Veterans Affairs after it found that Vietnam veterans of the Royal Australian Navy had a higher rate of mortality from Agent Orange-associated diseases than did Vietnam veterans from other branches of the military; when the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention studied specific cancers among Vietnam veterans, it found a higher risk of cancer among United States Navy veterans; and

Whereas, Herbicides containing TCDD did not discriminate between soldiers on the ground and sailors on ships offshore, and

Whereas, More than 30 Veterans Service Organizations support the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2013; by not passing H.R. 543, a precedent could be set to selectively provide certain groups with injury-related medical care while denying other groups without any financial, scientific or consistent reasoning, and

Whereas, When the Agent Orange Act passed in 1991 with no dissenting votes, con-

gressional leaders stressed the importance of responding to the health concerns of Vietnam veterans and ending the bitterness and anxiety that had surrounded the issue of herbicide exposure, the federal government has also demonstrated its awareness of the hazards of Agent Orange exposure through its involvement in the identification, containment, and mitigation of dioxin "hot spots" in Vietnam; and

Whereas, The United States Congress should reaffirm the nation's commitment to the well-being of all of its veterans and direct the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to administer the Agent Orange Act under the presumption that herbicide exposure in the Republic of Vietnam includes the country's inland waterways, offshore waters, and airspace; similarly, now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Town of Seymour hereby respectfully urge the Congress of the United States to restore the presumption of a service connection for Agent Orange exposure to United States Veterans who served on the inland waterways, in the territorial waters, and in the airspace over the combat zone.

THE INNOVATION ACT

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2013

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support for H.R. 3309, the Innovation Act.

While not perfect, this legislation would take significant steps toward reducing the number of costly and abusive patent lawsuits.

"Patent trolls," or non-practicing entities that take advantage of the legal process for their own economic gain, are a massive cost to businesses and a significant strain on our already overburdened justice system.

I strongly agree that we should be addressing this critical problem especially at a time of continuing economic recovery.

However, like many, I had serious concerns about specific portions of this legislation.

That is why I voted in strong support of an amendment introduced by my dear friend and colleague Congressman JOHN CONYERS, the Ranking Member of the Judiciary Committee.

His amendment would have improved the Innovation Act by adding provisions that protect customers targeted in infringement suits, promote transparency in patent ownership, and direct the Patent and Trademark Office to develop educational materials for small businesses.

Unfortunately, while his amendment failed, I hope we will continue to work to implement many of his suggestions.

As we vote on this legislation today, it is also important that we remember other issues affecting our ability to fight patent fraud.

For example, the sequester cost the Patent and Trademark Office nearly \$150 million this year. It also resulted in 1000 fewer patent examiners and delayed the construction of a satellite patent office in Silicon Valley.

I commend this legislation's well intentioned goal to curb abusive patent litigation and look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to end this destructive practice.

THE U.S. POST-TYPHOON RESPONSE IN THE PHILIPPINES: HEALTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2013

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, Recently, the deadliest typhoon ever to hit South East Asia devastated portions of the Philippines, including the islands of Leyte, Samar, and Cebu. With sustained winds of 155 miles per hour, Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda reached as high as 270 miles per hour at one brief point. The storm surge reached a maximum height of 40 feet. It is the deadliest Philippine typhoon on record, killing more than 5,600 people. Another 1,759 are listed as missing. Approximately 26,000 were injured. Yolanda is also the strongest storm ever recorded at landfall, and unofficially the fourth strongest typhoon ever recorded in terms of wind speed. Philippines Foreign Secretary Alberto Del Rosario told us the storm was "three and a half times the size of Katrina."

Several weeks ago, I led a congressional delegation to the Philippines to witness the devastation unleashed by Typhoon Haiyan—known locally as Typhoon Yolanda—and to gain a better understanding of the unmet needs going forward.

Joined by my distinguished colleagues TRENT FRANKS and AL GREEN—and staff director Greg Simpkins and counsel Piero Tozzi—we were unanimous in our deep respect and abiding gratitude for the accomplishments of the U.S. military, USAID leaders, and NGOs on the ground including Catholic Relief Services—who alone has committed over \$20 million to assist victims. For their part, the Philippine military was also playing a vital role along with the remnants of local governing bodies.

In the immediate aftermath of the storm—right up until arrival—highly motivated U.S. service members brought desperately needed supplies, including food, water, medicine, and housing materials by the plane-load to the ruins of Tacloban, with homeless, destitute victims—over 19,000 and counting—hitching flights back to Manila for safety and shelter.

As was the case after the 2004 tsunami, the United States deployed an aircraft carrier—this time the USS *George Washington*—and other major military assets to provide assistance. Smart, rapid response, combined with unique airlift capability has made all the difference in the world.

In the Philippines, I had the privilege of meeting Col. Eric Mellinger, Chief of Staff of the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force. I nominated Eric to the Academy in 1982—and it was clear watching him in action that he has earned extraordinary respect. His leadership—and that of Generals Kennedy and Wissler—ensured that a desperate, shell-shocked population of victims got immediate, tangible help. Every Marine we saw, including three from New Jersey—Lance Cpl. Anthony Pellegrini, Lance Cpl. James Soccodato, and Lance Cpl. Michael Nappa—was working around the clock to protect victims. "Sleep—what's that?"

one Marine told me with a smile. "We're saving lives."

Al Dwyer, Principal Regional Advisor for East Asia and the Pacific at the USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Relief said "when the U.S. hit the ground things got moving . . . this was a model response . . . we saved lives here—I know that for a fact." The cooperation and teamwork of the military and disaster assistance leaders from USAID, including Jeremy Konyndyk—Director of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance—who traveled with us, the NGO community, and Philippine officials was a textbook example of how disaster assistance ought to be done. But of course the relief efforts are far from over. The emergency phase has matriculated into recovery.

With Donald Reilly from Catholic Relief Services, our delegation visited a sanitation kit distribution at a local parish church, and received a briefing from Mayor Remedios Petilla of Palo—whose daughter Jessica Petilla is a medical doctor in New Jersey—and met with numerous survivors who told us heartbreaking stories yet radiated a calm and inner peace. One man told us how his father drowned only a few feet from where we stood and how he had stoically carried many waterlogged dead bodies to a mass grave. He said he nearly collapsed emotionally however when he carried the lifeless body of a three year-old girl. He said he just broke down, overwhelmed, and felt he could continue no more. Yet amazingly, a few hours later, there he was—determined to rebuild and overcome and full of faith in God.

That resiliency was best summed up by Archbishop Jose Palma of Cebu who said "the Typhoon was the strongest in the world . . . but our faith in the Lord is even stronger . . . no calamity or natural devastation can quench the fire of our hope. The Filipino soul is stronger than Yolanda."

Enroute from Tacloban to Manila aboard a C130 commanded by Major Jason Kauffman, our plane was diverted to seek the whereabouts and rescue of a helicopter that crashed into Manila Bay. After a flawless, just above the deck, systematic search for survivors in the water—kind of like looking for a needle in a haystack—the pilot spotted two individuals, opened the back end of the C130, and kicked out a yellow life raft to two lifejacketless swimmers. With night darkness fast approaching, it was clear that their lives had been saved. Aboard was the crew's superior officer, Colonel John Peck, 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade Chief of Staff, along with copilot Captain Kim and Crewmasters MSgt. Holdaway, Sgt. Weins, Cpl. Oliver, and LCpl Lopez.

Back in Manila, we had productive meetings with both the Health Minister Enrique Ona and Secretary of Foreign Affairs Albert del Rosario. Matt Bohn, Resident Country Director of the Millennium Challenge Corporation told us that roads that had been constructed pursuant to a \$435 million 5-year MCC grant had been only minimally damaged but had provided—after debris removal—an additional artery for humanitarian aid.

We also met with a plethora of NGOs and U.N. agencies. Our interest was not only in seeing how effective our emergency aid coordination has been throughout it all, but going forward where our assistance ought to be di-

rected in the medium- and long-term. We felt that two areas deserved special attention: preventing or addressing potential epidemics and minimizing human trafficking.

It normally takes two to three weeks for a marked increase in disease prevalence after a natural disaster such as the typhoon, but international health experts on the scene told us that dengue fever already was endemic in the storm-ravaged areas and could increase four- to five-fold in the coming weeks. In addition to dengue fever, cholera, hepatitis A, typhoid fever, leptospirosis, shigelosis, pneumonia and other diseases can proliferate in a post-storm environment. There are vaccines for cholera, hepatitis A and typhoid fever (as well as some other diseases likely to spread post-storm), but there are no such vaccines for dengue fever, leptospirosis or shigelosis.

Efforts to address potential epidemics are complicated by several factors. First, the Philippines is undergoing a rainy season that will not only increase breeding grounds for mosquitoes and other disease-bearing pests, but also will hamper relief efforts. Furthermore, the many residents without shelter or with inadequate shelter will be more susceptible to the elements. Second, the lack of electricity means no cold chain for medicines that must be refrigerated to remain usable. Third, many roads remain uncleared or badly damaged, making transportation for health workers or patients more difficult. Fourth, many Filipino health workers have either left the affected areas or died in the storm, and the continued presence of foreign health workers will depend on ongoing donor funding and the health needs demanded by subsequent crises elsewhere.

Internationally-funded protection efforts currently focus on family reunification, personal identification and creation of safe spaces for women and children. USAID grantees are establishing women-friendly and child-friendly spaces in strategic locations to address the needs of women and adolescent girls, as well as male children. The lack of electricity and insecure housing raises their risk of falling prey to abusers, especially at night.

However, while there is acknowledgement of the increased risk of human trafficking in the wake of the storm, the lack of reports of increased trafficking may be a good thing—or could mean that this issue is not yet a sufficient focus of protection efforts. This is despite the fact that the Philippines had a problem with human trafficking even before the latest typhoon. The Philippines was raised from Tier II Watch List to Tier III in the current human trafficking report by the Department of State. Nevertheless, that report states that trafficking of men, women, and children remains a significant problem, but child sex trafficking is a special danger, with children being forced to perform sex acts on the internet. Clearly, there needs to be more involvement of trafficking-in-persons experts on recovery planning teams.

Also important will be providing shelter for the 1.2 million families whose homes have been damaged or destroyed. Schools have been so widely destroyed on Leyte that officials told us the school year may be over now—months before it normally would have ended in March. Livelihoods have been severely affected as the coconut industry—the

leading agricultural producer—has been decimated, and it will take 5–7 years to replace the trees lost in this storm.

The Philippines is a major American ally and trading partner. There are an estimated 350,000 Americans living in the Philippines, and 4 million Filipinos living in the United States. We have an important stake in seeing that our friends and neighbors in the Philippines can recover from this devastating storm.

ANNOUNCING RECIPIENTS OF THE
2013 CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN
COMMENDATION FOR THE THIRD
DISTRICT OF TEXAS

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2013

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to honor fourteen distinguished military veterans, community servants, and American patriots who call the Third District of Texas home. All faithfully answered the call of duty and placed service above self for the sake of our great nation. Each one leaves a legacy to be remembered, for future generations to follow, a legacy of bravery, loyalty, dedication, and sacrifice. For their selfless service, bold leadership, and undying commitment for their neighbor and nation, the following individual has been selected as a recipient of the third annual Congressional Veteran Commendation:

Keashaun Coffey served with honor in the United States Navy from 2008 to 2012. He began his military career by enlisting as a Religious Program Specialist. Selected for the Fleet Marine Force, he served at the Officer Candidate School in Quantico, Virginia, where he trained chaplain candidates and facilitated over 150 religious services and over 200 field services.

Mr. Coffey's next assignment led him to Yokosuka, Japan, where he served with the Forward Deployed Naval Forces. In this position, he planned and implemented community service events which allowed the USS *Cowpens* to log 3,059 community service hours. Following his service with the USS *Cowpens*, Mr. Coffey remained in Japan where he was assigned to the Chapel of Hope and the United States Naval Hospital Yokosuka. He was stationed there when the 2011 tsunami and earthquake struck Japan. As his final act of military service, Mr. Coffey spent long hours creating general ledgers for Operation Tomodachi in order to maintain 100 percent accountability in the expenditure of government and donated funds.

After Mr. Coffey's service to the military honorably ended, he enrolled in the University of Texas at Dallas to continue his education. On campus he has continued serving the community by co-founding and serving as President of the Veterans of Dallas at UTD's student organization. In 2012, he played an active role in the creation and establishment of the UTD Veteran Services Center.

Keashaun Coffey, let me both thank and congratulate you on your exceptional service