in VA nursing homes, hospitals, and transitional housing for homeless veterans. For the past four years Mr. Preminger has litigated to ensure that all veterans living on VA property have access to voter registration

I applaud the VA for its recent change in policy allowing state and local election officials and non-partisan groups to access VA facilities to assist officials in registering veteran voters who are receiving care. But issuing a new policy is not enough and I question the agencies commitment to it. Last Friday, September 12, 2008, the San Francisco VA prohibited Veterans for Peace ("VFP"), a 501(c)(3), from registering voters, even though the "directive" instructs local officials to "facilitate" nonpartisan groups who wish to register voters.

As Paul Sullivan of Veterans for Common Sense stated in his testimony yesterday before the Senate Committee on Rules, "The VA has changed their policy on veteran voting rights three times in the past five months. VA can easily reverse course again and issue yet another policy banning voting assistance for veterans living in VA facilities."

I support this legislation, but am concerned that the protection for "nonpartisan" activities may create the inference that a government agency can regulate private "partisan" conversations just because they are on federal property, even though there is no apparent government sponsorship.

Over 5.3 million veterans (23.2 percent of all veterans) were not registered to vote in 2006. Veterans have dedicated their lives to protecting our country and deserve every commitment from the government to offer them the opportunity to participate in the political process. With November rapidly approaching it is imperative that we act both swiftly and vigilantly in passing H.R. 6625.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of H.R. 6625, the Veterans Voting Support Act, which contains several provisions to help Veterans as they participate in the political process. First, it will require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to allow States to designate V.A. facilities as voter registration agencies. The bill will also require V.A. facilities to provide information and assist election officials to ensure proper delivery of voting material. Additional, the bill prohibits the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from restricting nonpartisan organizations and state election organizations from providing information at V.A. facilities. This bill will help to prevent Department of Veterans Affairs policies from withholding information from Veterans on voter registration and voting.

The Department of Veterans Affairs previously adopted a policy that prohibits voter registration drives on V.A. grounds. The Department of Veterans Affairs recently changed that policy and now allows state and local election officials as well as non-partisan organizations to provide veterans help. However, the language of the policy still allows individual V.A. facilities to restrict access to these groups. This legislation will guarantee that individuals and organizations with the appropriate knowledge are given the right to assist our veterans in the voting registration process.

Our veterans have dedicated their lives to our country's safety and deserve the opportunity to be assisted in the political process. Given that many of our veterans are disabled or ill with special assistance needs as a result of their service to our country, we should make every possible accommodation to provide them with the assistance they need to take a part in the political process and have their voices heard. It would be ironic for those fighting for our freedom and ability to participate in our democracy to themselves be denied the ability to participate.

I commend Rep. BRADY, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, for his hard work on this bill and urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend Chairman BRADY for bringing this legislation to the floor today, and for his work to ensure that our veterans are full and able participants in our democracy.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, last week, the VA revised its wrongheaded directive barring nonpartisan voter registration drives at VA facilities. Clearly, the VA felt the overwhelming bipartisan pressure from local, state and federal members who supported this legislation, as well as the Secretaries of State and countless veterans throughout the country who rightfully decried it. We have asked enormous sacrifices of our men and women in uniform, and it is simply unconscionable to deny them the right to participate in a government for which they have so valiantly served and fought for.

However, our presence here today attests to the fact that this fight is not yet over—while the VA has acted wisely in withdrawing their directive, they still retain the ability to reinstate it at some future date. The VA's recent policy shifts on voting registration have been sudden and unpredictable, and there is precious little assurance that they will not undergo another change of heart.

That is why I am a strong supporter of H.R. 6625. I have been to Connecticut's VA Hospitals and clinics, and I have seen and spoken with the generations of proud veterans those facilities care for and serve. They want to be able to enjoy the freedoms they worked to defend, and they deserve to be able to do so at VA facilities. Connecticut's Governor, Secretary of State, and Attorney General have joined this fight and support the legislation before us because they know our veterans' rights should not just be protected today, but for generations to come as well.

Not only will H.R. 6625 guarantee the right of veterans to register to vote at VA facilities, but the bill will also limit restrictions and expand access for nonpartisan voter drives and ensure that veterans get the assistance they need to complete the voter registration process. In an election year such as this, it's important that veterans, with their unique experience in serving their country, have their voices heard.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and stand up for our veterans.

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6625, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

## SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING LOWERING FLAG OVER CAPITOL TO HONOR MILITARY DEATHS

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 61) expressing the sense of the Congress that the United States flag flown over the United States Capitol should be lowered to half-mast one day each month in honor of the brave men and women from the United States who have lost their lives in military conflicts.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 61

Whereas more than 1,000,000 brave men and women from the United States have died in military conflicts from the time of the Revolutionary War through Operation Iraqi Freedom;

Whereas the people of the United States mourn the loss of the brave men and women who have given their lives for this country;

Whereas the United States has not forgotten the sacrifices that brave men and women have made to protect our Nation and our freedom; and

Whereas paying tribute to the brave men and women from the United States who gave their lives for this Nation demonstrates the spirit of patriotism that is the foundation of our great country: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring),* That it is the sense of the Congress that the United States flag flown over the United States Capitol should be lowered to half-mast one day each month in honor of the brave men and women from the United States who have lost their lives in military conflicts.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks in the RECORD on this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

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

This resolution recognizes our servicemen and -women who have fought and died for our country and the sacrifice made by their families. The resolution provides for the flag over the Capitol to be raised at half-staff once a month in honor of all the U.S. men and women that have made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of our Nation.

While we in Congress and the majority of the American people go about our day-to-day lives, this small gesture should serve as a constant reminder of those brave men and women who have given their lives in defense of the freedoms that we, the American people, enjoy. We owe all of our fallen servicemen and -women a debt that can never be repaid.

I am pleased to support this resolution, and I urge all of my colleagues to support it as well.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Resolution 61, which expresses the sense of the Congress that the United States flag flown over the United States Capitol should be lowered to half-mast 1 day each month in honor of the brave men and women from the United States who have lost their lives in military conflicts.

For all of those who work in or visit the Capitol each day, the flag that flies atop this building is an emblem of the democratic principles that guide this body. This powerful symbol of freedom is even more striking when it's lowered to half-mast, signaling that our Nation is in mourning.

The men and women of our military who defend our Nation in the time of war may be called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Lowering the flag atop the Capitol once a month in their honor is a small yet meaningful way to communicate how deeply their loss is felt by all Americans.

In addition to being a moving tribute to the members of our military who we have lost, it is also a reminder to all Members of Congress that the actions we take—or do not take—have profound consequences on the men and women of our military. When we talk about funding our armored vehicles or express our views on intelligence gathering in the war on terror, it is imperative that we do not forget the real ramifications that our decisions will have on our servicemen and -women who must live with the consequences of our actions.

I urge my colleagues to join with me in supporting this moving tribute to our Nation's Armed Forces.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield as much time as he may consume to the sponsor of this bill, Representative LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee.

Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee. I thank the gentlelady from California.

All of us, I'm sure, have had an opportunity—at least most—to visit the war zones in Iraq and Afghanistan. And being there, we have observed the greatness of the volunteers who volunteer their service for this great country and to help preserve, defend, and to bring about liberty and freedom to others in different parts of the world today, mainly in those two war zones in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the third one in the area of the Balkans.

But as they serve, some give the ultimate sacrifice. And for all of those who serve and who have served, and for those who have given the ultimate sacrifice, we can never really do enough as a Nation to thank them for their service and, ultimately, leaving their families with the loss of their lives.

In 1775, a shot heard around the world brought American men and women into battle at the Siege of Boston that lasted through the spring of 1776, which eventually brought us into war for our independence. After several years and the loss of many lives, we obtained our independence. Since that time, our young men and women have been willing to volunteer to go into the battlefields to preserve the freedom that our first military men and women fought to give us, and we've been willing to preserve that and we should continue as a Nation.

But I think when we look at those who give the ultimate sacrifice, sometimes we give the medals and we show sympathy and appreciation to the families, and then after a while, we forget that. I know in every courthouse and every city hall there are monuments that have the names of those who have given their lives for this country and paid the ultimate sacrifice.

On Memorial Day we visit and Veterans Day we visit, perhaps some special days like 9/11 we again remember and we visit those who have their names engraved on the markings and on the monuments in our courthouses and city halls throughout this country.

□ 1945

But I believe that just those two or three special occasions are not enough.

And, Mr. Speaker, I didn't realize how little we were showing appreciation for those who gave the ultimate sacrifice until my very first visit in early 2004 to Iraq. We had just traveled from one part of Iraq, flying back into Baghdad in a C–130. And before we boarded the plane, there was an escort detail. And we noticed that there was a casket, a flag-draped casket. A very solemn occasion as you looked at the lines of the young men and women who were saying farewell to the one who had given his life. And they placed that in that cargo bay off the C–130. Those of us who were Members of Congress sat more to the front—those who have traveled obviously know that we ride the jump seats as we go in and out into Iraq or Afghanistan.

And for some reason, when I looked in the faces of those young men who were the escorts, the solemn faces, the faces who weren't looking to anyone, I don't think, for sympathy, but just understanding, for me, on that occasion, I said, I don't think we do enough. And in 2004, I introduced this bill, the same one that's here today, to where we can at least once a month—12 times a year, plus the other occasions—say thank you to the mothers and fathers, to the brothers and sisters of the one who gave his life, and to the one who gave his life, that America still cherishes, respects, loves and remembers the sacrifice that you gave to this Nation.

So for me, it is my hope that this bill passes unanimously, and that we honor those who have given their life for this great Nation of ours.

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman bringing this legislation forward.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I stand today in support of H. Con. Res. 61, "Expressing the sense of the Congress that the United States flag flown over the United States Capitol should be lowered to half-mast one day each month in honor of the brave men and women from the United States who have lost their lives in military conflicts." The brave men and women who have sacrificed their lives to protect not only the lives of Americans but democracy around the world, warrant a day each month in which the Nation honors their service and sacrifice.

More than 1 million brave men and women from the United States have died in military conflicts since the birth of our great Nation. It is the right of the American people to mourn the loss of the brave men and women who have given their lives for this country. All Americans must remember that our freedom has not come without sacrifice. The heroic men and women who have given the ultimate sacrifice, to protect our Nation and our freedom must be honored and recognized. As Gertrude Stein put it so eloquently, "Silent gratitude isn't very much use to anyone."

Paying tribute to the fearlessness and courageousness that the men and women from the United States have displayed throughout history, demonstrates the spirit of patriotism that is the foundation of our great country.

H. Con. Res. 61 must be supported by the Members of Congress in order for us and all Americans to pay homage and show our respect for those extraordinary soldiers who are no longer with us, but whose legacies should live on. In honoring those who have fought for our country from the time of its conception would be a grand opportunity to show the men and women wearing the uniform today that their service is not in vain. It is an opportunity for America to demonstrate the magnitude of appreciation that we hold in our hearts for the service and bravery of all our veterans. A simple gesture can demonstrate the immeasurable amount of gratitude which emanates through us all.

The State of Texas alone is home to approximately 1,707,365 veterans. H. Con. Res. 61 commemorates not only the valuable contribution of heroes past but to our present champions of freedom and democracy. I am reminded of something once said by author Melodie Beattie, "Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, confusion into clarity . . . it turns problems into gifts, failures into success, the unexpected into perfect timing, and mistakes into important events. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow."

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time and I urge passage of the legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 61.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

## CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF EFFECTIVE STATE-BASED ALCOHOL REGULATION

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res 415).

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 415

Whereas throughout American history, alcohol has been consumed by its citizens and regulated by the Government;

Whereas prior to the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, which established Prohibition in the United States, abuses and insufficient regulation resulted in irresponsible overconsumption of alcohol;

Whereas passage of the 18th Amendment, which prohibited ''the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors'' in the United States, resulted in a dramatic increase in illegal activity, including unsafe black market alcohol production, organized crime, and noncompliance with alcohol laws;

Whereas the platforms of the 2 major political parties in the 1932 presidential campaigns advocated ending national Prohibition by repealing the 18th Amendment;

Whereas on February 20, 1933, the 2nd Session of the 72nd Congress submitted to conventions of the States the question of repealing the 18th Amendment and adding new language to the Constitution that the transportation or importation of alcoholic beverages for delivery or use in any State would have to be carried out in compliance with the laws of the State;

Whereas on December 3, 1933, Utah became the 36th State to approve what became the 21st Amendment to the Constitution, the quickest-ratified amendment and the only ever decided by State conventions, pursuant to article V of the Constitution;

Whereas alcohol is the only product in commerce that has been the subject of 2 constitutional amendments;

Whereas Congress's reenactment of the Webb-Kenyon Act, passage of the Federal Alcohol Administration Act, the 21st Amendment Enforcement Act, annual appropriations to support State enforcement of underage drinking laws, and the STOP Underage Drinking Act demonstrated the longstanding and continuing intent of Congress that States exercise their primary authority to achieve temperance, the creation and maintenance of orderly and stable markets, and the facilitation of the efficient collection of taxes;

Whereas legislatures and alcoholic beverage control agencies in the 50 States have worked diligently to implement the powers granted by the 21st Amendment for 75 years;

Whereas legislatures and alcoholic beverage control agencies in all States created and maintain State-based regulatory systems for alcohol distribution made up of producers and importers, wholesale distributors, and retailers;

Whereas development of a transparent and accountable system of distribution and sales, an orderly market, temperance in consumption and safe practices, the efficient collection of taxes, and other essential policies have been successfully guided by the collective experience and cooperation of government agencies and licensed industry members throughout our geographically and culturally diverse Nation;

Whereas regulated commerce in alcoholic beverages contributes billions of dollars in Federal and State tax revenues and additional billions to the economy annually;

Whereas 2,500 breweries, distilleries, wineries, and import companies, 2,700 wholesale distributor facilities, over 530,000 retail outlets, and numerous agricultural, packaging, and transportation businesses support the employment of millions of Americans;

Whereas the American system of State-based alcohol regulation has resulted in a marketplace with unprecedented choice, variety, and selection for consumers;

Whereas members of the licensed alcoholic beverage industry have been constant partners with Federal and State Governments in balancing the conduct of competitive businesses with the need to control alcohol in order to provide American consumers with a safe and regulated supply of alcoholic beverages; and

Whereas members of the licensed alcoholic beverage industry have created and supported a wide range of national, State, and community programs to address problems associated with alcohol abuse, including drunk driving and underage drinking: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring)*, That Congress—

(1) celebrates 75 years of effective State-based alcohol regulation since the passage of the 21st Amendment;

(2) recognizes State lawmakers, regulators, law enforcement officers, the public health community and industry members for creating a workable, legal, and successful system of alcoholic beverage regulation, distribution, and sale; and

(3) continues to support policies that allow States to effectively regulate alcohol.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent for all Members to have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res 415, which celebrates 75 years of successful State-based alcohol regulation.

I want to commend the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE) for introducing this measure. It's the same as H. Con. Res 341, introduced by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK), which has 98 bipartisan cosponsors, and S. Res. 551, introduced by the senior Senator from Montana, Senator BAUCUS, which has 14 cosponsors, also in a bipartisan manner.

Seventy-five years ago—nearly to the day—on December 5, 1933, the 21st amendment to the Constitution of this country was passed. It repealed prohibition, a great mistake in the social era in this country, and the 21st amendment was ratified by the people in constitutional form. It brought an end to a misguided experiment and ushered in a new system of legal regulation of alcohol beverages. Previously, we had an illegal system that encouraged organized crime and worked against the public's wishes.

Section 2 of that amendment states that ''the transportation or importation into any State, Territory, or possession of the United States for delivery or use therein of intoxicating liquors in violations of the laws thereof is hereby prohibited.'' The effect of section 2 was to entrust regulation of alcoholic beverages to the States.

Under the 21st amendment, and the terms of the Webb-Kenyon Act which implemented it, States have done an outstanding job exercising their primary authority to regulate this industry composed of producers, importers, wholesale distributors and retailers, often dubbed the ''three tier system'' by such knowledgeable and legendary individuals as Tom Hensley.

This has been a successful approach, and we have not had occasion to reconsider it. It is a system that provides transparency and accountability. It is one that prizes public safety in which the industry works with State lawmakers—of which I was one for 24 years and served on the State and local government committee in Tennessee that had the responsibility of ensuring that the three-tier system worked and the public was protected.

Public health officials and law enforcement people also worked on this to provide quality products to consumers and ensure the responsible use of alcoholic beverages. Through this partnership with the Federal Government, we have pursued efforts to eliminate alcohol abuse, underage drinking, drunk driving, and other problems associated with the abuse of alcoholic beverages.

I commend Mr. STUPAK of Michigan and Mr. COBLE of North Carolina for their leadership on this resolution, which commemorates the end of a failed experiment, prohibition, and the establishment of a system that served the citizens of this Nation well for over three-quarters of a century.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is more symbolic than substantive. It will not