

SENSE OF THE HOUSE COMMENDING NATION'S BUSINESSES AND BUSINESS OWNERS FOR SUPPORT OF OUR TROOPS AND THEIR FAMILIES

SPEECH OF

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 4, 2003

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I rise today in support of H. Res. 201, which commends American business for its support of U.S. Reservists and National Guardsmen called to active duty.

Nationwide, Reservists are averaging far more number of days either deployed or away from home than at the height of the Gulf War in 1991. They are being called up more often, are serving for longer periods of time, and are absolutely vital to our national military strategy. The U.S. military does not undertake any sustained operations anywhere in the world without using the National Guard and Reserve.

Over 216,900 reservists have been called to active duty since 9/11, with most having to temporarily leave their civilian jobs to serve. Although their jobs are assured when they return, for their employers, war means having to continue business without key employees. Small firms in particular must make extraordinary sacrifices when they lose one of their most productive workers. Yet, despite these hardships, many companies continue to support these employees and their families while they serve their nation. H. Res. 201 expresses the sense of the House that our nation's businesses and business owners should be commended for their support of our troops and their families as they serve our country.

It is important to acknowledge the sacrifices and contributions made by American business in support of the Reservists and Guardsmen they employ. Many of these companies, without legal obligation to do so, continue to pay reservists the difference between their military pay and what they earn on their civilian jobs. Many also continue to pay health and insurance benefits for those employees and their families.

Members of the guard and reserve can't do their job without the support of their family and employers. It is fitting that we take this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution that American business, both corporate and family-owned, is making to the defense of our nation and to our national military objectives.

ALL SPOUSES OF MILITARY RETIREES DESERVE OUR HELP

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 9, 2003

Mr. FILNER Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I rise to call attention to my bill, H.R. 2393, "Continued Benefits for Injured Spouses Act".

Under current law, enacted in 1982, former spouses of military members or retirees are eligible for military medical benefits and exchange and commissary privileges if the military member had performed at least 20 years

of military service, had been married for at least 20 years to one spouse, and 20 years of marriage and service were overlapping. This is known as the 20/20/20 restriction. Further legislation was enacted two years later to include additional former spouses under a 20/20/15 restriction.

While this law recognizes the contribution and sacrifice of many military spouses who later divorced, there is a group who are completely left out through no fault of their own. Spouses who must leave a marriage through divorce due to documented abuse are often left with none of these benefits. Domestic violence and physical or sexual endangerment to the spouse or the children, proven by medical or counseling records, should be taken into account. Divorced because of this situation, the injured spouse should continue to receive all benefits.

H.R. 2393 will change the law to 20/20/10—only for these special circumstances, meaning that the military member would have been married for at least 20 years to one spouse, would have performed at least 20 years of military service, with 10 years of service and marriage overlapping. This change would allow an abused spouse to escape from a potentially dangerous marriage and still keep benefits.

Teresa, a woman in my Congressional District, has found herself in these circumstances. She told me, "I didn't begin this marriage looking for a way to divorce. I believe in commitment, and there were some good years. But had I known when I married him how he would hurt me and endanger my life, I would have backed away. I have done all I can to keep this marriage together. His response to legal separation was to come over and throw our 15 year old around until I called the police. I will never allow him to hurt our children again."

Most of our military members are honorable and good people. But, in the few cases where spousal or child abuse is involved, we must protect the families. I invite my colleagues to join with me in supporting military spouses who have found themselves in dangerous marriages. Please co-sponsor H.R. 2393.

TRIBUTE TO HILDA VAUGHAN

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 9, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Hilda Vaughan, an exceptional individual who has selflessly devoted her time and energy to the betterment of this nation. I applaud her outstanding character, and her desire to support and educate her community. Hilda demonstrates impressive qualities worthy of such praise, and today we honor her retirement as a salute to a job well done.

Hilda was born in Lynchburg, Virginia, and spent her adolescent years thirsting for knowledge. After graduating from Rustburg High School in Rustburg, Virginia, she obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from Lynchburg College, and married her beloved husband, Ted Vaughan. Hilda moved to Silt, Colorado, and served her community well, by holding a number of clerical, secretarial, and accounting po-

sitions. Additionally, Hilda achieved her EMT-B certification and assisted the Grand Valley Fire Protection District. Hilda's attention to detail, together with her unwavering determination, led her to become and perform as an outstanding substitute teacher and librarian for 23 years. As a student teacher in Lynchburg, she educated herself to become a mentor as well as a teacher. Her first substitute teaching position was in the RE-2 School District, in Rifle, Colorado. Through her experiences in different geographic areas and districts, Hilda expanded her vast knowledge and wisdom, and became an excellent asset to every school district she served. Today we admire a woman who selflessly donated her time and efforts to upholding the structure of her community.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride I honor such an outstanding individual before this body of Congress and this nation. Hilda contributed so much, and she was so thoughtful, words will never express our appreciation to her. Hilda, thank you for your hard work in our country, and I anticipate great achievements from you in the future.

TRIBUTE TO PATRICIA HARPER GARRETT

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 9, 2003

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Patricia Harper Garrett, of whom it can be said, "Teaching was in her genes." Her grandmother was the Principal at Belle Glades Jr. High School and later Principal of Roosevelt Jenkins High School in Starke, Florida, where her parents were both students. At the end of this school year, Mrs. Garrett will be retiring from the teaching profession after 35 years.

Patricia Garrett is a graduate of George Washington Carver High School and Bethune Cookman College. She is also a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and an Associate Member of Jack and Jill of America.

Throughout her teaching career, her title has changed several times, including Work Experience Coordinator at Booker T. Washington and Richmond Heights Junior High Schools and Cooperative Education Coordinator/Department Chairperson at Miami Sunset Senior High School. However, her goal has always been the same: to make a positive and lasting difference in the lives of young people.

Ms. Garrett realized at an early age, from years of watching her grandmother and mother who were both teachers, that education was crucially important. After college, she came to realize that her skills could best be utilized helping to educate young people.

Ms. Garrett has received numerous honors over the years in recognition of her skill, commitment, dedication, and enthusiasm for educating young people. In 1997, she received perhaps her greatest honor: the selection of her daughter, Jessica Garrett—a fourth-generation teacher in her family as Miami-Dade Public Schools Region Beginning Teacher of the Year. The legacy of educators continues with her youngest daughter, April Garrett, who is in her first year of teaching.