

change that needs to be completed. A small tweak in the law is necessary.

While advanced manufacturing is a very important part of our economy, agriculture is still a very important part of our economy as well.

Under the existing law, ag products on the way to the market have to obtain a permit that they can carry an additional 5 percent weight on U.S. Highway 78. In the absence of that bill, that permit would not be available.

To make it clear, this bill is no loss, no gain. The roadway that is in use today is the exact same roadway that will be used as Interstate 22. The mile markers, as you have heard, are specified in the legislation. There is not one additional vehicle that can legally travel this road under this law that would be able to do so under a new law.

That is why I urge passage of this bill. I want to thank the ranking member, I want to thank the chairman, and I also want to thank the senior member of the Mississippi delegation for his cooperation in making this possible.

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

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support the bill before us, and 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. PETRI) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4268.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AWARDING CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO THE 65TH INFANTRY REGIMENT

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1726) to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 65th Infantry Regiment, known as the Borinqueneers, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1726

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

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds the following:

(1) In 1898, the United States acquired Puerto Rico in the Treaty of Paris that ended the Spanish-American War and, by the following year, Congress had authorized raising a unit of volunteer soldiers in the newly acquired territory.

(2) In May 1917, two months after legislation granting United States citizenship to individuals born in Puerto Rico was signed into law, and one month after the United States entered World War I, the unit was transferred to the Panama Canal Zone in part because United States Army policy at the time restricted most segregated units to noncombat roles, even though the regiment could have contributed to the fighting effort.

(3) In June 1920, the unit was re-designated as the "65th Infantry Regiment, United States Army", and served as the United States military's last segregated unit composed primarily of Hispanic soldiers.

(4) In January 1943, 13 months after the attack on Pearl Harbor that marked the entry of the United States into World War II, the Regiment again deployed to the Panama Canal Zone before deploying overseas in the spring of 1944.

(5) Despite relatively limited combat service in World War II, the Regiment suffered casualties in the course of defending against enemy attacks, with individual soldiers earning one Distinguished Service Cross, two Silver Stars, two Bronze Stars and 90 Purple Hearts. The Regiment received campaign participation credit for Rome-Arno, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, and Central Europe.

(6) Although an executive order issued by President Harry S. Truman in July 1948 declared it to be United States policy to ensure equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without respect to race or color, implementation of this policy had yet to be fully realized when armed conflict broke out on the Korean Peninsula in June 1950, and both African-American soldiers and Puerto Rican soldiers served in segregated units.

(7) Brigadier General William W. Harris, who served as the Regiment's commander during the early stages of the Korean War, later recalled that he had initially been reluctant to take the position because of "prejudice" within the military and "the feeling of the officers and even the brass of the Pentagon . . . that the Puerto Rican wouldn't make a good combat soldier. . . I know my contemporaries felt that way and, in all honesty, I must admit that at the time I had the same feeling . . . that the Puerto Rican was a rum and Coca-Cola soldier."

(8) One of the first opportunities the Regiment had to prove its combat worthiness arose on the eve of the Korean War during Operation PORTREX, one of the largest military exercises that had been conducted up until that point, where the Regiment distinguished itself by repelling an offensive consisting of over 32,000 troops from the 82nd Airborne Division and the United States Marine Corps, supported by the Navy and Air Force, thereby demonstrating that the Regiment could hold its own against some of the best-trained forces in the United States military.

(9) In August 1950, with the United States Army's situation in Korea deteriorating, the Department of the Army's headquarters decided to bolster the 3rd Infantry Division and, owing in part to the 65th Infantry Regiment's outstanding performance during Operation PORTREX, it was among the units selected for the combat assignment. The decision to send the Regiment to Korea and attach it to the 3rd Infantry Division was a landmark change in the United States military's racial and ethnic policy.

(10) As the Regiment sailed to Asia in September 1950, members of the unit informally decided to call themselves the "Borinqueneers", a term derived from the Taino word for Puerto Rico meaning "land of the brave lord".

(11) The story of the 65th Infantry Regiment during the Korean War has been aptly described as "one of pride, courage, heartbreak, and redemption".

(12) Fighting as a segregated unit from 1950 to 1952, the Regiment participated in some of the fiercest battles of the war, and its toughness, courage and loyalty earned the admiration of many who had previously harbored reservations about Puerto Rican soldiers based on lack of previous fighting experience and negative stereotypes, including Briga-

dier General Harris, whose experience eventually led him to regard the Regiment as "the best damn soldiers that I had ever seen".

(13) After disembarking at Pusan, South Korea in September 1950, the Regiment blocked the escape routes of retreating North Korean units and overcame pockets of resistance. The most significant battle took place near Yongam-ni in October when the Regiment routed a force of 400 enemy troops. By the end of the month, the Regiment had taken 921 prisoners while killing or wounding more than 600 enemy soldiers. Its success led General Douglas MacArthur, Commander-in-Chief of the United Nations Command in Korea, to observe that the Regiment was "showing magnificent ability and courage in field operations".

(14) The Regiment landed on the eastern coast of North Korea in early November 1950. In December 1950, following China's intervention in the war, the Regiment engaged in a series of fierce battles to cover the rear guard of the 1st Marine Division during the fighting retreat from the Chosin Reservoir to the enclave at Hungnam, North Korea, one of the greatest withdrawals in modern military history.

(15) When General MacArthur ordered the evacuation of Hungnam in mid-December, the Regiment was instrumental in securing the port, and was among the last units—if not the last unit—to depart the beachhead on Christmas Eve, suffering significant casualties in the process. Under the Regiment's protection, 105,000 troops and 100,000 refugees were evacuated, along with 350,000 tons of supplies and 17,500 military vehicles.

(16) The brutal winter conditions during the campaign presented significant hardships for soldiers in the Regiment, who lacked appropriate gear to fight in sub-zero temperatures.

(17) Between January and March 1951, the Regiment participated in numerous operations to recover and retain South Korean territory lost to the enemy, assaulting heavily fortified enemy positions and conducting the last recorded battalion-sized bayonet assault in United States Army history.

(18) On January 31, 1951, the commander of Eighth Army, Lieutenant General Matthew B. Ridgway, wrote to the Regiment's commander: "What I saw and heard of your regiment reflects great credit on you, your regiment, and the people of Puerto Rico, who can be proud of their valiant sons. I am confident that their battle records and training levels will win them high honors. . . . Their conduct in battle has served only to increase the high regard in which I hold these fine troops."

(19) On February 3, 1951, General MacArthur wrote: "The Puerto Ricans forming the ranks of the gallant 65th Infantry on the battlefields of Korea by valor, determination, and a resolute will to victory give daily testament to their invincible loyalty to the United States and the fervor of their devotion to those immutable standards of human relations to which the Americans and Puerto Ricans are in common dedicated. They are writing a brilliant record of achievement in battle and I am proud indeed to have them in this command. I wish that we might have many more like them."

(20) The Regiment played a central role in the United States military's counteroffensive responding to a major push by the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) in 1951, winning praise for its superb performance in multiple battles, including Operations KILLER and RIPPER, as well as for its actions on February 14th, when the Regiment inflicted nearly 1,000 enemy casualties at a cost of

only one killed and six wounded, almost singlehandedly annihilating a North Korean infantry regiment that had infiltrated the defenses of the 3rd Infantry Division's headquarters.

(21) By 1952, senior United States commanders ordered that replacement soldiers from Puerto Rico would no longer be limited to service in the Regiment, but could be made available to fill personnel shortages in non-segregated units both inside and outside the 3rd Infantry Division. This was a major milestone in United States Army policy that, paradoxically, harmed the Regiment by depriving it of some of Puerto Rico's most able soldiers.

(22) Beyond the many hardships endured by most American soldiers in Korea, the Regiment faced unique challenges arising from discrimination and prejudice.

(23) In 1953, the now fully integrated Regiment earned admiration for its relentless defense of Outpost Harry, during which it confronted multiple company-size probes, full-scale regimental attacks, and heavy artillery and mortar fire from Chinese forces, earning one Distinguished Service Cross, 14 Silver Stars, 23 Bronze Stars, and 67 Purple Hearts, in operations that Major General Eugene W. Ridings described as "highly successful in that the enemy was denied the use of one of his best routes of approach into the friendly position". The recipient of the Distinguished Service Cross was then-First Lieutenant Richard E. Cavazos, a Mexican-American, who went on to become the first Latino to rise to the rank of four-star general in the United States Army.

(24) For its extraordinary service during the Korean War, the Regiment received two Presidential Unit Citations (Army and Navy), two Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citations, a Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army), a Navy Unit Commendation, the Bravery Gold Medal of Greece, and campaign participation credits for United Nations Offensive, CCF Intervention, First United Nations Counteroffensive, CCF Spring Offensive, United Nations Summer-Fall Offensive, Second Korean Winter, Korea Summer-Fall 1952, Third Korean Winter, and Korea Summer 1953.

(25) In Korea, soldiers in the Regiment earned a total of nine Distinguished Service Crosses, approximately 250 Silver Stars, over 600 Bronze Stars, more than 2,700 Purple Hearts. On March 18, 2014, Master Sergeant Juan E. Negrón Martínez received the Medal of Honor, the Nation's highest award for military valor, for actions taken on April 28, 1951 near Kalma-Eri, Korea.

(26) In all, some 61,000 Puerto Ricans served in the United States Army during the Korean War, the bulk of them with the 65th Infantry Regiment—and over the course of the war, Puerto Rican soldiers suffered a disproportionately high casualty rate, with over 740 killed and over 2,300 wounded.

(27) In April 1956, as part of the reduction in forces following the Korean War, the 65th Infantry Regiment was deactivated from the regular Army and, in February 1959, became the only regular Army unit to have ever been transferred to the National Guard, when its 1st battalion and its regimental number were assigned to the Puerto Rico National Guard, where it has remained ever since.

(28) In 1982, the United States Army Center of Military History officially authorized granting the 65th Infantry Regiment the special designation of "Borinqueneers".

(29) In the years since the Korean War, the achievements of the Regiment have been recognized in various ways, including—

(A) the naming of streets in honor of the Regiment in San Juan, Puerto Rico and The Bronx, New York;

(B) the erecting of monuments and plaques to honor the Regiment at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia; the San Juan National Historic Site in San Juan, Puerto Rico; Fort Logan National Cemetery in Denver, Colorado; and at sites in Boston, Massachusetts; Worcester, Massachusetts; Buffalo, New York; and Ocala, Florida;

(C) the renaming of a park in Buenaventura Lake, Florida as the "65th Infantry Veterans Park";

(D) the dedication of land for a park and monument to honor the Regiment in New Britain, Connecticut;

(E) the adoption or introduction of resolutions or proclamations honoring the Regiment by many state and municipal governments, including in the states and territories of California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, and Texas; and

(F) the issuance by the United States Postal Service of a Korean War commemorative stamp depicting soldiers from the Regiment.

(30) In a speech delivered on September 20, 2000, at a ceremony in Arlington National Cemetery in honor of the Regiment, Secretary of the Army Louis Caldera said: "Even as the 65th struggled against all deadly enemies in the field, they were fighting a rearguard action against a more insidious adversary—the cumulative effects of ill-conceived military policies, leadership shortcomings, and especially racial and organizational prejudices, all exacerbated by America's unpreparedness for war and the growing pains of an Army forced by law and circumstance to carry out racial integration. Together these factors would take their inevitable toll on the 65th, leaving scars that have yet to heal for so many of the Regiment's proud and courageous soldiers."

(31) Secretary Caldera further stated: "To the veterans of the 65th Infantry Regiment who, in that far off land fifty years ago, fought with rare courage even as you endured misfortune and injustice, thank you for doing your duty. There can be no greater praise than that for any soldier of the United States Army."

(32) Secretary Caldera also noted that "[t]he men of the 65th who served in Korea are a significant part of a proud tradition of service" that includes the Japanese American 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the African American Tuskegee Airmen, and "many other unsung minority units throughout the history of our armed forces whose stories have never been fully told".

(33) The service of the men of the 65th Infantry Regiment is emblematic of the contributions to the armed forces that have been made by hundreds of thousands of brave and patriotic United States citizens from Puerto Rico over generations, from World War I to the most recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, and in other overseas contingency operations.

SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the award, on behalf of the Congress, of a single gold medal of appropriate design in honor of the 65th Infantry Regiment, known as the Borinqueneers, in recognition of its pioneering military service, devotion to duty, and many acts of valor in the face of adversity.

(b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (hereinafter in this Act referred to as the "Secretary") shall strike the gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

(c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the gold medal in honor of the 65th Infantry Regiment, known as the Borinqueneers, the gold medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where it shall be available for display as appropriate and made available for research.

(2) SENSE OF THE CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the Congress that the Smithsonian Institution shall make the gold medal received under this Act available for display elsewhere, particularly at other appropriate locations associated with the 65th Infantry Regiment, including locations in Puerto Rico.

SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

Under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck under section 2, at a price sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

SEC. 4. NATIONAL MEDALS.

Medals struck pursuant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HUIZENGA) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. CAPUANO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and submit extraneous materials for the RECORD on H.R. 1726, as amended, currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1726, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 65th Infantry Regiment, known as the Borinqueneers, introduced by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. POSEY).

The bill authorizes the minting and award of a single gold medal in honor of this brave regiment. The medal would be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where it would be available for display or loan, as appropriate.

Mr. Speaker, in 1898, the United States acquired Puerto Rico in the Treaty of Paris that ended the Spanish-American war. The following year, Congress had authorized raising a unit of volunteer soldiers in the newly-acquired territory.

In May 1917, 2 months after President Woodrow Wilson signed into law legislation granting United States citizenship to all individuals born in Puerto Rico and 1 month after the United States entered World War I, the unit was transferred to the Panama Canal Zone.

United States Army policy at the time restricted most segregated units

to noncombat roles, although this regiment was otherwise combat-ready and could have contributed to the fighting effort.

In June of 1920, the unit was redesignated as the 65th Infantry Regiment, United States Army. It would serve as the United States military's last segregated unit composed of Hispanic soldiers.

In January of 1943, 13 months after the attack on Pearl Harbor that sparked the entry of the United States into World War II, the regiment again was deployed to the Panama Canal Zone, before being deployed overseas in the spring of 1944.

Despite the regiment's relatively limited combat service in World War II, the unit suffered casualties in the course of defending the Pacific and Atlantic sides of the isthmus against enemy attacks.

Individual soldiers earned one Distinguished Service Cross, two Silver Stars, two Bronze Stars, and 90 Purple Hearts; and the unit received campaign participation credit for its service in the Rome-Arno, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, and Central Europe theaters.

The story of the 65th Infantry Regiment during the Korean war has been aptly described as "one of pride, courage, heartbreak, and redemption."

Arriving in Pusan, South Korea, in September 1950, the regiment was assigned the mission of destroying or capturing small groups of North Korean soldiers. Its success led General Douglas MacArthur, commander in chief of the United Nations Command in Korea, to observe the regiment was "showing magnificent ability and courage in the field of operations."

Fighting as a segregated unit from 1950 until 1952, the regiment participated in some of the fiercest battles of the war. Its toughness, courage, and loyalty earned admiration of many who had even previously harbored reservations.

Mr. Speaker, the service of the men of the 65th Infantry Regiment is emblematic of the contributions to the Armed Forces that have been made by hundreds of thousands of brave and patriotic United States citizens from Puerto Rico, over generations, from World War I to the most recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq and in many other overseas operations.

This honor is richly deserved. The bill has 301 cosponsors in the House, and a companion bill introduced by Senator BLUMENTHAL in the Senate has 63 cosponsors.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for immediate passage of this important legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI). As everyone knows, Puerto Rico has a Resident Commissioner here. He has the luxury of a 4-year term. We all envy that.

At the same time, it is an important position to have and a position that we should listen to.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1726, a bill that would award the Congressional Gold Medal to the United States Army's 65th Infantry Regiment in recognition of its pioneering military service, devotion to duty, and many acts of valor in the face of adversity.

The regiment was composed largely of soldiers from the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico; and members of the unit are called the Borinqueneers, which is derived from the Taino word for Puerto Rico, meaning the "land of the brave lord."

Since the term was first used over 60 years ago, coined by members of the regiment on their way to Korea, it has become synonymous with honor, courage, redemption, and pride.

I want to begin by expressing my gratitude to Mr. POSEY of Florida. Working with him on a bipartisan basis to move this bill forward has been a pleasure. I know that Congressman POSEY, like me, feels a profound sense of responsibility to these veterans and their families.

The surviving members of the regiment are in the twilight of their lives, and so we hope our colleagues in the House and in the Senate, acting on behalf of a grateful Nation, will see fit to honor the Borinqueneers while these humble heroes still walk among us.

□ 1615

Mr. Speaker, we are honored that the oldest living Borinqueneer, Don Leonardo Martinez, who is 96 years young, is here with us today.

Of course Congressman POSEY and I are not on this mission alone. We are working shoulder to shoulder with an army of individuals and organizations from Puerto Rico and the States. These advocates have been inspired by the legacy of the regiment and are mindful of its special contribution to the tapestry of American life. Their campaign on behalf of the Borinqueneers has been exceptional. I want to publicly thank each and every one of them because they are the heart and soul of this movement. I must highlight, in particular, the tireless efforts of the Borinqueneer Congressional Gold Medal Alliance, led by National Chairman Frank Medina.

To place the achievements of the regiment in context, it is important to understand that for generations—from World War I, almost a century ago, to Afghanistan today—American citizens from Puerto Rico have built and maintained a rich record of military service.

If you visit any U.S. military installation, you will see men and women from Puerto Rico fighting to keep this Nation safe, strong, and free. They may speak English with an accent, like I do, but they are just as devoted to this country as their fellow soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines from the States. If you need proof, there is a frame on my office wall containing photographs of the servicemembers from Puerto Rico that have fallen since

9/11—row after row of young faces, sometimes smiling and sometimes stern, usually posing in their dress uniforms against the backdrop of the American flag.

In a book he wrote about Puerto Rico, former Attorney General Dick Thornburgh observed that:

Historically, Puerto Rico has ranked alongside the top five States in terms of per capita military service.

In the forward to that book, former President George H.W. Bush noted:

This patriotic service and sacrifice of Americans from Puerto Rico touched me all the more deeply for the very fact they have served with such devotion, even while denied a vote for the President and Members of Congress who determine when, where, and how they are asked to defend our freedoms.

No unit better epitomizes Puerto Rico's distinguished tradition of military service than the 65th Infantry Regiment, which was constituted just after World War I, participated in an honorable—albeit limited—fashion during World War II, and came into its own during the Korean war, earning admiration for its outstanding combat performance.

Like society more generally, the U.S. military in the 1950s was different than it is today, and attitudes toward ethnic minorities could be harsh. The men of the regiment not only had to fight the enemy on the battlefield, which they did with bravery and skill, but they also had to overcome negative stereotypes held by some of their commanders and comrades. For example, then-Colonel William Harris, who commanded the regiment during the early stages of the Korean war, later recalled that he had been reluctant to assume command of the unit because of prejudice within the military but that his experience eventually led him to regard the Borinqueneers as "the best damn soldiers that I had ever seen."

Such sentiments would be expressed by many others who witnessed the regiment in action, including General Douglas MacArthur, who wrote the following in 1951:

The Puerto Ricans forming the ranks of the gallant 65th Infantry on the battlefields of Korea . . . give daily testament to their invincible loyalty to the United States . . . They are writing a brilliant record of achievement in battle; and I am proud, indeed, to have them in this command. I wish that we might have many more like them.

The experience of the Borinqueneers during the Korean war was perhaps best encapsulated in September 2000, at a ceremony held at Arlington National Cemetery in honor of the regiment, by secretary of the Army Louis Caldera, who observed that the Borinqueneers "fought with rare courage even as they endured misfortune and injustice."

The Borinqueneers earned many unit-level awards for their service in Korea, including two Presidential Unit Citations. Soldiers in the regiment earned many individual awards, including nine Distinguished Service Crosses, about 250 Silver Stars, over 600 Bronze Stars, and more than 2,700 Purple Hearts.

In March of this year, President Obama awarded the Medal of Honor—the military's highest individual award for bravery—to four deceased American soldiers from Puerto Rico, including Master Sergeant Juan Negrón, who became the first Borinqueneer to be accorded this honor.

Moreover, in recent years, the achievements of the regiment have been recognized in many ways. A multitude of State legislatures have approved resolutions in their honor, while numerous parks, streets, and monuments bear the regiment's name. I hope Congress will pay tribute to the Borinqueneers by conferring upon them the Congressional Gold Medal.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I now yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. POSEY), the sponsor of this great legislation.

Mr. POSEY. I thank the gentleman from Michigan for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be joined here today by my colleague, Resident Commissioner PIERLUISI, whom you just heard from, in support of our bill, H.R. 1726, to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Puerto Rico's 65th Infantry Regiment, known as the Borinqueneers.

During the darkest days of the Korean war, the Borinqueneers, an ethnically segregated unit, served with singular distinction during a multitude of major and minor combat engagements. During the now famous Battle of Chosin Reservoir, the regiment fought alongside the 1st Marine Division, covering them through what is recognized as one of the greatest strategic withdrawals in military history. The regiment was known for its fierceness in the face of the enemy and demonstrated their exceptional courage by launching the last recorded battalion-size bayonet charge in U.S. military history.

For its service, the regiment was singled out for special recognition by General Douglas MacArthur, who declared:

I am proud, indeed, to have them in this command. I wish that we might have many more like them.

Last month, Borinqueneer Master Sergeant Juan Negrón was awarded the Medal of Honor, our Nation's highest military honor for heroic actions "above and beyond the call of duty." His actions reflect the fighting spirit, sense of duty, and dedication of the entire regiment.

The Borinqueneers are part of a proud tradition of distinguished American soldiers that include the Tuskegee Airmen, Montford Point Marines, Navajo Code Talkers, and the Japanese American Nisei regiments, all of whom have already received the Congressional Gold Medal.

I would also like to recognize the grassroots efforts of the Borinqueneer Congressional Gold Medal Alliance and their national chair, Frank Medina.

For many of their members, this bill was their first time ever contacting a Member of Congress. Congratulations. We would not be here today if it were not for the tireless efforts of literally hundreds of people in the Borinqueneer community.

I would also like to thank Rob Medina of my Florida office, who first brought this issue to my attention, and Robert Carter, my legislative counsel, who has advanced this legislation as a member of my staff.

I rise in full support of the Borinqueneers and urge all of my colleagues to join us to ensure that these American soldiers are recognized for their exceptional, their courageous, and their selfless service to our Nation. And I call upon the Senate to take prompt action to pass this bill and allow us to declare, "Mission accomplished."

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. SERRANO), with whom I agree on almost everything, with the sole exception of his favorite baseball team, which, of course, should be the Red Sox, but maybe someday it will be.

Mr. SERRANO. I thank the gentleman for the time and the kind comments about my favorite team. I thank the majority party for the opportunity to bring this bill to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very, very special and emotional day on the island of Puerto Rico and throughout the Puerto Rican community in the United States. This is a tribute long, long, long overdue. If you know the history of our country—and we all do—you know that many groups have been treated unfairly, and many have been treated unfairly during wartime, which is so unfair.

Let me read to you something that I found that is very interesting:

The regiment faced unique challenges due to discrimination and prejudice, including the humiliation of being ordered to shave their moustaches "until such a time as they gave proof of their manhood," being forced to use separate showering facilities from their non-Hispanic officers, being ordered not to speak Spanish under penalty of court-martial, flawed personal rotation policies based on ethnic and organizational prejudices, and a catastrophic shortage of trained noncommissioned officers.

Yet most of them were volunteers, if not all. Yet they fought with great valor. Yet they knew that they were very much a part of this Nation.

So today, in awarding this Congressional Gold Medal, we are not just repairing a mistake of the past, but we are also paying tribute to ourselves as a nation. Our Nation is great in many ways. And one of the things that makes this Nation great is that we have made mistakes in the past, but every so often we look back and try to correct them.

Under House rules, we are not allowed to point people out in the gallery; but it is important to note that to my right, there are members of the

Borinqueneers, as the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) said, including one who is 96 years old and is still here with us. God bless him.

And these folks bring so much glory to our community. I remember growing up in New York, where I grew up. I came at the age of 6. My parents—my uncles, my father, who had all served in the military, would speak about the 65th Infantry Regiment, 65 de Infanteria, as something so special. It was a moment of glory on Saturday afternoons during a few drinks and a good roast pork or something and rice and beans to discuss a lot of the achievements in music and sports, but also the achievements of the 65th Infantry were always a part of that conversation because they had endured so much, not to mention the fact—and this may sound funny, but remember, they came from a tropical island and went on to suffer some of the most severe cold weather you could on the battlefields with less equipment, I am told and history books will show, than other soldiers. So, you see, today we honor them.

But today we honor ourselves. We here, in a bipartisan fashion, agree on one thing all the time, and that is, whether you agree on military action or not, when they come home, they should be taken care of properly, and when they are on the battlefield, they be treated equally.

Those days have passed. The Borinqueneers were the last segregated unit in this country. We no longer have that, thank God. We now fight as one nation, indivisible, undivided under God.

So I thank both sides, and I thank especially my brother from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for this initiative and Mr. Medina, who have crossed the country.

I will tell you how important this is. The National Puerto Rican Parade, which is being held this year on June 8, which is the largest ethnic parade of its kind in the U.S., has made this one of its top three priorities, the awarding of this medal. Little do they know that we beat them to the punch. And while they will be asking for the medal to be passed, hopefully by 6:30, 7 o'clock tonight, we will have passed it in the House, and it will be worked on in the Senate, which I don't think will be very difficult to do.

As one who had a very simple military career in the Army—where did they send a Puerto Rican? They sent me to Alaska. Luckily, I grew up in New York, so I was able to adapt to that cold.

But this is a wonderful day, a glorious day. And without pointing to them in the gallery, we thank the Borinqueneers for their service and for their patriotism to this country and for honoring Puerto Rico the way they have.

□ 1630

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close and reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield as much time as she may consume to the gentlelady from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ), with whom I had the honor of serving on the Financial Services Committee.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1726, which will pay tribute to the many patriotic Puerto Ricans who have served in the 65th Regiment throughout our Nation's conflicts. I am very proud today to serve in this body and of the fact that we are having this vote in a bipartisan manner. It is not every day that we have the pleasure of bringing bipartisan legislation to the floor.

I want to recognize Mr. PIERLUISI, the Commissioner from Puerto Rico, as well as Frank Medina and the countless individuals and organizations throughout our Nation and Puerto Rico, for trying to get this recognition to the floor and to the Senate.

Puerto Ricans have a rich heritage of serving in the military. From the American Revolution, when Puerto Ricans volunteered to fight the British, to current conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, Puerto Ricans have fought and bled to defend the United States. The 65th Regiment, in particular, has time and again exemplified the courage of Puerto Rican soldiers. During World War II, these soldiers were initially deployed to protect the Panama Canal before later shipping to Europe. There, members of the unit would earn scores of medals, including Purple Hearts, the Distinguished Service Cross, two Silver Stars and Bronze Stars.

In the Korean war, the 65th made an even greater mark on history, participating in some of the most significant and bloodiest battles of that conflict. In 1950, the American ground situation in Korea deteriorated, prompting the 65th to be sent to Korea as reinforcements. While sailing for Asia, members of the unit adopted their informal name—the “Borinqueneers.” Derived from the Taino word for Puerto Rico, meaning “land of the brave lord,” this title exemplified these soldiers’ fighting spirit.

General MacArthur wrote of the unit’s achievement in Korea:

They are writing a brilliant record of achievement in battle, and I am proud indeed to have them in this command. I wish that we might have many more like them.

I am proud to note, Mr. Speaker, that one of those brave Puerto Rican troops who served in Korea was my late uncle, Luis Manuel Serrano Medina.

Since their participation in the Korean war, the 65th has continued to be an integral part of our Armed Forces, serving in the global war against terrorism and Operation Iraqi Freedom. In San Juan and New York City, the legacy of these brave warriors has been honored with streets in their names. It is only fitting that Congress now recognize these soldiers’ contributions with one of the highest civilian awards. I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on this legislation, and I ask the Senate to do the same.

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Chair, I am prepared to close and reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Mr. PIERLUISI and Mr. POSEY for proposing this bill, and I hope that it passes as quickly as possible.

I would just simply like to add one thing, sitting and listening to these things: particularly in World War II, there was never a question by almost anyone about people of German American heritage or Italian American heritage fighting on behalf of the United States of America—even in the European theater. Yet people had questions about other ethnicities which I think is a blot on the history of this great country, and I couldn’t be prouder to be a very small, little part to be here today to try to make amends for those past sins and to say thank you to the Americans who served this great country and helped me live a better life.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to reflect the comments of my colleague from Financial Services, as we have. As the son of a disabled World War II veteran myself, I certainly know what that Greatest Generation had done. No matter where they geographically came from, they fought for that flag that is behind you today, Mr. Speaker, and we appreciate the work that was done by them and by any of those colleagues that are here, and to my colleague from New York, especially her uncle in the service that he had to this fine Nation, and we want to say thank you for that.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I urge rapid passage of this, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, it is always an honor to recognize the sacrifice and bravery of our men and women in uniform. Today, as a fellow Puerto Rican, I am pleased to join my colleagues in celebrating the Puerto Rican veterans of the 65th Infantry Regiment, who are known as the Borinqueneers.

The Congressional Gold Medal will be the highest award granted by Congress to a Hispanic active duty unit in U.S. history. The Borinqueneers will be only the second Latino individual or group to receive a Congressional Gold Medal. This recognition of their service and sacrifice is long overdue and I thank the authors, the Governor of Puerto Rico, and Puerto Ricans and veterans from Florida to New York, to Illinois to Colorado who have made sure the accomplishments of the Borinqueneers are preserved and celebrated.

The Borinqueneers served during WWI, WWII, and the Korean War. The unit was segregated through most of the Korean War and composed primarily of soldiers from the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico, but also included recruits from other Latino backgrounds. In the face of discrimination and segregation, these brave soldiers performed many remarkable military accomplishments and are known for waging the final battalion-sized bayonet assault in U.S. Army history.

These soldiers fought valiantly on behalf of the U.S. and served our nation honorably with

great skill and courage. General Douglas MacArthur said of the Borinqueneers, “The Puerto Ricans forming the ranks of the gallant 65th Infantry give daily proof on the battlefields of Korea of their courage, determination and resolute will to victory, their invincible loyalty to the United States and their fervent devotion to those immutable principles of human relations which the Americans of the Continents and of Puerto Rico have in common. They are writing a brilliant record of heroism in battle and I am indeed proud to have them under my command. I wish that we could count on many more like them.”

Throughout the course of the Korean War, Puerto Rico’s 65th Infantry Regiment suffered more casualties than did the vast majority of mainland states and according to Department of Defense records, 2,700 soldiers received the Purple Heart for wounds received while in battle, and the Regiment lost 740 Borinqueneers in Korea. The Borinqueneers selflessly served and many gave their lives for our democracy and have earned this recognition from Congress. They have inspired new generations of Puerto Ricans who have continued to answer the call to serve in the Armed Forces of the United States.

To the Borinqueneers of the 65th Infantry Regiment, their loved ones, and to the Puerto Rican soldiers who have followed in their footsteps, I thank you for your proud service to this country. Your sacrifice is just one more reason I am proud of my Puerto Rican heritage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. POSEY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1726, 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.

AWARDING CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO JACK NICKLAUS

Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2203) to provide for the award of a gold medal on behalf of Congress to Jack Nicklaus, in recognition of his service to the Nation in promoting excellence, good sportsmanship, and philanthropy.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2203

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

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Jack Nicklaus is a world-famous golf professional, a highly successful business executive, a prominent advertising spokesman, a passionate and dedicated philanthropist, a devoted husband, father, and grandfather, and a man with a common touch that has made him one of the most popular and accessible public figures in history.

(2) Jack Nicklaus amassed 120 victories in professional competition of national or international stature, 73 of which came on the Professional Golf Association (in this