

quote of President Abraham Lincoln, when he said: “Those who deny freedom to others, deserve it not for themselves; and, under a just God, can not long retain it.”

Mr. Speaker, for the sake of all of those who founded and built this Nation and dreamed of what America could someday be, and for the sake of all of those since then who have died in darkness so Americans could walk in the light of freedom, it is so very important that those of us who are privileged to be Members of the United States Congress pause from time to time and remind ourselves of why we are really all here. Do we still hold these truths to be self-evident?

You know, Mr. Speaker, I think sometimes we forget the majestic words of the Declaration of Independence: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men.”

Oh, I wish so desperately that every Member of Congress could truly absorb those words in their hearts because it is very clear that it is almost a theological statement because it recognizes all of us to be created in the image of God, that we are created. And that makes all the difference, Mr. Speaker, because if we are created, if we have a purpose, if there is something miraculous about this magnificent gift of life, then we all should pay very close attention to what that purpose is. And if our rights don't come from government, if they don't come from the hand of men, if they, indeed, come from the hand of God, then we have a great responsibility to try to protect them from one another and for one another.

Mr. Speaker, the Declaration goes on to say: “That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men.” That is why we are here.

Mr. Lincoln called upon all of us, Mr. Speaker, to remember that magnificent Declaration of America's Founding Fathers and “their enlightened belief that nothing stamped with the divine image and likeness was sent into the world to be trodden on or degraded and imbruted by its fellows.”

He reminded those he called posterity that when in the distant future some man, some faction, some interest, should set up the doctrine that some were not entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness that “their posterity”—that is us, Mr. Speaker—“their posterity might look up again to the Declaration of Independence and take courage to renew the battle which their Fathers began.”

Wow.

Thomas Jefferson, whose words marked the beginning of this Nation, said, “The care of human life and its happiness, and not its destruction, is the chief and only object of good government.”

The phrase in the Fifth Amendment capsulizes our entire Constitution. It says, no person shall “be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.”

And the 14th amendment says no State “deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

Mr. Speaker, protecting the lives of all Americans and their constitutional rights, especially those who cannot protect themselves, is why we are all here. It is why we came to Congress.

You know, not long ago, I heard Barack Obama speak very noble and poignant words that, whether he realizes it or not, so profoundly apply to this subject. Let me quote excerpted portions of his comments.

He said: “This is our first task, caring for our children. It's our first job. If we don't get that right, we don't get anything right. That's how, as a society, we will be judged.”

President Obama asked: “Are we really prepared to say that we're powerless in the face of such carnage, that the politics are too hard? Are we prepared to say that such violence visited on our children year after year after year is somehow the price of our freedom?”

The President also said: “Our journey is not complete until all our children . . . are cared for and cherished and always safe from harm.”

“That is our generation's task,” he said, “to make these words, these rights, these values of life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness real for every American.”

Mr. Speaker, never have I so deeply agreed with any words ever spoken by President Barack Obama as those I have just quoted. And how I wish—how I wish with all of my heart—that Mr. Obama and all of us could somehow open our hearts and our ears to this incontrovertible statement and ask ourselves in the core of our souls why his words that should apply to all children cannot include the most helpless and vulnerable of all children. Are there any children more vulnerable than these little pain-capable unborn babies we are discussing today?

You know, Mr. Speaker, it seems like we are never quite so eloquent as when we decry the crimes of a past generation. But, oh, how we often become so staggeringly blind when it comes to facing and rejecting the worst of atrocities in our own time.

What we are doing to these little babies is real, and the President and all of us here know that in our hearts. Medical science regarding the development of unborn babies beginning at the sixth month of pregnancy now demonstrates irrefutably that they do, in fact, experience pain. Many of them cry and scream as they are killed, but because it's amniotic fluid going over the vocal cords instead of air, we don't hear them.

Again, Mr. Speaker, it is the greatest human rights atrocity in the United States of America today.

So, Mr. Speaker, let me close with a final contribution and wise counsel from Abraham Lincoln that I believe so desperately applies to all of this in this moment. He said: “Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance or insignificance can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation.”

Mr. Speaker, the passage of H.R. 36 will be remembered. It will be considered in the annals of history and, I believe, in the counsels of eternity.

Protecting little pain-capable unborn children and their mothers is not a Republican issue. It is not a Democrat issue. It is a basic test of our humanity and who we are as a human family.

Today we began to open our eyes and allow our consciences to catch up with our technology. Today Members of the United States Congress began to open their hearts and their souls to remind themselves that protecting those who cannot protect themselves is why we are really all here.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that it sparks a little thought in the minds of all Americans so that we might all open our eyes and our hearts to the humanity of these little unborn children of God and the inhumanity of what is being done to them.

I don't know if that will happen or not. But, Mr. Speaker, as of today, when we passed the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, we have come a step closer, and for that, I am grateful.

I yield back the balance of my time.

FUTURE FORUM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from California (Mr. SWALWELL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, tonight we are back with the Future Forum, a group of young Members of Congress here to discuss an issue that is near and dear to our hearts and one that is on the minds of each of us on a daily basis, and that is the issue of our veterans.

We are joined tonight by some Future Forum members. And we are going to start by asking everyone who is watching across the country to tweet at us or find us on Instagram or Facebook under #futureforum to give us your suggestions and your ideas about challenges facing veterans and what we can do here to address it—#futureforum.

The first person we are going to hear from tonight is a veteran himself from the Boston area. He is a first-term Member of Congress who served four tours of duty in Iraq, is a Marine infantryman. So I am going to have SETH MOULTON of the Boston area talk about

his experience as a 9/11 veteran and what he is hearing in the Boston area and what we can do here in Congress.

I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOULTON).

Mr. MOULTON. Thank you, Congressman SWALWELL.

Mr. Speaker, the veterans are coming home from our wars, and they want to serve again. And that is one of the most amazing things about today's veterans and about millennials in general is that there is a supreme desire to serve, to serve their country.

You know, one of the toughest jobs to get out of college now is not a job in investment banking on Wall Street; it is a job serving in Teach For America.

One of the amazing things that I have found about those who have served, both in civilian service and veterans from our military services, is that we get out and we actually want to serve again.

Frankly, when I went into the military, I thought I would do my 4 years and kind of check that box and no one would ever question for the rest of my life whether I wanted to serve the country again. Yet then I got out and found I really missed it. I missed that sense of public service, that sense of duty, that sense that every single day my work impacted the lives of other people.

So veterans come home, and they don't just want a paycheck. They don't just want a retirement. They don't just want health care. They want to actually contribute to the country back here at home. But in order to do that, they have got to be able to transition into life back here as a civilian.

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That is tough. That is tough today because many of the basic health care needs of veterans are not being taken care of. They are not given the opportunities to pursue jobs in the private sector. So that great opportunity for our Nation's veterans to serve again is squandered because we are not taking care of them when they get home.

There are some fascinating statistics about how successful veterans are in the civilian workforce. Fortune 500 CEOs are disproportionately veterans. And yet veterans are also disproportionately homeless. So how does that happen?

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. MOULTON, we asked some of our followers of Future Forum on Twitter to chime in with their own thoughts. Shawn Van Diver of the San Diego area, a veteran himself @ShawnJVanDiver, said, "Let's leverage veterans toward rebuilding our infrastructure." Do you see a role for veterans as we try and repair and rebuild America's infrastructure?

Mr. MOULTON. Absolutely. There is so much that veterans can do back here at home. The point with my story about how veterans are disproportionately successful and yet also disproportionately homeless, I think it all comes

back to that transition. Because if you are a veteran who can come home and navigate the transition to work in the civilian sector successfully, because you get the health care that you need, if you have post-traumatic stress—which is an entirely treatable condition—you get it taken care of. Then you can use all those skills and experiences that you had in the military, that leadership training, that experience performing under the toughest circumstances on Earth, you will use that for success in the business world and back here at home in whatever you do.

But if you don't make that transition successfully, if you don't get the health care that you need to take care of whatever conditions you have from your service, then you can literally become homeless. And that is why this transition is so important.

The point is that veterans have a lot to give back to our country. So I think most Americans understand that we have a moral obligation to take care of our veterans, that for all they have done for us overseas risking their lives, we ought to take care of them when they get back. And most Americans get that. But it is also just a smart investment. It is a smart investment in our economy, and it is a smart investment in America's future to take care of our veterans.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. You talked a little bit about the leadership training that you get when you are serving your country in the military. In this job, I had the pleasure of going to Afghanistan. I went with Mr. KILMER back in August of 2013, and just a couple of weeks ago, I was in Baghdad. I observed our troops in theater. What I observed was, of course, the military training and the leadership training that they are getting, but they are also using everyday software applications to carry out their duties.

How do you see their knowledge and experience with the various technologies they are using in the field, how can that translate at home when they try to go into the workforce?

Mr. MOULTON. We live in an information economy. You are from Silicon Valley, you represent Silicon Valley. There is so much need for tech savvy, technically trained employees in our workforce. You get extraordinary training in the military, whether you are in the infantry, you are on the ground in one of those toughest jobs where your ability to lead in the most difficult circumstances imaginable is critical, or even if you are sitting controlling a drone back in Arizona and just understanding how our most advanced technology works, if you are able to manage that, then you are going to be incredibly valuable back home.

We have got to take care of our veterans to get there. A lot of veterans have post-traumatic stress, and it has kind of created this stigma that if you hire a veteran, you might get someone

who has some mental issues. But the reality is that post-traumatic stress, first of all, is a pretty normal thing to expect after what many veterans have gone through overseas, but it is entirely treatable. It shouldn't be unusual to think that someone who went through the rigors of combat, the tragedy of war, would be affected by that. But we know that we can take care of that condition and treat it appropriately, and then veterans can serve again when they get back home.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. We got a question just a moment ago from Lee Hawn, @LeeAhawn, and he said, "How are the new VA Director's changes coming along?" I would ask more broadly, what would you like to see in treating post-traumatic stress to make sure that it is not a stigma in the workforce, and that our veterans are able to seamlessly go from theater or their service to coming home and having a job?

Right now we look at the veteran unemployment rate for those who have served since September 11 and the Iraq war, and it is today 6.7 percent. Just last year it was as high as 7.2 percent. It has been as high as 9.9 percent in the last 2 years, always above what the national unemployment rate is.

So what can we do with the VA as we fund and authorize programs there to treat PTSD and make sure veterans aren't losing jobs or losing opportunities in the workforce?

Mr. MOULTON. First of all, we need a lot of reform at the VA, and this has been much publicized across the country. Of course, there are some VA's that are doing all right, doing fairly well. There are others that are completely failing our veterans. It shouldn't matter where you are from or where you live. You should be able to go to a VA facility and get the care that you need, the care that you have earned, and the care that you deserve. A lot of veterans just aren't seeing that.

Some people ask me how often do I hear from fellow veterans who are struggling to get the care that they need at the VA. I can tell you I have heard from two marines in my second platoon just in the past week. They have asked for my help as a new Congressman just getting the access to care that they need. You shouldn't have to go to your Congressman to be able to get the care that you need at the VA.

Some interesting statistics about the VA: the peak of claims from World War I, the year when the most World War I veterans sought care at the VA, was not 1920 or 1925. It was 1969–1969. So that tells us two things. First, it says that the VA as we know it today was really built to deal with a different generation of veterans, not Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, not even Vietnam veterans. The second thing it tells us is that if the VA can't take care of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans today, we haven't even begun to see the beginning of the problem. A lot of Vietnam

veterans are just now coming to the VA because they realize that their cancer or Parkinson's has to do with the Agent Orange exposure they received some 40 years ago.

So we have a lot of changes to make at the VA, and I think that the new Secretary, to the question, is doing a good job, and he is certainly moving in the right direction. But we need radical change, and it remains to be seen just how effective his work will be.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Thank you, Mr. MOULTON.

I am hearing right now from Duncan Neasham @DuncanN, and he said, #millennial vets stood up when the country needed them. We need those problem-solvers to run for office and change our cynical politics.

I think he is right, and I am grateful that you are a colleague of ours, Mr. MOULTON. Also in the Future Forum we have some other post-September 11 veterans in Congresswoman TULSI GABBARD of Hawaii, Representative RUBEN GALLEGOS of Arizona, and also yourself. So thank you for participating this evening.

Mr. MOULTON. I love the question because we have never had fewer veterans in our Congress in our Nation's history than we do today. I don't think it should be a litmus test you have to be a veteran to run for Congress, not at all. But at a time when we face unprecedented challenges across the globe, when we are involved in so many challenges overseas, that perspective of veterans is critically important. We can't just have the perspective of older veterans. We need younger veterans too, veterans of the wars in the Middle East, veterans who have had to fight counterinsurgencies, veterans who faced terrorists across the globe. Those are the challenges that we are figuring out how to meet in Congress. I think it is important that we have the perspective of veterans.

So I will tell you, if there are veterans out there who are listening to this right now, I hope you will consider running. We need you. We need new leaders. We need your perspective, and we would love to see you serve the country again.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. I couldn't agree with you more. I know it is an issue that you are very passionate about, and I think this is a richer body because we have veterans like you serving it.

Mr. MOULTON. I am honored to serve with you.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. KILMER, you and I went to Afghanistan back in August of 2013. I know you have a number of servicemembers in your district and people who were servicemembers. I am just wondering, you look at this number, 6.7 percent higher than what the average unemployment rate is, and what are you hearing out there in the Tacoma area in Washington, and what can we do in Congress?

Mr. KILMER. Sure. Well, one, I thank you, Mr. SWALWELL, for your

leadership in the Future Forum and your focus on these veterans issues. I actually represent more veterans than any Democrat in the United States Congress. Actually, I think my region is a whole lot stronger as a result of that because we have men and women who have served our country who choose to make the Olympic Peninsula or the Tacoma area their home.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Approximately how many veterans do you represent?

Mr. KILMER. I don't know the exact number, but we have got a slew of them. Between Naval Base Kitsap and our joint base, people serve in our area, and it is a glorious place to live. So after their service, they choose to make it their home.

Frankly, my background was working in economic development. When you talk to employers in our region, by and large they get it that the veterans bring a lot to the table, that they bring a skill set, a unique skill set from their prior experience, they bring a work ethic, they bring a sense of patriotism, and so our workforce is a stronger workforce because of the service of those men and women who want to attach into the civilian workforce.

Certainly, there are some challenges in that regard. That means we ought to be focused on that. For example, embracing programs like Helmets to Hardhats, which you heard the reference earlier to trying to deploy our veterans to build up America's infrastructure.

It means ensuring that our veterans don't face discrimination when they pursue employment. In fact, in my State we added military and veteran status to our State's nondiscrimination statute to ensure that when someone was seeking employment that their military status wasn't used against them either for the reasons that Mr. MOULTON suggested around concerns about PTSD or something like that, but also our Guard members and Reservists who, when we had hearings on that legislation at the State level, we were told, Well, I am concerned about hiring you because what happens if you get called up again?

That is not right. People who choose to serve our country, people who fight for our country overseas shouldn't have to fight for a job when they come home. I think that should be a focus of this Congress as well.

It also means applauding those firms large and small who make it a priority to hire our veterans. We have plenty in my neck of the woods that have really made a strong effort to hire veterans.

Legislatively there are also things that we could and should do to make sure that those who have served overseas and who have served in the military, period, are able to translate the experiences and the skills they have learned into a civilian job.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. On that one I want to ask you if you could expand because I have heard, and Mr.

MOULTON and I were talking about this earlier, medics, people who serve in the military and they have medical training to help others who are wounded or get sick, they are having a hard time—and I am hearing this in the Bay Area—when they come home and they want to work naturally as an EMT or a paramedic, and they are finding by and large their training is not being accepted by the local schools or the State requirements.

Are you hearing about that?

Mr. KILMER. Absolutely. A few years back when I served in the State legislature, I visited Clover Park Technical College, which is in the 10th District of Washington, DENNY HECK's district. When I was in the legislature, I visited that college, and I was meeting with a group of students. One said, "I was a battlefield medic, and I wanted to enter the nursing program. My prior experience didn't count towards the pursuit of that college credential." So we actually changed our State law requiring our State colleges and universities to acknowledge that prior military experience, whether that be in the medical profession or you talk to folks who drove a truck as part of the logistics efforts through the battlefields of Afghanistan and want to get a commercial driver's license. We also passed a law that directs our State Department of Licensing to acknowledge that prior military experience and have it count towards some of their requirements for pursuing either a college degree or a professional license or certification.

That is something that I think we really have to rededicate ourselves to, to ensure, again, that that transition is a smooth one.

I did want to share with you that some veterans in our area are doing some pretty cool stuff. I was at the University of Washington-Tacoma. They stood up a veterans incubator for veterans who are looking to start a business. One of the businesses that was started was from a young veteran, a guy named Steve Buchanan from my district. And I actually invited him to the State of the Union because Steve had a cool idea for a company, and he made it happen. He worked with his CFO, who is also a veteran, Chris Shepherd. They hit upon a simple way to connect veterans with flexible jobs.

Their idea was to create an online marketplace for veterans who had skills on one side of the equation to people who had something that needed to get done, sort of an online marketplace for anything from remodeling their landscaping to IT work. Anyone can visit their Web site, and you can plug in your task of what you are looking to get done, and you can find a veteran with those skills and a desire to work. It is a great way to give veterans a chance to get some flexible work directly from folks who need their help, and it is a great platform from the community to show their support for our Nation's heroes.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. You are hitting on Stephen Brown @StevBrown. He asked, “Can our government offer incentives to veterans who want to start small businesses?” He just asked that on Twitter. What do you think about that? Can we do more?

Mr. KILMER. Sure. I think it is always good to look at that, whether that be through our SBA programs and the availability of access to capital.

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One of the things that we are looking at doing is focused on businesses who hire our veterans; already through things like our procurement process, there are some advantages for veteran-owned businesses, but one of the things we are looking at is could you create an incentive for those who hire a whole lot of veterans so that they have some incentive to do that hiring as well.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Thank you, Mr. KILMER. I appreciate your continued participation in Future Forum. I know the veterans in your area are very grateful to have you standing up on the House floor tonight to champion their issues and getting them into the workforce.

Mr. KILMER. We are lucky to have them. Thanks so much.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. We are now joined by JARED POLIS of Colorado. My question for JARED comes from Ruchit @ruchithmajmudar, and he says: “Veterans took care of us. We need to take care of them.”

What do you think about that?

Mr. POLIS. I think that is what brings us here tonight. It is what brings champions of veterans issues like DEREK KILMER and yourself and SETH MOULTON here. This is an opportunity for us to talk about what we as Democrats want to do to make sure that we honor and support those who served our country.

I had a wilderness roundtable last week. We had RAÚL GRIJALVA in town. He is the ranking member of the Natural Resources Committee. We are working on designating some of our beautiful public lands in Summit and Eagle Counties as wilderness. We were having a meeting in Vail. Come visit Vail. I want everybody to know that Vail is a wonderful place to visit. We had a roundtable.

We had one of the people at it—in addition to hikers, bikers, a lot of local merchants that sell equipment, we had a veteran who served in the Middle East.

He got up, and he said that, when he was serving overseas in Afghanistan and he went to a visual display and they had the national anthem and what they showed—the images on the screen were not our tall buildings, were not our politicians or our actors; it was our beautiful public lands.

It was the Grand Canyon; it was the mountains of Colorado; it was the great coasts of California, and that was what he and his fellow servicemembers drew their pride from.

He further expressed such an excitement about the wilderness bill we were working on. He said the public lands were a place of healing for veterans. He said: If we don’t protect these beautiful lands, what the hell did I fight for?

It really moved everybody at the entire table just to say, do you know what, that is that part of that American spirit that we derive from the spirit of conservation.

It was really one of those moments where it made me and those of us working on some of those public land issues glad to know that we were helping to heal some of the veterans that had served us under difficult circumstances overseas.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. This week, we are considering the National Defense Authorization Act. We have done VA funding in the past couple weeks.

What are you hearing specifically in your congressional district about whether we are taking care of our veterans? Especially tonight, we are talking specifically about post-9/11 generation veterans who have just, by and large, been underemployed at a much higher rate than the rest of the country.

What are you hearing at home, any stories that you can share?

Mr. POLIS. Well, we really need to do a lot more. That is one of the reasons that I recently introduced a post-9/11 conservation corps bill, which would actually help employ some of our post-9/11 veterans to protect our public lands and water, so it can be part of their healing and part of making sure that our public lands are well maintained.

It would help veterans restore and protect our national, State, and tribal forest parks; coastal areas; wildlife refuges; and cemeteries—allowing us to attack the jobless rate among our returning veterans and help address the enormous maintenance backlog at our national parks.

That is the kind of idea which I think a lot of veterans get excited about. They want to see something that shows that we deeply respect the work they did defending our country, that their work is valued here at home.

It is the absolute wrong message to send when we are slashing veterans benefits; when we are not funding, for instance, our new VA hospital that needs to be built in Aurora, Colorado; when we are slashing the benefits that people get beyond the impact of those financial dues that they receive.

It is the message they are getting that somehow, do you know what, instead of returning to a civilian service corps, towards helping job placement, towards the counseling and health support services we need, we are returning to a thankless America.

I think that we Democrats want to do something about that. That is why we have a great package of bills to show that we do honor and respect, and we want to show that in word and deed

to those who served us in post-9/11 wars.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. I talked to a number of my veteran groups in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties at home, and not until I took this job had I heard the phrase of a “ghost veteran.”

It was explained to me it is the servicemember who has come back from Iraq or Afghanistan and has completely fallen off the radar. They are not associated at all with the VA. They are not signed up for any of the benefits that they are eligible for. They are not participating in the American Legion or the VFW.

The theory is that, because we have done such a poor job of fully funding the VA and giving benefits and time to people who deserve it, having issues with the hospitals and the back claims, as well as the GI benefits not fully taking care of people—do you think that makes people pessimistic when you get out of your service and you return to your community? Is that going to make you more or less willing to participate in some of these programs that we have put out there?

Mr. POLIS. I have not heard that term before, “ghost veteran,” but I have met so many veterans that meet that exact definition.

I think it is a combination of things. I think you are right. It is part of the fact that they don’t think they are going to get anything anyway because it has all been cut. It is also part of the need that we have and the VA has to adapt our veteran-serving institutions to meet the real-life needs of a new generation of veterans.

The truth is the returning 9/11 veterans are not interested in piles of paperwork and filling it out. That is understandable. They are not interested in beating their head against the wall to try to get some benefit that they may or may not get. They have served our country. They have a lot of great capacity in them to do great work again.

They want our help in enabling them to be able to live great lives, whether it is going back to school under GI Bill—and, of course, we passed the post-9/11 GI Bill—whether it is working on something like the veterans conservation corps that, if my bill passes, it would set up, whether it is making sure they have support to start their own small business as entrepreneurs.

What they don’t want is to wait in line down at some facility to fill out more forms that may or may not result in them getting something, someday. That is really what I hear in so many of the returning post-9/11 veterans that in my district really meet the definition of what you are talking about, ghost veterans.

Once they got out, they just didn’t want to deal with what they see as a bureaucratic, out-of-touch apparatus that doesn’t give them the support they need.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. In the GI Bill, it works when we fund it and

we give opportunity to veterans. It provides eligible veterans up to 36 months of education benefits. Frankly, I think you and I probably would like to see that greatly expanded to include a full education; 1700 colleges and universities are supplemented by post-GI Bill benefits.

Fifty-one percent of student veterans earn their degree from an institution of higher education. From 2009–2012, there has been an increase of veterans using their benefits by 67 percent. When we are faced with the question when it comes to veterans funding or NDAA considerations that we make, should we be expanding the educational opportunities for our veterans, or should we be reducing it?

Mr. POLIS. I am just so excited and honored to represent a district that has two of our State flagship universities: Colorado State University in Fort Collins—go Rams—and University of Colorado Boulder—go Bucks.

We have had interns in our office that were only able to attend those institutions because of the GI Bill, returning post-9/11 veterans who were able to fulfill their dream of getting a higher education at a time where you and I know it is increasingly costly to get that education.

My goodness, you Californians pay \$35,000 a year to come to CU; but even our instate folks are paying \$9,000 a year just to go to college. Not a lot of families can afford that in discretionary income when you add in food and lodging and everything else.

Those who have served our country are able to avail themselves of this tremendous opportunity, the GI Bill. We need to renew our commitment to those folks. We need to make sure that it is there to fund their education, in an increasingly costly educational environment, that they can have the skills they need.

I would like to see more ways where they can get credit for some of the skills they learned in the military. Some of those convey over and appropriately should be granted credit at institutions of higher education, so there is a lot more we can do.

So many veterans that I have interacted with on both campuses are just so grateful. I want to make sure that we defend and I know Democrats here are standing in the line of defense of the post-9/11 GI Bill.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Others that were in the last Congress—and I was a big supporter of the Veteran Employment Transition Act that made permanent the work opportunity tax credit for qualified veterans and also the Troop Talent Act by our colleague, a veteran herself, TAMMY DUCKWORTH, which would direct the Department of Defense to make information on civilian credentialing opportunities available to members of the Armed Forces at every stage of their training for occupational specialties.

The Future Forum we just launched last month, we went to New York and Boston and San Francisco.

Mr. POLIS. We are coming to Denver soon, right?

Mr. SWALWELL of California. We are coming to Denver soon, yes.

Mr. POLIS. I am looking forward to it.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. You are going to host us out there in Denver. We are going to make a mile-high difference there for young people, and I very much look forward to that.

At these conversations that we have had under the #futureforum, whether they are in the audience or they are tweeting at us, what we have learned is that young people today—veterans and just millennials alike—right now, their top issues, I believe, from what we have heard, are student loan debt, access to entrepreneurship, equality and making sure that we have equal pay for equal work, as well as climate change.

When it comes to veterans, every audience we were in front of had a veteran there, and every audience thought we weren't doing enough to take care of our veterans.

I think the message I want to put out there tonight—and continue the conversation on social media under #futureforum—is we must stand up and serve our veterans as well as they have stood up and served us as a country.

Mr. POLIS, I will leave it to you for any closing thoughts on how we can best serve our veterans.

Mr. POLIS. Well, I just wanted to add, again, particularly in the West, in districts like mine, many veterans who have settled in Eagle and Summit Counties or in the Boulder area really have seen their experiences and interactions with the outdoors and our environment as an important part of their healing experience.

That is why we see such great support for a number of nonprofits that help get veterans out hiking and biking; why the young veterans, in turn, are strong supporters of wilderness proposals; and why I think so many returning veterans would benefit from a veterans conservation corps that really got them out there working with their hands and their hearts, preserving some of that same natural heritage that, when they saw displayed on the movie screen while our national anthem played in Afghanistan or Iraq, gave them the inspiration that they needed to be able to continue to serve our country so well for another day.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Thank you, Mr. POLIS. Thank you, Mr. MOULTON, a veteran himself. Also, thank you to Mr. KILMER.

The Future Forum, we will be back in a few weeks talking about a variety of issues that are facing young people; but this is not us talking to you. As you saw tonight, I read a number of tweets live here on the House floor and was tweeting as we were having this conversation.

Our goal is to talk about the issues, have a conversation, but really listen to you and what you care about as millennials. We look forward to being

back here on the floor and out across America as the Future Forum, looking out for what is best for millennials and standing up here in Congress.

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

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MOOLENAAR). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 8 p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2300

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SESSIONS) at 11 o'clock p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1735, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

Mr. BYRNE, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114–112) on the resolution (H. Res. 260) providing for further consideration of the bill (H.R. 1735) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today (second series) on account of official business.

Mrs. CAPPS (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for May 12 through May 21 on account of medical reasons.

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled bills of the House of the following titles, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 651. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 820 Elmwood Avenue in Providence, Rhode Island, as the “Sister Ann Keefe Post Office”.

H.R. 1075. An act to designate the United States Customs and Border Protection Port of Entry located at First Street and Pan American Avenue in Douglas, Arizona, as the “Raul Hector Castro Port of Entry”.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.