

away. In my district, more than 6,700 heroes will rely on the Zadroga Act for medical care not for the next 5 years, as is being proposed, but for the rest of their lives.

Time doesn't erase our moral imperative to cover their medical expenses. It is an extension of the costs of the attack. America's heroes deserve a permanent reauthorization of the Zadroga Act, and nothing less.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that this House permanently reauthorize this program, which is essential to our deserving heroes.

GUN VIOLENCE

(Mr. CICILLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, it has been 34 days since the murder of nine men and women at Umpqua Community College in Oregon. It has been 140 days since the murder of nine parishioners at Mother Emanuel Church in Charleston, South Carolina. It has been 1,055 days since the murder of 20 children and 6 adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut.

In the time since then, Congress has done nothing to close loopholes in our background check system and make it easier to identify a dangerous individual before they are able to buy a gun.

There are more mass shootings in the United States each year than in any other country, and six of the deadliest shootings in American history have taken place in just the past 8 years.

It shouldn't be this way. It doesn't have to be this way. Congress has the responsibility to stand up to the powerful special interests and say, "No more." There is no reason lawmakers in this body should continue to cower before the National Rifle Association. We are the people's Representatives, and it is time to get to work on commonsense reforms that will save the lives of thousands of Americans and put an end to the epidemic of gun violence in our country.

HONORING SENATOR FRED THOMPSON

(Mrs. BLACK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a Tennessee giant: Senator Fred Thompson.

Whether Fred Thompson was speaking on the Senate floor, canvassing the State in his red pickup truck, or entertaining us on the big screen, he always did the Volunteer State proud.

In his lifetime, Fred saw many accomplishments, but he remained the same: a proud product of Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, the son of a car salesman, and the first person in his family to earn a college degree.

Fred was a statesman who led with conviction. He was a visionary who helped bring Tennessee from a Democratic stronghold to the conservative success story that it is today. He was a loving husband and father. He was a man of faith, who I know has found ultimate healing today from the cancer that gripped his earthly body.

Tennessee shines brighter because of Fred Thompson's service. We will miss him deeply, but we know that his legacy lives on.

MANATEE AWARENESS MONTH

(Ms. GRAHAM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, did you know it is Manatee Awareness Month?

Every November, we celebrate these beautiful, gentle creatures. How lucky we are that Florida is one of the few places in the world where you can see them.

To raise awareness, I would like to recognize the Save the Manatee Club, an international nonprofit which has been working to save endangered manatees since 1981, when it was co-sponsored by Jimmy Buffett and my father, Governor Bob Graham. Their commitment to these unique animals has made great strides in protecting them around the world.

Human activity presents the greatest threat to manatees, but we are also their greatest hope. Only our compassion and action can protect them.

FAR-REACHING ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATORY MANDATE

(Mr. STEWART asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. STEWART. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, President Obama issued an executive memorandum that could turn into one of the most far-reaching and devastating environmental regulations in history. This document, which holds the same weight as an executive order, aims to expand a 26-year-old policy that requires agencies to set a no net loss of wetlands to all natural resources. The economic impact of this regulation would be devastating to the West.

Why do I live in Utah? I live there because I love it. I love to rock climb. I love to ski. I love the beauty of the place I live.

All of us want to protect our natural resources, but we can't put human interests at the bottom of the priority pile. This is more than a huge power grab. It is going to devastate the trust that is essential between the President and the American people.

If the President wants more regulations and further protections on natural resources, such a thing must be done in the people's Congress by those who are closest to the people. For that reason, I will use every tool at my disposal in order to ensure that this out-

rageous Presidential decree is not implemented.

□ 1230

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF FORMER CONGRESSMAN HOWARD COBLE

(Ms. ADAMS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor former Congressman Howard Coble, who passed away last night.

Howard Coble was the epitome of a public servant. He served in the U.S. Coast Guard, the North Carolina State House, and as the Congressman for North Carolina's Sixth Congressional District for more than 30 years.

Howard Coble dedicated his life to serving, and it was exemplified in the way he ran his office. As a freshman Member of Congress, I looked to him in serving my constituents. He was steadfast, attentive, and always put his constituents first. Some say he offered the best constituent services of any Member.

I will never forget the night Howard Coble welcomed me to Congress the day I was sworn in. He later wished me well on my new journey as a Member.

My thoughts and prayers are with his family, his friends, and his former colleagues during this difficult time.

He will be missed but never forgotten. Howard Coble's legacy will remain in the Greensboro community and throughout North Carolina as a man who served selflessly.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AND SEMPER FI

(Mr. PALAZZO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, today, in honor of the 240th birthday of the United States Marine Corps, I would like to offer the official Marine Corps Hymn in tribute to the brave men and women who serve as Marines at home and abroad.

"From the halls of Montezuma
To the Shores of Tripoli;
We fight our country's battles
In the air, on land and sea;
First to fight for right and freedom
And to keep our honor clean;
We are proud to claim the title
Of United States Marine.
"Our flag's unfurled to every breeze
From dawn to setting sun;
We have fought in ev'ry clime and place
Where we could take a gun;
In the snow of far-off Northern lands
And in sunny tropic scenes;
You will find us always on the job—
The United States Marines.
"Here's health to you and to our Corps
Which we are proud to serve;
In many a strife we've fought for life
And never lost our nerve;

If the Army and the Navy
Ever look on Heaven's scenes;
They will find the streets are guarded
By United States Marines."

From one Marine to another, happy birthday and Semper Fi.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF FORMER CONGRESSMAN HOWARD COBLE

(Mr. PRICE of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, it was a little less than a year ago that a number of us gathered on the House floor to bid farewell to our colleague, Howard Coble, as he retired from 3 decades of service to the people of North Carolina.

The series of heartfelt tributes that day, from Members on both sides of the aisle, were a striking reflection of the respect and admiration that so many of us felt for Howard. And he returned that affection. He always made the extra effort to get to know those with whom he worked, regardless of their stature or their party affiliation.

Howard was also an effective legislator, a tireless advocate for the Sixth District. He took on complicated and difficult issues in his leadership roles on the Judiciary and Transportation Committees.

I was fortunate to partner with him on a number of bipartisan initiatives, from textile research, to disaster relief, to funding for his beloved Coast Guard.

In an era where our politics are too often fractious and divisive, Howard's camaraderie, good humor, and generosity of spirit reflected the best of what this institution can be.

Lisa and I are saddened by his passing. We join his many friends and former colleagues in extending condolences to his family and expressing gratitude for his life.

VETERANS HEALTH AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

(Mr. GUINTA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GUINTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the introduction of the Veterans Health and Accountability Act. Yesterday's Veterans Affairs Committee hearing showed why this bill is so critical.

An investigation revealed that Veterans Affairs administrators likely gamed the system to enrich themselves at taxpayer expense, creating high-paying vacancies at desirable locations, where they would have less responsibility.

At the hearing, they pled the Fifth to avoid the truth, and they remain on the job. Meanwhile, Granite State vets are waiting for care.

My Veterans Health and Accountability Act strengthens the Veterans Choice program, allowing veterans to

seek private care due to inadequate VA facilities. My home State of New Hampshire does not even have a full-service VA.

The act also protects whistleblowers who expose negligence and mismanagement. If it were not because of these individuals, we may never have discovered secret waiting lists where thousands of vets probably died waiting for care.

The bill I introduced clarifies hiring and firing rules, so bad actors who abuse their positions can be exited promptly.

We must enforce and expand VA reforms to ensure our military vets receive the care we promised them. We must restore Americans' trust in government.

DISAPPROVAL OF THE RADEWAGEN AMENDMENT TO THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BILL

(Ms. PLASKETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my disapproval to the Radewagen amendment to the surface transportation bill, which was ultimately defeated last night, 113-310.

This amendment would have required the Secretary to change the allocation program funds made available to the territories. This amendment would have potentially harmed my district, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam, by possibly taking already minimal funds away from these two territories.

The funding provided in the transportation bill is yet another example of this Congress' inability to address the real needs of the U.S. territories, whose economies have not recovered and require additional support.

And, while I certainly recognize and empathize with the frustrations of some of my colleagues from the territories, it is the limited funding within this bill which has created an environment where we are literally fighting over scraps.

The proposed funding in the bill barely provides any increase of the historically low allocation for the territorial highway program.

I would like to thank both the chair and ranking member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Mr. SHUSTER and Mr. DEFAZIO, for not supporting the amendment and for recognizing that this is not an amendment that enjoyed the full support of all the four smaller territories.

I would also like to thank the dean, Congresswoman BORDALLO, of the territory of Guam, for her efforts and engagement on this very important issue.

I look forward to working with Transportation and Infrastructure leadership and staff and my fellow Delegates from the insular areas and working together on resolving our problems.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF DANIEL STANDAGE

(Ms. MCSALLY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, next week we celebrate Veterans Day, a time to honor the men and women who served our country in the military.

Today, I want to recognize a stand-out veteran from my district, Daniel Standage.

Daniel served 10 years in the U.S. Marine Corps, until a neurological condition he suffered from eventually rendered him completely blind. He received a 100 percent service-connected disability, but that hasn't held him back.

Daniel completed a blind rehabilitation program at the Southern Arizona VA. He enrolled at the University of Arizona and was instrumental in establishing its student veterans center, a place that offers assistance to transitioning student veterans. The center now is a national model for Student Veterans of America.

Today, Daniel is a staunch advocate for veterans across the country. He credits his education as being the most important factor in helping him overcome his disability, and he now helps countless other veterans earn their degrees.

In advance of Veterans Day, I thank all the men and women like Daniel who serve and served our Nation and continue to make a difference today.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF STEPHEN TALLEY

(Mr. RUIZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and great legacy of San Jacinto Valley's artist, Stephen Talley, known as Steve, who passed away last week after his battle with cancer at the age of 62.

Steve was 11 years old when he began his career, creating and selling his artwork. That passion is what led him to pursue and share his artistic vision with the community and the world.

For more than 30 years, Steve taught art at San Jacinto High School, touching the life of every student who sat in his class. He was known internationally for his work, winning more than 100 awards in numerous competitions, many of them in first place.

He never let his success get in the way of his commitment to his students and, as a result, he has inspired a new generation of artists to never give up on their dreams.

Steve was a mentor, a teacher, a friend, and, above all, he was a great man. His memory will never be forgotten.

As we mourn the passing of Stephen Talley and celebrate his life, my