

large companies can provide, and they allow employees to choose coverage options that work best for them.

At the Education and the Workforce Committee, we have been proud to do our part to bring about this sustainable healthcare solution for millions of Americans. I welcome the news.

RECOGNIZING PREMATURITY AWARENESS MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, November is Prematurity Awareness Month, and as the number of preterm births continues to rise in the United States, it is important to acknowledge this serious issue.

In my own experience as an obstetrician having delivered over 5,000 babies, I have seen firsthand the seriousness of early birth. Premature birth is still the number one cause of infant mortality in the United States and around the world. Advancements in detection and care for infants born early have not made the same strides that other areas of the medical field have.

The premature birth rate in Kansas is right below the national average of 9.93, meaning that approximately 1 in every 10 babies is born premature. In the coming weeks, Congress has the opportunity to act and pass the PREEMIE Reauthorization Act of 2018 and help those who cannot yet help themselves.

RECOGNIZING KANSAS GUARDSMEN OVERSEAS

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, this past holiday weekend, I had the pleasure, the opportunity, to travel to the Middle East and to the Horn of Africa. Specifically, I got to visit with some 700 Kansas National Guardsmen from the 2nd 137th Combined Arms Battalion and Battery C, 161st Field Artillery. These guardsmen have been deployed since April in support of Operation Enduring Freedom Spartan Shield.

I am often asked what was the purpose of my trip. Why do Congressmen do these trips?

First of all, I think it is important that, as a Congressman, I bring these troops a message of hope and thanks and let them know personally that we do care and are grateful for their service and the sacrifices they are making for this country.

Next, my goal was to check on the mental and physical well-being of our troops. Despite talking to hundreds of our soldiers, I cannot get one of them to register one complaint. Specifically, I thought their mental health was outstanding, that they were all in good spirits and, indeed, had great hope. Physically, their nutrition appeared to be well attended to. Their medical and dental needs were well attended to as well.

My one concern, perhaps, would be the housing. And though no soldier complained about housing, when you are there for a year at a time, I do

think we could supply our soldiers with better housing.

Today, we are reminded of the dangers of serving in our military as we lost three soldiers to a roadside bomb in Afghanistan. Certainly, my sympathy goes out to the families. I know the words that I can express will never be enough, but I would say this: Today we are also reminded once again that freedom is not free.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MAJOR BRENT RUSSELL TAYLOR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, Major Brent Russell Taylor is one of six brothers to each wear the uniform of the United States Army.

While training Afghan security forces in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel, Major Taylor was killed by an apparent insider attack on November 3 in Kabul province while in the final months of his deployment. He is survived by his wife, Jennie, and seven children: Megan, Lincoln, Alex, Jacob, Ellie, Jonathan, and Caroline. In Utah, we mourn with the family of Major Taylor and grieve his loss and honor his sacrifice.

As Major Taylor and his brothers passed through Basic Combat Training, they learned the seven Army values in great detail. Those values are loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage, and Major Brent Taylor lived these values.

First, loyalty: Major Taylor swore to bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the United States and support and defend our Nation's guiding documents against all enemies. He demonstrated his loyalty to this oath time and time again.

Duty: Major Taylor earned a Bronze Star for his outstanding dedication to duty during combat operations in Iraq. The Army says doing your duty means more than carrying out your assigned tasks. Major Taylor's military service record shows he employed this guidance to the fullest.

So, too, does his life outside the military, because Major Taylor was not only Major Taylor, he was also Mayor Taylor. His community and neighbors so entrusted him to lead and provide that they elected him the mayor of North Ogden City in Utah.

In that role, he did much more than carry out his assigned tasks. He worked to beautify and improve the city and to create a community that was welcoming to newcomers; and in the predawn morning of his last Christmas on Earth, Mayor Taylor ventured out into the cold to oversee the snowplows and salt trucks as they cleared the roads and made his city safe.

Respect: Major Taylor not only enjoyed the respect of his family, community, and fellow servicemembers, but his praises came from across the globe. In a letter from Afghanistan to

Mrs. Taylor following her husband's death, an Afghan aviator said: "Your husband taught me to . . . treat my children as treasured gifts, to be a better father, to be a better husband, and to be a better man."

A man does not receive that level of praise without first showing his own grand measure of respect.

Selfless service: As a high school senior in Chandler, Arizona, Brent delivered the honor speech at graduation, and his instruction to the audience was: "Go out. Be happy. Find peace and make a positive difference in the world."

Major Taylor left his family and American soil on four deployments to serve and "make a positive difference in the world." In that same honor speech, he gave the order to "stick with it to the end." He, himself, did just that.

Honor: Major Taylor honored his faith, his family, his community, and his country throughout his short life. Brent's social media postings are replete with photos of his children and family. They show images of love and service and patriotism, qualities of a man, a husband, and a father who honors his family and country.

In his last Facebook post, Brent implored that we all remember: "We have far more as Americans that unites us than divides us." And he ended the post with the words, "God Bless America."

Integrity: The Army says that integrity is a quality you develop by adhering to moral principles, and the more choices you make based on integrity, the more this highly prized value will affect your relationships with family and friends.

The days since the sad passing of Major Taylor have been filled with an outpouring of love and grief expressed by those who knew Brent. His integrity left an impression, and his integrity affected his relationships.

Finally, personal courage: In September of 2007, Major Taylor was commanding a convoy in Iraq when he was hit by an insurgent IED. His vehicle was struck by shrapnel, asphalt, and concrete debris. For the wounds received in action, Major Taylor was awarded the Purple Heart, and he would go on to deploy twice more.

Brent Taylor stood as an example of personal courage. He lived the Army Values.

In April of this year, the Department of Veterans Affairs opened a facility in North Ogden City. It is a place where veterans and their families can go to receive counseling and support. It is a place located in the heart of Brent Taylor's hometown.

As a small gesture to his service and his sacrifice, I have introduced a bill to name that VA facility the "Major Brent Taylor Vet Center Outstation."

The naming of a building will never repay the debt our Nation owes Major Taylor or his family, but it can stand as a humble reminder of the citizen soldier who lost his life in the service of others.