

which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous matter on S.1683, the Senate bill just passed.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1230

PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICER MEDAL OF VALOR ACT OF 1998

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R.4090) to provide for a national medal for public safety officers who act with extraordinary valor above and beyond the call of duty, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor Act of 1998".

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF MEDAL.

The President may award, and present in the name of Congress, a Medal of Valor of appropriate design, with ribbons and appurtenances, to a public safety officer who is cited by the Attorney General, on the advice of the Medal of Valor Review Board, for extraordinary valor above and beyond the call of duty.

SEC. 3. BOARD.

(a) BOARD.—There is established a permanent Medal of Valor Review Board (hereinafter in this Act referred to as the "Board"). The Board shall—

(1) be composed of 11 members appointed in accordance with subsection (b); and
(2) conduct its business in accordance with this Act.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The members of the Board shall be appointed as follows:

(A) 2 shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(B) 2 shall be appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives.

(C) 2 shall be appointed by the Majority Leader of the Senate.

(D) 2 shall be appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate.

(E) 3 shall be appointed by the President, one of whom shall have substantial experience in firefighting, one of whom shall have substantial experience in law enforcement, and one of whom shall have substantial experience in emergency services.

(2) PERSONS ELIGIBLE.—The members of the Board shall be individuals who have knowledge or expertise, whether by experience or training, in the field of public safety.

(3) TERM.—The term of a Board member is 4 years.

(4) VACANCIES.—Any vacancy in the membership of the Board shall not affect the powers of the Board and shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

(5) OPERATION OF THE BOARD.—

(A) MEETINGS.—The Board shall meet at the call of the Chairman and not less than twice each year. The initial meeting of the Board shall be conducted not later than 30 days after the appointment of the last member of the Board.

(B) QUORUM; VOTING; RULES.—A majority of the members of the Board shall constitute a quorum to conduct business, but the Board may establish a lesser quorum for conducting hearings scheduled by the Board. The Board may establish by majority vote any other rules for the conduct of the Board's business, if such rules

are not inconsistent with this Act or other applicable law.

(c) DUTIES.—The Board shall select candidates as recipients of the Medal of Valor from among those applications received by the National Medal Office. Not more often than once each year, the Board shall present to the Attorney General the name or names of those it recommends as Medal of Valor recipients. In a given year, the Board is not required to choose any names, but is limited to a maximum number of 6 recipients. The Board shall set an annual timetable for fulfilling its duties under this Act.

(d) HEARINGS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Board may hold such hearings, sit and act at such times and places, administer such oaths, take such testimony, and receive such evidence as the Board considers advisable to carry out its duties.

(2) WITNESS EXPENSES.—Witnesses requested to appear before the Board may be paid the same fees as are paid to witnesses under section 1821 of title 28, United States Code. The per diem and mileage allowances for witnesses shall be paid from funds appropriated to the Board.

(e) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The Board may secure directly from any Federal department or agency such information as the Board considers necessary to carry out its duties. Upon the request of the Board, the head of such department or agency may furnish such information to the Board.

(f) INFORMATION TO BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.—The Board shall not disclose any information which may compromise an ongoing law enforcement investigation or is otherwise required by law to be kept confidential.

SEC. 4. BOARD PERSONNEL MATTERS.

(a) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), each member of the Board shall be compensated at a rate equal to the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level IV of the Executive Schedule under section 5315 of title 5, United States Code, for each day (including travel time) during which such member is engaged in the performance of the duties of the Board.

(2) All members of the Board who serve as officers or employees of the United States, a State, or a local government, shall serve without compensation in addition to that received for those services.

(b) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—The members of the Board shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of service for the Board.

SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.

For the purposes of this Act:

(1) PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICER.—The term "Public Safety Officer" has the same meaning given that term in section 1204 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968.

(2) STATE.—The term "State" means each of the several States of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Attorney General such sums as may be necessary to carry out this Act.

SEC. 7. OFFICE.

There is established within the Department of Justice a national medal office. The office shall staff the Medal of Valor Review Board and establish criteria and procedures for the submission of recommendations of nominees for the Medal of Valor.

SEC. 8. CONFORMING REPEAL.

Section 15 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 is repealed.

SEC. 9. CONSULTATION REQUIREMENT.

The Attorney General shall consult with the Institute of Heraldry within the Department of Defense regarding the design and artistry of the Medal of Valor. The Attorney General shall also consider suggestions received by the Department of Justice regarding the design of the medal, including those made by persons not employed by the Department.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GILLMOR). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, last month we honored two men whose sacrifices right here in the Capitol were both shocking and supreme. Our two heroic Capitol Hill police officers, Detective John Gibson and Officer Jacob Chestnut, could never have imagined that tragic Friday morning that a violent gunman would take away their lives and destroy their families' dreams.

The terrible truth is that each and every day a police officer dons that familiar blue uniform could be that officer's last day. In our hearts we all know this, and yet we allow ourselves to be lulled into complacency and to forget. But the spouses and children of a police officer can never forget. They must live with the daily fear of the sudden and painful disintegration of their family.

When those greatest fears are realized and an officer is slain, we rightly honor him or her for that final sacrifice. Every year, we set aside one week to celebrate the lives and work of police officers slain, and we forever pay tribute to their memories by adding their name to the memorial wall.

But is that enough? I believe that we can and should do more. In the military, we recognize many acts of heroism and valor with special medals and ribbons. As we are all aware, the Nation's highest combat medal, the Medal of Honor, is given to a member of the military who has demonstrated "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty."

The American public knows of this prestigious honor and of the many others bestowed by the military, for example the Purple Heart and the Silver Star. Yet we do not offer a similarly high honor to public safety officers.

Mr. Speaker, today I bring before the House H.R. 4090, the "Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor Act." It is long past due for the Federal Government to

pay tribute to acts of extraordinary valor committed by public safety officers. They gave their utmost and now so should their government in honoring them.

H.R. 4090 will establish a medal given by the President in the name of the Congress to a public safety officer who is cited by the Attorney General for extraordinary valor above and beyond the call of duty. The legislation creates a Medal of Valor review board composed of 11 members appointed by Congress and the President who will serve 4-year terms. The members of the board shall be persons with knowledge or expertise in the field of public safety. The board will be staffed by a new office within the Department of Justice called the National Medal Office. The board would be charged with reviewing the applications which the office receives each year, to select which names to present to the Attorney General as nominees for the Medal of Valor. They may conduct hearings and take testimony as necessary.

In a given year, the board may choose not to select any names, but it is limited to no more than six per year. This way the medal is truly for extraordinary valor above and beyond the call of duty. I believe that limiting the number of medals given each year will help retain the high honor which I envision the award to represent.

Mr. Speaker, White House supports passage of this long overdue legislation. And also I would like to thank the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Association of Police Organizations, the National Troopers Coalition, the National Law Enforcement Alliance of America, and the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association for their support.

Mr. Speaker, we all look forward to that momentous day when not one new name is added to the Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Wall. While we continue to nurture that hope, we will let this medal represent our gratitude and respect to heroic law enforcement officers all across this Nation. I urge my colleagues to pass H.R. 4090.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased on behalf of the minority to give my strong support to this legislation. The gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON), who is one of the sponsors, very eloquently outlined what the bill does.

We have been the beneficiaries in recent years in particular of the excellent work done by law enforcement people. There is no greater responsibility for government than the protection of its citizens. Until fairly recently, there were serious gaps in our ability to provide that protection in many parts of this country. We still are not where we should be. But across this country there has been significant improvements in this government and

State and local government's ability to protect its citizens against those who would prey on them. And, obviously, one of those entities most responsible for this are law enforcement officers.

We have ended a sterile debate, I hope, as to whether we needed more law enforcement officers or better procedures. Obviously, the answer is both. And to a great extent we have had both. I do want to note that providing well-trained, well-equipped law enforcement officers in adequate numbers is a function of government. It is supported by taxes. It is one of those things which, if we are going to do it well we will have to have a government that has the resources to provide it, because this is not something that we can do in our own individual capacities.

As part of that effort, it is entirely appropriate that we single out for a medal of this sort individual officers who from time to time show extraordinary valor. We should be very clear, there are no nonvalorous people in law enforcement. One does not strap on a weapon and put themselves out front as a target for the criminal element; one does not insert themselves as a shield between law-abiding citizens and their property and those who would viciously take advantage of it if they are not a person of valor.

We saw that in the murder of those two brave officers here in the Capitol that my colleague alluded to. The first one noted, Officer Chestnut, was at his post and he was unfortunately the target. Because we say to law enforcement officials, "Arm yourself and put yourself out there," and sadly we have no alternative to this, the vicious will get the first shot. So we do not mean to suggest by this that we are singling out those who are brave and not others. There is an inherent bravery in anyone who undertakes that job of being a law enforcement officer. And that is why it is appropriate that we talk here about extraordinary demonstrations of bravery.

So as a way of honoring all those in law enforcement who literally put their lives at risk every single day to protect the rest of us, as we were so tragically reminded here, and to recognize as a mark of the gratitude of a generous society those extraordinary efforts, this is an entirely reasonable piece of legislation and I support it.

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

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) for his excellent words in support of this legislation, and I wholeheartedly agree with his comments.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4090, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

THOMAS ALVA EDISON COMMEMORATIVE COIN ACT

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 678) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the sesquicentennial of the birth of Thomas Alva Edison, to redesign the half dollar circulating coin for 1997 to commemorate Thomas Edison, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 678

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Thomas Alva Edison Commemorative Coin Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds the following:

(1) Thomas Alva Edison, one of America's greatest inventors, was born on February 11, 1847, in Milan, Ohio.

(2) The inexhaustible energy and genius of Thomas A. Edison produced more than 1,300 inventions in his lifetime, including the incandescent light bulb and the phonograph.

(3) In 1928, Thomas A. Edison received the Congressional gold medal "for development and application of inventions that have revolutionized civilization in the last century".

(4) 2004 will mark the 125th anniversary of the invention of the light bulb by Thomas A. Edison in 1879, the 1st practical incandescent electric lamp.

SEC. 3. COIN SPECIFICATIONS.

(a) DENOMINATION.—In commemoration of the 125th anniversary of the invention of the light bulb by Thomas A. Edison, the Secretary of the Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the "Secretary") shall mint and issue not more than 500,000 \$1 coins, each of which shall—

(1) weigh 26.73 grams;

(2) have a diameter of 1.500 inches; and

(3) contain 90 percent silver and 10 percent copper.

(b) LEGAL TENDER.—The coins minted under this Act shall be legal tender, as provided in section 5103 of title 31, United States Code.

(c) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all coins minted under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

SEC. 4. SOURCES OF BULLION.

The Secretary may obtain silver for minting coins under this Act from any available source, including stockpiles established under the Strategic and Critical Materials Stock Piling Act.

SEC. 5. DESIGN OF COINS.

(a) DESIGN REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The design of the coins minted under this Act shall be emblematic of the light bulb and the many inventions made by Thomas A. Edison throughout his prolific life.

(2) DESIGNATION AND INSCRIPTIONS.—On each coin minted under this Act there shall be—

(A) a designation of the value of the coin; and