

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TO AMEND TITLE X, U.S.C. RELATING TO THE COMPENSATION OF RETIRED MILITARY PERSONNEL

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 15, 1998

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to place the following Senate Resolution from the State of Rhode Island into the RECORD.

SENATE RESOLUTION MEMORIALIZING CONGRESS TO AMEND TITLE TEN, UNITED STATES CODE RELATING TO THE COMPENSATION OF RETIRED MILITARY

Whereas, American servicemen and women have dedicated their careers to protect the rights we all enjoy; and

Whereas, Career military personnel endured hardships, privation, the threat of death, disability and long separations from their families in service to our country; and

Whereas, Integral to the success of our military forces are those soldiers and sailors who have made a career of defending our great nation in peace and war from the revolutionary war to present day; and

Whereas, There exists gross inequity in the federal statutes that denies disabled career military equal rights to receive Veterans Administration disability compensation concurrent with receipt of earned military retired pay; and

Whereas, Legislation has been introduced in the United States Congress to remedy this inequity applicable to career military dating back to the nineteenth century; and

Whereas, The injustice concerns those veterans who are both retired with a minimum of 20 years, are denied concurrent receipt of hard earned military longevity retirement pay and Veterans Administration awards for service connected with disability; and

Whereas, Career military earn retirement based on longevity of twenty years for honorable and faithful service and rank at time of retirement; and

Whereas, Veterans administered compensations serve a different purpose from longevity retired pay and are intended to compensate for pain, suffering, disfigurement, chemicals, wound injuries and a loss earning ability and have a minimum requirement of 90 days of active duty; and

Whereas, The prevailing idea that military retirement pay is "free" is false. There is a contribution to retirement pay, which is calculated to reduce military base pay and retirement pay by approximately seven percent when pay and allowances are computed and approved by Congress; and

Whereas, Traditionally, a career military person receives a lower pay and retirement than his or her civilian counterpart and has invested a life of hardships and long hours without the benefit of overtime pay and lack of freedom of expression through the unions; and

Whereas, The Veterans Administration awards dependents allowances to disabled veterans with a thirty percent (30%) disability or more for each dependent, which allowances are increased with the amount of disability; and

Whereas, The Department of Defense deducts the entire amounts of dependents al-

lowance, essentially leaving the disabled military retiree with no dependents allowance and that extends the discrimination to the families of military longevity retirees; and

Whereas, It is unfair to require disabled military retirees to fund their own Veterans Administration compensation by deductions on a dollar for dollar basis in the Department of Defense; and

Whereas, No such deduction applies to similarly situated federal civil service or Congressional retirement benefits to receive Veterans Administration compensation; and

Whereas, A statutory change is necessary to correct this injustice and discrimination in order to insure that America's commitment to national and international goals be matched by the same allegiance to those who sacrificed on behalf of those goals; now therefore be it

Resolved, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations hereby urges the United States Congress to amend title ten, United States Code relating to the compensation of retired military, permitting concurrent receipt of military retired pay and Veterans Administration compensation, including dependents allowances; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of State be and he hereby is authorized and directed to transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to the President of the United States, Secretary of Defense, Senate Majority and Minority Leaders of the U.S. Congress, Speaker of the House, Committee Chairman of the Senate Armed Forces Committee and Veterans Affairs Committee, House Committee Chairman, National Security and Veterans Affairs Committee, and each member of the Rhode Island Delegation to Congress.

IN MEMORY OF KIRK O'DONNELL

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 15, 1998

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to the memory of Kirk O'Donnell, who passed away last week at the age of fifty-two. Throughout his three decades in public service, both as an aide to Speaker Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill Jr. and Boston Mayor Kevin White and as an advisor to some of our nation's most influential officials, Kirk served his country with an abundance of dignity and integrity that could be matched only by the fullness of his patriotism.

In sharp contrast to many of today's political "spin doctors" who nurture cynicism in exchange for votes, Kirk's wisdom rested in his ability to communicate his principled desire for a better America, a moral society with opportunity for all and poverty for none. His contributions toward achieving this end were immeasurable.

Kirk was also a very dear personal friend, Mr. Speaker. I worked closely with him when he served as counselor to Speaker O'Neill, but our friendship continued, and even grew warmer, after he left public service when Tip

O'Neill retired. He was committed to decency and fairness, and I had great respect for his compassion for the less fortunate.

Mr. Speaker, Boston Globe columnist Thomas Oliphant wrote an eloquent tribute to Kirk O'Donnell that eloquently articulates the outstanding character traits that I and so many others admired in him. I submit Mr. Oliphant's column to be placed in the RECORD. I invite my colleagues to join me in remembering the life of Kirk O'Donnell and extending our heartfelt condolences to his wife of 26 years, Kathryn Holland O'Donnell, and his two children, Holly and Brendan.

[From the Boston Globe, Sept. 10, 1998]

HE STOOD FOR POLITICS AT ITS BEST

(By Thomas Oliphant)

WASHINGTON.—He was arguably the best mayor Boston never had, among a handful of people who mattered most to the turbulent city of the 1970s.

No one did more for the House of Representatives over the last generation who was never elected to it; no history of national affairs in the 1980s is complete without his large thumbprint.

The last four presidents have known all about his special gifts and felt their impact; the two Democrats (the completely different Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton) had more than one occasion to depend on them big time.

On an average day he could get your brother a fair shot at the police force, help repair Social Security, broker the biggest tax bill of modern times, keep the Big Dig's cash coming, and still make it home for supper.

All across the intersections where politics and government meet in the interests of real people, the shock and pain at Kirk O'Donnell's death over the Labor Day weekend is the only recent event to unite Republicans, congressional Democrats, and Clintonites in this season of shame and ugliness.

You'd think all this emotion concerned a senior statesman passing on after a long lifetime of service, the occasion for a proud-sad moment to celebrate a life lived magnificently.

But the shock and pain arrived like a rusty blade in the gut because O'Donnell was only 52; he did things in his 30s and 40s that big shots in their 60s never accomplish. But the best was still ahead of him, and the sky was the limit; if the Democrats ever elect another president, a Cabinet post or chief of the White House staff would have been lateral movements for him.

This is the kind of death that shakes your faith, making it all the more important to reaffirm it. And the fact is this blend of Dorchester and D.C., of Boston Latin and Brown was a walking reaffirmation of faith in the potential of public service, a shining example of the silent majority who don't broker votes for cash, check their principles at the front desk, ignore their families, waltz on their commitments, indulge their whims and their urges, lie, and shirk. His life demonstrates that at the end only two things matter—whether your word's any good and how you treat others.

Two stories: Kevin Hagen White gets the credit for discovering him in the early years of decentralized innovation and leadership

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