based services, not just for confining medical institutions. I believe this will strengthen the existing infrastructure set forth by the ADA and the Developmental Disabilities Act.

Mr. Speaker, we are not yet where we want to be, but thank God we are not where we were 10 years ago. We still have much progress to make. However, I am pleased to be here today to offer my unwavering support for our people who live and work daily with disabilities. I am proud that as a result of the ADA, many people with disabilities are now thriving, productive members of society, and looking forward to the future with glee and anticipation.

HONORING LIEUTENANT COLONEL KAREN DIXON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute and congratulate a real American heroine, Lieutenant Colonel Karen Dixon, who hails from the Seventh Congressional District of Maryland. I was honored to attend a pinning and promotion ceremony for Lieutenant Colonel Dixon last Friday at the Women's Military Service Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington Virginia. During this ceremony, Lieutenant Colonel Dixon was promoted from the rank of Major to Lieutenant Colonel.

Lieutenant Colonel Dixon is the ninth child of 11 children born to Alice and James Dixon. Of those 11 children, four have served in the military. She is an honors graduate of Catonsville High School and received several awards and served as a member of the All-State cross country team. She received a bachelor of arts degree in social work from Bennett College, where she was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the United States Army Signal Corps upon selection as a distinguished military graduate. In 1995, she received a master's of arts degree in management from Webster University.

Mr. Speaker, during her tenure in the Army, she has served in many capacities. She currently is assigned as a Department of the Army Systems Acquisition Management Coordinator, assigned to the Secretary of the Army's staff. Her next assignment is Chief of the Headquarters Branch, Joint Headquarters Regional Subcommand, NATO in Greece.

Lieutenant Colonel Dixon is an American soldier, a person of capability and ideals. She has dedicated her life to an American Army that always must remain true to its principles, an Army that must always conduct itself with fairness. She understands that our commitment to fairness and merit is our strength. She has served this Nation well. And in the process, she has learned that no one gives us our freedom; it must be earned. No one guarantees fairness that we ourselves are not willing to affirm, even if that requires some personal risk on our part.

Lieutenant Colonel Dixon understands that life is a struggle, but she is an American. She believes that when we persevere, fairness will ultimately prevail. The United States military is remarkable among the great fighting forces of the modern world.

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More often than not, the young people who have defended us and, all too often, have made the ultimate sacrifice have done so as volunteers.

Last March, President Clinton applauded the service and achievements of all the women who have put on the uniform of the United States and fought for their country. As the President also recognized, however, obstacles to hard-earned recognition all too often remain, in the military and in civilian life.

Mr. Speaker, we must continue to build a military which is as diverse as this wonderful Nation. Never again should gender predetermine a person's opportunity to serve.

The ideals of American women and men, our commitment to freedom, to equality and fairness, have made this country the strongest in the world. We must never forget that. Fairness is the foundation of our freedom.

Today, we acknowledge Lieutenant Colonel Karen Dixon for her competence and her commitment to American ideals and for her tremendous service.

Lieutenant Colonel Dixon has demonstrated that merit will be recognized and fairness will prevail if we persevere. By her actions, she has shown that a commitment to fairness remains the foundation of America's strength. That is why I am so honored to represent Lieutenant Colonel Dixon in the Congress of the United States of America.

APPLAUDING LEADERSHIP IN ADVOCACY OF RIGHTS OF DISABLED PERSONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUYKENDALL). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to join my congratulations and recognize the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities and the American Association of People With Disabilities.

I rise today to applaud the leadership that has been shown in the advocacy for the rights of the disabled, the mentally and physically challenged.

I am delighted to be able to salute the spirit of the ADA torch relay which evidences that we all are created equal. I join my colleagues who have come to this floor to acknowledge that when this country speaks of equality and in its Declaration of Independence, when it offers to the American people the opportunity for equality and a good quality of life, they speak of everyone no matter what one's position in life and what one's ability.

The people who are physically challenged and mentally challenged have shown us that it is not limiting in their spirit or their ability to achieve. I am very gratified that they continue to press their point of equality and justice.

I believe it is important that we in the United States Congress support the Americans with Disabilities Act in its reauthorization and its implementation. It is important that the businesses of America recognize that they are advantaged by hiring individuals with disabilities.

I recall making a speech some few weeks ago, and I spoke about America's greatness and its diversity. I remember being reminded by someone who came to me in a wheelchair never to forget that diversity is also reflected in Americans with disabilities. Just a few weeks ago, that very same person came to the United States Congress along with 20 other representatives from the community of individuals who are disabled.

Unfortunately, this own Capitol, our own Capitol was very hard for them to access, but, nevertheless, they were not frustrated, they did not yield, and they persisted in getting into the United States Capitol that belongs to all of the American people.

I think it is important that we allow people with disabilities to be independent, and that is why I supported legislation that would not diminish their benefits if they worked, for we all deserve that affirmation that we are able to support ourselves and to stand for ourselves.

I would hope that we, as the United States Congress and the American people, will continue to promote and enhance those who are physically challenged and who may be mentally challenged. People with disabilities are our friends, our brothers, our family members, our sisters, mothers and fathers and our children. They deserve our affirmation.

So today, Mr. Speaker, I rise and affirm them and congratulate them for persisting on the grounds of their own equality, and I seek to have this United States Congress and our legislative initiatives continue to affirm opportunities for them in providing opportunities for them to work and as well making sure that the resources that they earn still allow them to have good health care, good educational resources, good housing.

Again, I implore American businesses to find the talented among Americans with disabilities and for all of us to make sure that everywhere is accessible to all Americans.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.