

for farmers. I am delighted that, in the bipartisan spirit of this body, we are going to get in passed into law.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1444, the "Fisheries Restoration and Irrigation Mitigation Act," legislation to establish a fish screen construction program for irrigation projects in Idaho, Washington, Montana and Oregon.

H.R. 1444 is needed to assist in the effort to protect the Northwest's endangered fish species. The bill aims to decrease fish mortality rates by aiding in the construction of fish screens to prevent juvenile salmon from straying into water diversion projects.

Many farms in the Northwest are irrigated by water diverted from streams and rivers. Water is transported to farms via irrigation canals connecting to streams and rivers. The irrigation canals pose a major risk to juvenile salmon, called smolts, migrating downstream to the ocean. Smolts die when they are diverted from the rivers and streams into irrigation ditches. Fish screens placed at entrances to irrigation diversions will prevent smolts from swimming into irrigation ditches and decrease mortality rates for fish stocks in the Northwest. H.R. 1444 sets up a federal program to assist in the construction of fish screens. Under the legislation, participation in the program will be voluntary and a local share of 35 percent of the cost of each project is required.

During negotiations over the legislation, there was some debate over which agency will have responsibility for administering the fish screen program. The original House bill put the Army Corps of Engineers in charge of the program while the Senate bill gave the responsibility to the Department of Interior. It was the Senate sponsor's hope that the Bureau of Reclamation, would be responsible for administering the program within the Department of Interior.

Under this final version of H.R. 1444, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will have responsibility for administering the program. The Fish and Wildlife was chosen as the lead agency because it has the expertise to most effectively administer the fish screen program. However, I would like to make it clear there are other federal agencies with expertise, capability and an interest in reducing fish mortality at irrigation diversions. Recognizing this, the bill directs the Fish and Wildlife Service to consult with other agencies when implementing the program. I also believe that, in addition to a consultative role, other agencies may contribute funds for programs developed under the authority of the act. I see the contribution of funds from federal agencies other than the Fish and Wildlife Services as especially appropriate from agencies involved in water management in the region and in the operations of the Federal Columbia River Power System, including the Bureau of Reclamation, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the Bonneville Power Administration to contribute the funds for the fish screen construction program.

In fact, it is my understanding that the draft Biological Opinion for the Federal Columbia River Power System issued in July calls for offsite mitigation by these agencies. Such mitigation under the draft Biological Opinion can include construction and installation of fish screens at irrigation diversions. I am hopeful that contributions of funds to develop programs under the authority of this act could be

credited as offsite mitigation under the finalized Biological Opinion.

As a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee as well as the House Resources Committee, I want to acknowledge the interest that Transportation Committee maintains in the bill and the projects developed under the bill's authority. The Transportation Committee should receive any reports prepared for Congress on the program. The Committee should particularly be included if projects relate to compliance with the Clean Water Act. In addition, the Corps of Engineers and EPA should be consulted on projects developed for compliance with the Clean Water Act.

The legislation is supported by numerous conservation, recreation and water user groups including the Oregon Water Resources Congress and Save Our Wild Salmon, a coalition of sport and commercial fishing groups, fishing businesses and conservation organizations. The bill is also supported by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The bill has bipartisan support in the House and Senate. Representative PETER DEFAZIO (D-Ore.) and Representative GREG WALDEN (R-Ore.), members of the House Resources Committee, are original cosponsors of H.R. 1444. The bill was approved by the House of Representatives on November 9th of last year. A similar measure was introduced in the Senate by Senator RON WYDEN (D-Ore.) and Senator GORDON SMITH (R-Ore.) and was approved by the full Senate on April 13, 2000. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this important legislation.

I also want to thank my colleagues who helped with this bill, including Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Resources Committee Chairman DON YOUNG and Ranking Member GEORGE MILLER, and Senators RON WYDEN and GORDON SMITH. I'd also like to acknowledge the many congressional staff members who worked on this bill including: Kathie Eastman of my personal staff, Lindsay Slater and Troy Tidwell of Mr. WALDEN's staff; Steve Lanich, Bob Faber and Doug Yoder of the House of Resources Committee; Ben Grumbles and Art Chan of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee; Joshua Sheinkman, and Eileen McLellan of Senator WYDEN's staff; Valerie West of Senator SMITH's staff; and former staffers Cynthia Suchman and Martin Kodis.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, House Resolution 630.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 4187; S. Con. Res. 145; S. 406; H.R. 4404, as amended; H.R. 1695; H.R. 2570; S. 1705; S. 2917; H.R. 5041;

H.R. 4521, as amended; H.R. 5308, as amended; H.R. 4646, as amended; H.R. 3926; H.R. 4312; S. 2102; S. 1936, as amended; S. 1296; H.R. 5398; and H. Res. 630.

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

There was no objection.

FEDERAL FIREFIGHTER RETIREMENT AGE CORRECTION ACT

Mr. OSE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 460) to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that the mandatory separation age for Federal firefighters be made the same as the age that applies with respect to Federal law enforcement officers.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 460

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

SECTION 1. MANDATORY SEPARATION AGE FOR FIREFIGHTERS.

(a) CIVIL SERVICE RETIREMENT SYSTEM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The second sentence of section 8335(b) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by inserting ", firefighter," after "law enforcement officer"; and

(B) by inserting ", firefighter," after "that officer".

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 8335(b) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking the first sentence.

(b) FEDERAL EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The second sentence of section 8425(b) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by inserting ", firefighter," after "law enforcement officer"; and

(B) by inserting ", firefighter," after "that officer".

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 8425(b) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking the first sentence.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OSE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 460.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the House consider H.R. 460, important legislation introduced by the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY). This bipartisan legislation amends Federal civil service law relating to the Civil Service Retirement System and the Federal Employees' Retirement System to provide the same mandatory separation age for

Federal firefighters and Federal law enforcement officers who have 20 years of service.

Currently, the mandatory separation age is 55 for firefighters and 57 for law enforcement officers. In both cases, an agency head may allow the employees to work until age 60 if that is required by the public interests.

The Subcommittee on Civil Service has examined the legislative history of these mandatory separation ages and the committee determined that there is no rationale for continuing to maintain the discrepancy that currently exists. If enacted, H.R. 460 will bolster our firefighting capabilities allowing these brave men and women the option of continuing their careers for an additional 2 years and will make it easier to maintain more experienced firefighters in the field and in senior management positions.

Madam Speaker, I encourage all Members to support this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, as of early September, more than 6.5 million acres, more than two times the 10-year national average, have burned. Federal manpower resources were spread thin. More than 29,000 people were involved in firefighting efforts, including approximately 2,500 Army soldiers and Marines and fire managers from Canada, Australia, Mexico, and New Zealand. In addition, 1,200 fire engines, 240 helicopters and 50 airtankers were in use this season.

If nothing else, this fire season has taught us that we must take steps to recruit and retain more Federal firefighters. H.R. 460 is a step in that direction.

From the start of the Civil Service Retirement System in 1920 until 1978, all Federal workers were required to retire at age 70, if, at that age, they had completed at least 15 years of service. In 1978, mandatory retirement was repealed for most Federal workers; although, it continues to apply to special occupational groups whose duties pertain to public safety.

Under current law, Federal law enforcement officers must retire at age 57 or as soon after that age as they complete 20 years of service. The agency head may grant exemptions up to age 60. Federal firefighters must retire at age 55 or as soon thereafter as they complete 20 years of service.

H.R. 460 would raise the mandatory retirement age for firefighters to mirror that of Federal law enforcement officers. It would raise the mandatory retirement age of Federal firefighters to that of age 57.

In June, The Washington Post reported a 5.8 percent reduction in the number of firefighters nationwide. H.R. 460 will help stem the declining firefighting population and will help the Federal Government retain some of its most experienced firefighters.

In addition to supporting this legislation, I urge my colleagues to support a bill I introduced last year that will be of equal benefit to the Federal public safety community. In May of last year, I introduced H.R. 1769, the Federal Employees Benefits Equity Act of 1999. This bill works to eliminate a number of inequities found in the computation of benefits for public safety employees under the Federal Employees Retirement System and the Civil Service Retirement System.

Although H.R. 1769, like the bill before us, H.R. 460, would be of tremendous benefit to the firefighter and law enforcement communities and their families, it is yet to be scheduled for floor action.

I look forward to working with the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SCARBOROUGH), chairman of the Subcommittee on Civil Service, and the author of H.R. 460, the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY), to bring H.R. 1769 to the floor of the House before the end of session.

Madam Speaker, I would be more than remiss if I did not acknowledge the hard work of the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPP) who worked so diligently with the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY) to bring H.R. 460 to this floor today.

I thank the gentlewoman and I thank the members of the Committee on Government Reform. I thank the members of the Subcommittee on Civil Service; and I join with my colleagues, with the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPP) and the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY) and ask that my colleagues give this bill your support.

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

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

Madam Speaker, I want to commend the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY) for introducing this important bill and for his efforts to bring it to the floor. I also want to thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), the distinguished ranking member, for cosponsoring the bill and for his continued work and cooperation on it.

I would also like to extend heartfelt thanks to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), chairman of the Committee on Government Reform; the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SCARBOROUGH), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Civil Service; the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), the ranking member, for their support.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the bill will actually save the government \$4 million in direct spending over the next 5 years. The Office of Personnel Management, which administers civil service retirement, believes that it is appropriate to apply the same mandatory separation age to firefighters and law enforcement officers. I urge Members to lend their support.

Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON).

(Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for this important legislation and the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY) for his work in this effort.

I want to relate to my colleagues that since I have been in Congress for the past 14 years, the support for our fire and EMS people has been one of my top priorities, partly because I was a volunteer firefighter and a fire chief before coming here.

I have traveled to all 50 States and spoken to all their national and State-wide associations. This has, without any doubt, been the most responsive Congress in the history of this institution in support of the Nation's fire and EMS community.

We passed, earlier this year, a \$2.9 billion appropriation for the forest fire problem in America, including replenishing funds that were used up with the forest fires of this year.

We passed a \$100 million add-on to the supplemental bill, which the leadership has committed will be in the final act signed by the President next week.

We passed as part of our defense bill, not only a \$500 million authorization initiative that I was able to get included, but we increased the availability for Federal surplus property for fire and EMS departments.

We commissioned a special panel to look at the radio frequency spectrum issue to make more radio frequency spectrum available.

We established a seven-member advisory board in the Pentagon of the fire and EMS groups to look at technology that can benefit firefighters and paramedics around the country, and we have taken a whole new effort to revitalize support for the rural firefighters of America. In fact, a new multiyear grant program that we established under FEMA will, in fact, give fire departments across the country the opportunity to provide matching funds to buy equipment, turn out gear, breathing apparatus and all those other tools that are so necessary.

This bill adds one more dimension to what we have done in this Congress for the Nation's fire and EMS community. They are our domestic defenders. They are the people who respond to every disaster that we have in America, from hurricane and fire to flood and tornado they are there, they have been there longer than the country has been a country, 100 of them are killed each year in the course of doing their duty, even though 85 percent of them are volunteers.

This legislation specifically pays attention to the retirement status of firefighters. It is significant legislation, because it brings them in line

with law enforcement and other personnel.

Madam Speaker, I want to applaud our membership and leadership on both sides of the aisle, my colleagues who have done a great job; and I just say to our colleagues they can go home with a great deal of pride and let the fire and EMS community know we are on their side.

In fact, just within the next hour, I will be meeting with the representative of AmeriCorps. Now I have never supported the AmeriCorps program; and I never supported it because it is a half a billion dollar program to create volunteers, but the volunteer fire service has never been eligible for the program.

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Amazing. It is not politically correct to volunteer to fight fires or to be ambulance or paramedic attendants. They want to come in now because AmeriCorps wants to support America's emergency response personnel who are volunteers. To our colleagues, this has been a fantastic situation.

I would just add, not one of these initiatives was proposed by the White House. Every one of these initiatives came from our colleagues on both sides of the aisle who have worked together to bring additional support for America's domestic defenders.

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

Madam Speaker, I agree with the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) in this light, that the committee has been very responsive to firefighters. We understand clearly the job that they do. We understand the dangers. We also understand that we owe them a great debt of gratitude.

We have seen the fires in the West, and we realize that so often when those fire fighters go into the woods and go to put out those forest fires, and other kinds of fires, of course, they do not know whether they are coming home.

So because of that, I think our committee has been very, very sensitive. I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE) for all of his hard work on our subcommittee, and all the other members of the subcommittee, because it was a bipartisan effort.

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the efforts of thousands of firefighters who have struggled against one of the worst fire seasons in decades. In Texas we saw over 31,000 fires destroy almost 600,000 acres of forests, grasslands, homes, and businesses.

The wildfires that swept across East Texas this summer were part of a nation-wide fire season that burned almost 7 million acres, equal to the entire state of Maryland.

It is difficult to imagine the destruction we would have witnessed if it were not for the thousands of brave men and women who fought the fires that threatened their homes and their communities. Without the work of these firefighters, many more acres would have been reduced to charred fields and skel-

etal homes. Many more forests would have been left smoldering, and many more lives would have been put in grave danger.

I offer my heartfelt gratitude to every person who took part in the dangerous fight to combat these devastating fires. Their work in protecting our lives, our families, our property, and our environment is deeply appreciated by all East Texans.

Fighting fires is trying and exhausting work. Hot, smoke-filled air and ash clog the lungs, and East Texas summer temperatures often climb well over 100 degrees. In addition to directly attacking the fires, our firefighters spent their time cutting fire lines, burning out dangerous areas, and mopping up after fires so that they do not flare up again. They walk fire lines for miles and spend hours scrapping, chopping, and digging while wearing stifling protective equipment.

Sleep is infrequent, uncomfortable, and rarely uninterrupted. There's no 9 to 5 shift on the fire line; crews work around the clock, pushing themselves past the point of exhaustion. Blistered feet and bloodshot eyes are universal, while heat exhaustion and serious injuries are common. Occasionally, a brave firefighter will lose his life.

Entire communities have banded together fighting the fires. Fire support teams have volunteers working as drivers, equipment managers, and assistant paramedics. It is a mental and physical challenge, and our firefighters have shown commitment, strength and determination that make us all proud.

As children, our parents told us stories of all types of heroes. From David fighting Goliath to knights in shining armor, from Greek warriors to great patriots like George Washington, Sam Houston, and Davy Crockett we strive to reach their level of courage, bravery, determination and faith. We admire them for protecting their families, their lands, and their communities.

This summer, the firefighters of East Texas have given us new stories to tell our children. Their sacrifices saved countless lives, buildings, and acres of natural resources.

We owed them a great debt. I hope that our children will listen closely to the stories we tell. When they grow up, we can only hope that they will follow the example set by these heroes. Our firefighters represent the highest standards of public service.

Mr. GALLEGLY. Madam Speaker, I would first like to thank Chairman BURTON, Subcommittee Chairman SCARBOROUGH, Mr. CAMP and Ms. CAPPs for their help in bringing this bill to the floor. I would also like to thank my constituent, retired Captain Mike Hair of the federal firefighting unit at Point Mugu Naval Air Station, for first bringing this important issue to my attention.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 460 is a bill I first introduced in 1995 to stop the forced early retirement of our federal firefighters. The bill raises the mandatory retirement age for federal firefighters from 55 to 57, allowing federal firefighters the option of continuing their careers for an additional two years. The bill has gained over 92 bipartisan cosponsors, and the endorsement of the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

Several years ago, Congress passed legislation which raised the mandatory retirement age for "federal law enforcement officers" from 55 to 57. However, Congress neglected to raise the retirement age for federal firefighters. The net result has been that capable

firefighters are being denied the opportunity to work simply because they turn 55. I introduced H.R. 460 to correct this omission in the law.

Madam Speaker, when this year's fire season reached its height, communities around the nation endured a dangerous shortage of experienced firefighters. I represent most of Ventura County, California, which has faced two major brush fires since the beginning of the fire season in mid-May. These fires have consumed thousands of acres. The latest of the fires struck dry grass in Piru, injuring five firefighters and scorching hundreds of acres near an underground oil pipeline.

Firefighters from the U.S. Forest Service and California Department of Forestry joined hundreds of firefighters from Ventura and Los Angeles counties to battle the flames.

Despite an increase in the overall fire budget nationally, federal fire management officers in California and the rest of the West faced a shortage of experienced personnel. With a declining firefighting population nationwide, Governors in some cases had to call upon Army National Guard units and volunteers with much less experience and training to fight the fires. In addition, CBS News reported that even retired fire managers were being called up to oversee and manage these fires. In the aftermath, firefighting officials are now looking for ways to help prevent a repeat of this year's devastation, which claimed more than 6 million acres.

According to the Washington Post, 57 percent of the U.S. Forest Service firefighters are 45 or older. According to the Brookings Institute, most new hires are 35 and older and training for senior management positions can take 12 to 17 years. As a result, we are losing our best and most experienced firefighters to forced early retirement.

If enacted, this bill will bolster our firefighting capabilities by maintaining more experienced firefighters in the field and in senior management positions by allowing these brave men and women the option of continuing their careers for an additional two years. As an added bonus, Madam Speaker, the CBO estimates that the bill will actually save the government \$4 million over the next 5 years.

We must act now to ensure we have the experienced personnel needed to fight our nation's fires during next year's fire season.

Mrs. CAPPs. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 460, a bill to raise the mandatory retirement age for federal firefighters from 55 to 57. As the lead cosponsor, I am proud that the House has passed this timely legislation.

As the recent wildfires which ravaged much of the West have shown, firefighters, are in great demand. Many of our Nation's firefighters are quickly approaching retirement age, highlighting the growing shortage of well-trained, quality firefighters. In my District, federal firefighters have been part of the team of courageous men and women battling the Harris fire and the smoldering peat bog on Vandenberg Air Force Base during the past several weeks. These heroes deserve our strongest support, and I'm proud to have played a role in securing this victory. This important legislation will allow more firefighters to remain on the front lines in the battle against devastating fires in my District and across the country.

Several years ago, Congress raised the mandatory retirement age for federal law enforcement officers from 55 to 57. H.R. 460

would correct this oversight and adjust the federal firefighters' retirement age so that it is equal to that of federal law enforcement officers. This legislation has bipartisan support and the endorsement of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC).

Currently, over 2,500 federal firefighters are based in California—the largest percentage of federal firefighters in the country. A recent report issued by the General Accounting Office (GAO) stated that because of an aging work force there will be a shortage of qualified firefighters in the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, and that the situation could have a direct impact on firefighters' safety. In fact, as reported recently in the Washington Post, 57 percent of Forest Service firefighters are 45 years of older (8/11/00). Because it takes 17–22 years of experience to become eligible for firefighters leadership positions, an extra two years of service would be of critical importance to a qualified and effective fire fighting operation.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to bring this important legislation to the Floor for a vote and I commend the dauntless efforts of the firefighters in my District and across the nation.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 460.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 4635. An act making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 4635) "An Act making appropriations for the Department of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes," requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. BOND, Mr. BURNS, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. CRAIG, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. KYL, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. STEVENS, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. HARKIN, Mr.

REID, Mr. BYRD, and Mr. INOUE, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. OSE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 415) expressing the sense of the Congress that there should be established a National Children's Memorial Day.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 415

Whereas approximately 80,000 infants, children, teenagers, and young adults of families living throughout the United States die each year from myriad causes;

Whereas the death of an infant child, teenager, or young adult of a family is considered to be one of the greatest tragedies that a parent or family will ever endure during a lifetime; and

Whereas a supportive environment and empathy and understanding are considered critical factors in the healing process of a family that is coping with and recovering from the loss of a loved one: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That—

(1) it is the sense of the Congress that there should be established a National Children's Memorial Day; and

(2) the Congress requests that the President issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such a day with appropriate ceremonies and activities in remembrance of the many infants, children, teenagers, and young adults in the United States who have died.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OSE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on House Concurrent Resolution 415.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the House consider House Concurrent Resolution 415, introduced by my colleague, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG).

This legislation expresses the sense of Congress that a National Children's Memorial Day should be established. Additionally, it asks the President to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such a day, with appropriate ceremonies and activities, in remembrance of the many infants, children, teenagers, and young adults in the United States who have died.

Madam Speaker, the death of a child at any age is a shattering experience for any family. By establishing a day to remember children that have passed

away, bereaved families from all over the country will be encouraged and supported in the positive resolution of their grief. It is important to families who have suffered such a loss to know that they are not alone. To commemorate the lives of these children with a special day would pay them an honor, and help to bring comfort to the hearts of their bereaved families.

For the past 2 years, the Senate has recognized the second Sunday in December as National Children's Memorial Day. Last year, the House passed a resolution similar to what we are considering here today.

As a husband, and father of two young girls, I can think of nothing more terrifying than losing one of mine. They are my daily source of joy and inspiration. Yet, approximately 80,000 infants, children, teenagers, and young adults die each year from any number of reasons.

After losing a child, parents and siblings are left with a void in their life. Questions are left unanswered. So many things are left unsaid. Those of us who have not experienced such loss are unable to adequately communicate our sympathy, and fail in our task to comfort the bereaved.

To this end, a support network can be of great assistance. The Children's Memorial Day provides an opportunity for these families to collectively express their pain and to form these support networks.

For example, on December 10, starting in New Zealand, candles will be lit for 1 hour, beginning at 7 p.m. local times, creating a 24-hour observance around the globe. This simple act goes a long way to help those who have lost a child, a grandchild, a sibling, or a friend, particularly during the December holiday season, when the loss is the most difficult to bear.

This simple and easy resolution may not seem like much to many, but I can assure the Members that to those families who have lost loved ones, the support that we show here today will go a long way in helping them cope with that loss.

It is important for families who have suffered such a loss to know they are not alone. Please help us in passing this resolution. I ask Members to express their support for this worthy and noble cause by voting aye. We carry the responsibility to honor and remember those who have died before their time. As compassionate concerned citizens, one of the best actions we can take is to support those who are left behind.

Madam Speaker, I encourage all Members to support this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I agree with the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE), this is a very, very important resolution. I think when one looks at it on its