

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

face we may not fully understand its significance, but it is so important.

Yesterday, hundreds of families journeyed to Washington, D.C. to celebrate the importance of family and to examine the vital role that families play in maintaining stable and prosperous communities. In years past, we have had the Million Man March, the Million Moms March, but this time our children were encouraged to participate. Many thousands of children did attend the march, and some even addressed the crowds about issues that were of particular concern to them.

The Nation took special note of our children yesterday in a positive and inspirational way. We adults were compelled to contemplate the world we have made for them, full of good times and bad, hope and despair, life and death.

Yesterday in the Middle East, Madam Speaker, during the ongoing violence involving the Palestinians and the Israelis, a child was left brain dead from a gunshot wound to the head. The loss of a child, no matter what the circumstances and no matter where, causes tremendous personal grief for the family and friends. It causes some of us to stop and reflect on the loss, and sometimes consider, could or should we have done something to prevent it. It also makes us think about all the unmet and unfulfilled dreams of those children and their families.

It is devastating to me when young lives are cut short. Those affected by such a tragedy often need assistance and support to get through the experience. I am glad to know that help is available. The Compassionate Friends, Incorporated, also known as TCF, is a group whose mission is to assist families in the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child.

TCF conceived and nurtured the worldwide candlelighting. In its fourth year, the candlelighting is held in the second Sunday in December. Participants around the globe light candles for 1 hour to honor children who have died. The candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time starting in New Zealand. As candles burn down in each time zone, they are then lit in the next. This creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as the observance continues around the world.

In the United States, approximately 228,000 children and young adults die every year. Nineteen percent of the adult population has experienced the death of a child, and 22 percent the death of a sibling. Taking into account people who have lost a child and sibling, 36 percent of the adult population has suffered the death of a child, a sibling, or both.

Madam Speaker, just yesterday in my district I spoke at the West Baltimore Middle School to 37 eighth graders. I asked them a very simple question, but the answer was very telling. I asked them how many of them had had a loved one, a friend, a young person to die by gun violence. Out of those 37 children living in the inner city of Bal-

timore, 35 raised their hands. That is here in America. That happens in our cities and even in our rural areas. We certainly grieve for those families.

House Concurrent Resolution 415 expresses, therefore, the sense of Congress that a National Children's Memorial Day should be established to remember the infants, children, teenagers, and young adults in the United States who have died.

As we remember America's children, let us also remember those who grieve for them. Whether it be from gun violence, an airplane or car crash, a miscarriage, or a terminal illness, the loss of a child is something no parent, no parent, should have to experience, but many do. Children's Memorial Day is a time when we as individuals and as a nation can show our compassion to those who have suffered such a loss.

Madam Speaker, I have often said that our children are the living messages we send to a future we will never see. It is sad to think that so often our children die before their parents, so we have no message to send to the future. Hopefully, on this Memorial Day, when we think about our children who have died, we will also think about ways that we can prevent them from dying so that they can experience this wonderful journey called life.

Many organizations and support groups, such as the Compassionate Friends, exist to help bereaved parents deal with their grief. Yet, only 46 percent of parents are aware of them. Let us join TCF in observing December 10 as Children's Memorial Day, and let it serve as an opportunity for grief support organizations and churches to increase awareness of their services and programs.

Madam Speaker, I urge our Members to vote in favor of this very important and wonderful legislation that has been sponsored by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG), and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

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

Again, I would like to thank the full committee chairman, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), the chairman of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SCARBOROUGH), and the ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), for their support.

If passed, Madam Speaker, this will be the third consecutive year we will have designated the second Sunday in December as Children's Memorial Day. I urge Members to lend their support.

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 would urge that all Members support this legislation. I would thank the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE) for his leadership with regard to Children's issues.

As he talked about his daughters, I could not help but think about the little prayer, Madam Speaker, that we say so often with our children: "Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take."

Anyone who has knelt over a child and said that prayer, they cannot help but feel tingles and sometimes a tear at just the thought of that child not rising, just the thought of that child not being able to live out the full potential that God has given to them.

Madam Speaker, I urge our membership to support this very important resolution, but in supporting this, I hope that when December 10 comes that we will also, as a Congress and as a body and as a country and as a world, do everything in our power to make sure that every one of our children, no matter where they are, no matter who they are, are able to rise up to be all that they can be, and be the best that they can be.

1530

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

Mr. OSE. 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. OSE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 415.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mr. OSE. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER CONFIDENTIALITY ACT OF 1999

Mr. OSE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3218) to amend title 31, United States Code, to prohibit the appearance of Social Security account numbers on or through unopened mailings of checks or other drafts issued on public money in the Treasury.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3218

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 "Social Security Number Confidentiality Act of 1999".