

Rudolph Giuliani; and Chairman and CEO of Radio Unica, Joaquin Blaya. Both Joaquin Blaya and Ana Maria Fernandez Haar joined Rabbi Katsof and my family on our trip to Israel this summer.

We congratulate and thank all of the cosponsors of House Resolution 235, because now, more than ever, words are vital to the American community.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, this resolution is somewhat unusual, but I want to congratulate the gentlewoman from Florida for having the insight and the feeling and the sensitivity and the recognition that sometimes behavior can be taught and that we can move in the direction that we choose to go.

This resolution, which expresses the sense of Congress regarding a National Words Can Heal Day, seeks to reduce verbal violence and gossip. Imagine, if we could reduce gossip, then obviously that would help to reduce verbal violence. The goal of this effort is to promote the value and practice of ethical speech in order to improve our democracy, build respect, honor and dignity in our country.

□ 1515

The essence of this campaign, which was launched on Tuesday, September 4, right here in Washington, D.C., is reflected in this simple pledge: "I pledge to think more about the words I use. I will try to see how gossip hurts people, including myself, and work to eliminate it from my life. I will try to replace words that hurt with words that encourage, engage, and enrich. I will not become discouraged when I am unable to choose words perfectly, because making the world a better place is hard work. I am pledging to do that one word at a time."

We can all play a role in this effort to improve our society and make a difference in our homes, our schools, our communities, and in the workplace by taking this pledge.

As I read through it, I could not help but recall the teachings of my mother, who always told us that you can catch far more bees with honey than with vinegar. Or she might say, see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil. Or she might admonish us to speak about others as we would have them speak of us. Then she would force us to read the book of Proverbs, with all of the wisdom that it contains. So it seems to me that the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) has taken those kinds of teachings and expressions, placed them into a resolution that all Members of this body can adopt; and I would urge my colleagues to take this pledge and, in doing so, support this resolution.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I want to thank the executive directors of the Words Can Heal Campaign, Rabbi Irwin Katsof and Rabbi Chaim Feld, whom I had the pleasure of knowing during my trip to Israel. When they first came to me and showed me their Words Can Heal Campaign pledge, I said that I wanted to get involved in a meaningful way and I thought of this resolution as a way to do it, because words can make a difference, and that is the pledge that we make one word at a time.

In the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks against the United States, we have borne witness to the ability of words to help in the healing process, as friends and allies offered their condolences and their support to our efforts. We have also felt the brunt of the verbal attacks by enemies of the United States who rejoice in the violence perpetrated against us.

Words matter. The ability to voice views freely and resolve differences through dialogue and persuasion is fundamental to our American style of government and our democracy, as it is to world peace. To reiterate, for that process to work well, our words must reflect mutual respect, truth, understanding, and fairness.

The Words Can Heal effort is a strong first step toward a future generation of Americans and global leaders who will value the power of words and practice ethical speech. It starts with one day. This one day can then become a week, a month, a year, until it is ingrained in our character, in our nature, in our human nature. The potential is limitless. The possibilities are awe-inspiring.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support this resolution. The hope for a better future begins today, one word at a time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. 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 gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 235, as amended.

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

The title of the resolution was amended so as to read: "Resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives in support of the goals of the Words Can Heal Campaign".

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT MEN AND WOMEN OF UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE HAVE DONE AN OUTSTANDING JOB OF DELIVERING THE MAIL DURING THIS TIME OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY

Mr. MCHUGH. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 257) expressing the sense of the Con-

gress that the men and women of the United States Postal Service have done an outstanding job of delivering the mail during this time of national emergency, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 257

Whereas, on September 11, 2001, evil acts of terrorism were perpetrated against the people of the United States and all humanity;

Whereas, in October 2001, reports of anthrax-tainted letters began to surface;

Whereas the United States Postal Service handles approximately 680,000,000 pieces of mail each day;

Whereas our Nation's postal and delivery sector accounts for approximately 8 percent of our gross national product;

Whereas, since September 11, 2001, the United States Postal Service has delivered more than 20,000,000,000 pieces of mail;

Whereas 2 employees of the United States Postal Service have died as a result of anthrax infection;

Whereas a number of employees of the United States Postal Service are being treated for anthrax-like symptoms;

Whereas the more than 800,000 men and women who work for the United States Postal Service have done an outstanding job of collecting, processing, sorting, and delivering the mail during this time of national emergency; and

Whereas the delivery of anthrax through the mail is an attempt to disrupt our ability to communicate through the mail, and threatens the viability of the postal system: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) it is the sense of the Congress that the men and women of the United States Postal Service have done an outstanding job of collecting, processing, sorting, and delivering the mail during this time of national emergency; and

(2) Congress will work with the United States Postal Service to assure the safety and well-being of postal workers as they carry out their duties and responsibilities, and of the general public.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCHUGH) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCHUGH).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCHUGH. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the concurrent resolution now being considered.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, H. Con. Res. 257, as introduced by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS), expresses the sense of Congress that the men and women of the United States Postal Service have done an outstanding job delivering the mail during this time of national emergency. I am very, very pleased, as I know the gentleman from Illinois is, that 47 of our colleagues here in the

House have cosponsored this resolution, signifying a broad base of support and recognition of the great sacrifices and contributions that these people make, certainly in recent weeks but, in point of fact, each and every day. We are amending this bill this afternoon, Madam Speaker, with a clarifying change in order to recognize all aspects of the postal system such as collection, processing, sorting, as well as delivery.

Let me begin by complimenting again the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS). I deeply appreciate his leadership, his understanding of the very appropriate nature of moving forward with this resolution at this time. Let me note as well that it is not just appropriate, but I think it is also very fitting, that the House consider this resolution honoring the dedicated people of the Postal Service in this, the same week as we have celebrated and observed our national holiday on Veterans' Day.

As they have literally for centuries, postal employees today are putting their lives on the line each and every day for those of us in America. It is their commitment to this job that is ensuring our Nation can continue to communicate through these difficult times by way of the mail. We as a House grieve for the Postal Service, which lost 2 of its own dedicated, devoted employees to inhaled anthrax, resulting from the bioterrorism attacks of recent days. Postal workers Thomas Morris and Joseph Curseen truly died in the line of duty, and I know we all join in expressing our most heartfelt sympathy and deepest words of appreciation to their families and to their loved ones in this time of great loss for them.

From the days of Ben Franklin to the high speeds of the information highway, the Postal Service has touched the lives of each of us, whether at home or at work, nearly every day of the week. Postal employees maintain an important presence in our busiest urban centers as well as our most tranquil rural communities. They are the friendly faces that deliver that special birthday card, the newest magazine or, quite often, the credit card bill. Yet, many of us, Madam Speaker, fail to realize how important postal workers are in our daily lives, in our daily experiences, until someone or something interferes with that centuries' old system.

Despite the terrorist attacks, the mail handlers, clerks, carriers, supervisors, and postmasters have delivered more than 20 billion pieces of mail since the terrorist attacks of September 11. A recent postal and delivery industry report found that an \$871 billion global business of mailing service providers has been built around the mail. Ninety percent of that money is earned in the United States or by U.S.-based organizations. This industry, taken collectively, has almost 9 million employees. Based on these statistics, the total mailing sector is roughly

8 percent of America's gross national product. Just in my State of New York alone, the annual mailing industry impact totals some \$64.7 billion.

Yet, in spite of this enormous impact and of the continuing outstanding service to our Nation provided by postal employees, we would be negligent if we did not recognize that the Postal Service is facing a worsening financial position, threatening its very viability. Even before September 11, the Comptroller General had placed the Postal Service on its high-risk list due to its financial and operational problems. The Postal Service is facing a \$1.8 billion deficit now, on top of the \$1.35 billion estimated deficit it ran in the fiscal year that just ended. Revenues were below projections by \$627 million in the last 2 months alone. Mail volumes are down by levels not seen since the Great Depression.

I know, Madam Speaker, that the Postal Service and its administration is resolute in meeting its challenges, as its employees that we have gathered here to honor and commemorate demonstrate to us each and every day. However, in my opinion, Madam Speaker, without modernizing our Nation's 31-year-old postal laws, the men and women of the Postal Service will have far too few tools to confront a growing challenge. The Postal Service is already requesting billions of dollars in Congress to deal with the crisis; but absent legislative change, the agency will likely have to return for ever-increasing taxpayer assistance.

As President Vincent Sombrotto of the National Association of Letter Carriers recently stated, "If this whole institution collapses, that is as great a threat to the individuals who work in the Postal Service as contracting this anthrax. Their future is at stake."

That is why at this moment when we honor and recognize the Nation's postal employees, I am very pleased to note the work that the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS); the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), the chairman of the full committee; the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), the ranking member, and others, including myself, have undertaken to try to produce a substantive draft bill to reform the Postal Service. I know the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) shares my commitment to the men and women of the Postal Service, that we in the Congress must do everything necessary to ensure their safety and well-being as they carry out their duties and responsibilities, particularly in this time of national emergency.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to working with the gentleman from Illinois and many others to help enact postal reform. It seems to me the Postal Service, its 800,000 dedicated employees, and the 281 million Americans who depend on universal service at affordable rates, are depending on us. Fortunately, as has existed from its founding days, the Postal Service has at its core men and women who each day make

the mail work and move it to our homes, to our businesses in ways that far too often we take for granted.

So, Madam Speaker, I certainly urge all of our colleagues to support this resolution with amendments to honor the men and women of the Postal Service who, as I have said, do such an incredible job in making sure that the mail arrives on time to its addresses across this great Nation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have introduced this resolution with the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCHUGH), and I also want to take this opportunity and this moment to commend him for his leadership as he labored as chairman of the Postal Subcommittee before its dissolution and continues to be a leading voice for postal reform. Hopefully, as a result of his efforts and the efforts of others, we will soon see a postal bill that all Members of Congress can take a hard look at and move us in the direction that the Postal Service really needs to go.

□ 1530

I also want to thank the gentleman from Indiana (Chairman BURTON); the ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN); the majority leader, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY); and the minority leader, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), for expediting consideration of this resolution.

The resolution before us today simply honors the men and women of the United States Postal Service for the outstanding manner in which they have carried out their duties since the terrorist attacks of September 11.

Even though we talk about September 11, we can never forget that the Postal Service has kept America connected since the early days of the Pony Express.

The United States Postal Service is a critical element of the Nation's infrastructure. It is the linchpin in the \$900 billion mailing industry that employs 9 million people and is responsible for 8 percent of the gross domestic product.

Members of the Postal Service visit our homes in rural and urban America 6 days a week. Through rain, sleet, snow, hot weather, shiny weather, they are always there. They deliver for us.

The 800,000-plus men and women of the Postal Service are on the front lines of promoting freedom and democracy by binding our Nation together through an elaborate network that touches six major markets: retail, financial services, communications, advertising, logistics, and delivery services. They deliver for us.

The men and women of the Postal Service handle approximately 680 million pieces of mail each day. The Postal Service fuels the Nation's economy and delivers hundreds of millions of

messages and billions of dollars of financial transactions each day to more than 8 million businesses.

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, Americans and especially postal workers have been confronted with a new enemy, a new challenge: anthrax. Enemies are seeking to disrupt our communications system by sending anthrax through the mail. The men and women of the Postal Service have continued to deliver in spite of this threat and the actuality of its being.

Since September 11, the Postal Service has delivered about 34 billion pieces of mail. That is about five pieces for each person on Earth. They continue to deliver.

Unfortunately, anthrax has touched the lives of some of our Nation's postal workers in a mighty and profound way. To the families of Thomas Morris, Jr., and Mr. Joseph Curseen, postal workers at the Brentwood Postal Facility who died as a result of anthrax infection, our hearts go out to them; and our prayers and gratitude are with them and their families. These two postal workers, as well as thousands and thousands of others, shall never be forgotten.

I want to personally salute the more than 5,000 postal workers from the Seventh Congressional District in Illinois. Moreover, I urge all Members and all Americans to take time out to thank the men and women of the United States Postal Service, because they deliver for us.

I also want to commend the American Postal Workers Union, the largest postal union, representing approximately 365,000 postal workers, and its newly elected president, Mr. William Burris, for seeking to honor the memory of their deceased brothers.

The American Postal Workers Union has designated this week, the week of the Veterans' Day observance, as a time to properly acknowledge that postal workers are heroes, too. The resolution says it is time for us to deliver for the men and women of the post office, and the best way we can possibly do that is by looking at the needs, in a very serious way, of our postal system; by making sure that we provide resources that are needed to make sure that the workplace is safe; and to make sure that men and women who work every day handling the mail can do so without the fear of infection or possibly death.

So we say to the postal workers of America, we say that we want to thank them for the work they have done, the work they continue to do. Because of them, America continues to be strong and vibrant and continues to be the great democracy that we know it is.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCHUGH. Madam Speaker, I have the privilege of yielding 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), someone who, certainly by experience and dedication, is a senior member of the Committee on

Government Reform, and someone who has deservedly earned a reputation as a fierce defender of government employees in all branches, in all agencies; and certainly the Postal Service is among them.

Mrs. MORELLA. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me and for his very kind introduction.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of expressing our gratitude for postal workers that have done such an outstanding job of delivering mail during this time of national emergency.

I do want to commend the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCHUGH). They have both worked very, very hard to make sure that our postal system is solvent. I commend them for that.

Indeed, with regard to this resolution, the Nation's postal workers provide a valuable service to Americans by helping to connect our society through the careful and prompt delivery of mail.

Today, more than ever, postal workers are being recognized for their selfless service of delivering the Nation's mail under all circumstances. This includes the usual weather conditions that we have always associated with the Postal Service in the past. We have all said, "Through wind and rain, sleet and snow," but now, for the first time, it is through safety threats against postal workers.

In October, as reports of anthrax-tainted letters began to surface, postal workers' lives were placed in jeopardy and the effective delivery of mail was threatened. Recognizing the importance of the Postal Service through this legislation can help to demonstrate our support and concern for the safety of postal workers as they perform their duties.

The anthrax threat has affected America deeply. Tragically, this has included the deaths of Joseph Curseen and Thomas Morris right here in Washington, D.C. at the Brentwood facility, who were killed in the line of duty. Thousands of other postal workers nationwide have been affected as they have been encouraged to visit hospitals to receive their precautionary antibiotic treatments against anthrax.

Also, the delivery of mail has been disrupted because mail processing facilities were temporarily shut down while postal workers were tested and facilities decontaminated.

The U.S. mail is a vital part of life in America. The Postal Service delivers 680 million pieces of mail daily. The anthrax threat may have disrupted mail service, but postal workers have persevered by delivering over 20 million pieces of mail since the September 11 attacks.

I support the efforts being taken to protect the lives of all the 800,000 men and women who work for the postal service in 38,000 offices, stations, and branches throughout the Nation. These efforts include increased communica-

tion and education of postal workers about anthrax, safety measures in handling mail, and the use of protective equipment.

Our postal workers deserve our support in assuring their safety and well-being as they carry out their duties and responsibilities for us. Also, this will help restore Americans' faith in our Postal Service.

Therefore, I urge all Members of this body to support this legislation that expresses our gratitude and concern for the safety of the men and women of the United States Postal Service, who have done such an outstanding job of delivering the mail during this time of national emergency.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I agree with President Bush and all of those who have referred to the postal workers at the Brentwood station as heroes.

Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Washington, D.C. (Ms. NORTON), who represents her constituents, as well as representing the rest of the Nation, in an outstanding and impeccable way.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his words and for his initiative on this resolution. It is the kind of initiative he has consistently shown since he has been a Member of Congress, and I appreciate the hard work of the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCHUGH). I bring both Members the appreciation of the residents of the District of Columbia, in particular.

I have just come from the official Postal Service memorial for two brave and dedicated postal workers who died while getting anthrax at our own Brentwood Post Office. The postmaster was there, the homeland security Secretary was there, All Souls Unitarian Church was full of postal workers, and Members of Congress spoke.

But Madam Speaker, the most touching words, the most profound statements, came from two men who knew the two postal workers, Joseph Curseen and Thomas Morris. They told us they were strong Christian men and dedicated postal workers.

I read from the resolution before us today that the postal workers had done an outstanding job of delivering mail during this time of national emergency because I knew that the postal workers, there were so many of them there, would appreciate knowing Congress recognized their service during this time, and especially after two of their number had been among the first to fall in the homeland war.

But I believe, Madam Speaker, that they especially appreciated section 2 of this resolution, which says, in so many words, that Congress will work with the Postal Service to assure the safety and well-being of our postal workers.

Let me say how much I appreciate the efforts being taken already. The Postal Service has found an alternative

site to Brentwood. We need to speed, and we are already about finding ways to assure the safety of postal workers and to protect people who receive mail. As Members might imagine, there is particular anxiety in this city about that. Whatever it takes, we simply must do.

I want to bring to the Members' attention an experience I had. I was on my race walk on Capitol Hill, where I live, on Saturday; and I saw a postal worker beside his postal truck. I did what I am sure everybody does: I stopped to shake his hand and to say thank you.

He said he was pleased that I took the time to do that; but he stopped to say to me, Congresswoman, we still do not have a labor contract. Madam Speaker, the National Association of Letter Carriers, the National Association of Rural Letter Carriers, and the American Postal Workers are working now without a contract.

I have to tell the Members today, as we sat there with an overload of postal workers, they are not happy campers. They are frustrated workers. I know this resolution is much appreciated and certainly much deserved.

The victims compensation amendment, which the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), our leader, introduced, and I am an original cosponsor, making it so victims of anthrax may also benefit from the Victims Compensation Fund, that is all very important. It is the kind of thoughtfulness this Congress has shown throughout this crisis since September 11.

But Madam Speaker, all the memorials in the world, all the resolutions, and even this very important one, and even the funds, as well placed as they are, cannot do what a finished contract would do for these workers.

The Postal Service is in a lot of trouble itself, so I understand why there are tough negotiations. Even given that, the Postal Service would go far in encouraging postal workers today, who still work at some risk, and we still cannot entirely guarantee their safety and security, we would go far if we would implement this resolution, because we may need to do so with funds, with a way to help them sign their contract before Christmas. That would be one way to do something for these hundreds of thousands of workers. If I may say so, perhaps it would be the most important way to do something for them.

Mr. MCHUGH. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), who serves in this House as chairman of the Committee on Veterans Affairs; but in the context of this particular resolution, he has the honor of representing Trenton, New Jersey, which is home to the postal facility at Trenton, the processing and delivering center; and he has known firsthand the challenges that the threat of the current situation facing postal employees has wrought.

I want to commend the gentleman for what I know has been his personal attention, his personal visits to that facility in this time of great need, to be as supportive as he possibly could. It is the kind of dedication that he brings to all facets of his service.

□ 1545

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCHUGH) for his courtesy and for his excellent service on the committee and in the Congress, and I want to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) for offering this important resolution.

It is extremely important that we recognize the tremendous service of our postal employees, especially in this time of national emergency. Equally important, as the second clause, and resolving clause, points out, we will work with the U.S. Postal Service to assure the safety and well-being of postal workers as they carry out their duties and responsibilities to the general public.

Certainly the challenge we face now is to ensure that every piece of mail that goes through the system, is guaranteed to be pristine and clean. This will take a considerable purchase, procurement of the kind of detectors that exist, they are off the shelf. We need to be willing to make that kind of payment to ensure that every letter carrier, every postal worker and everyone who works within the system and everyone who gets mail is not going to become contaminated.

We certainly know firsthand what that is all about in Mercer County, in central New Jersey, Hamilton and Trenton. In Hamilton, the John K. Rafferty postal facility on Route 130 was shut down and continues to be shut down. There have been seven people affected by anthrax in my state. One was not a postal worker, but she worked in the building complex where my district office is located. Thankfully, they have all made great recoveries because of the marvels of antibiotics and Cipro in particular.

Again, I think by recognizing that they are on the front line, we need to put postal workers on a pedestal and thank them from the bottom of our hearts for their courage and their commitment to public service during these very trying times.

I would point out that Vito Cetta, who is the postmaster in charge of the central Jersey area, and Joe Sautello have done marvelous jobs. Yes, there has been second guessing from time to time. When do you close? When do you keep a facility open? When do you test? We were pushing very hard that all of the 44 different feeder sites of the main facility be tested. Lo and behold, when they did the testing, four of those sites suffered from cross-contamination, which we will all recall CDC and others said at the onset cannot happen. Well, it did, and there were areas and perhaps even people who were contaminated.

Let me also thank Tony DiStefano, who heads up the letter carriers union. I met with Tony many times during this crisis, obviously many times before. He and the letter carriers have been tenacious. They want to deliver the mail, they want to do their jobs, but they want to do it in a way that mitigates and hopefully eliminates the possibility of contamination.

Bill Lewis from the APWU has also done a great job under very, very trying circumstances. But they want to do their jobs. They want to be on the job because they know the mail moves the country. Our economy is absolutely dependent upon the work they do.

Finally, I want to say I have a bill pending before the Committee on Financial Services that I hope will move quickly. Many people have not received their bills, and often when they sent in their checks, their remittances, they were held up getting to their Visa, credit card or mortgage company. This bill would establish a grace period of 30 days. Our hope is that this might be done voluntarily, but there are going to be big gaps. So hopefully this legislation will move very quickly so that we can ensure that people's credit histories are not penalized and that the finance charges are not levied against them.

We have learned a lot from this. Again, I want to conclude by saying that Postmaster General Potter has been vigilant. He deserves high praise as well. He has convened his own group to meet, to figure out what the protocols ought to be when opening and closing postal facilities. They are literally writing the book as they go, day in and day out. I want to commend him for the job he is doing.

Madam Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding me time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Ms. WATSON).

Ms. WATSON of California. Madam Speaker, I am proud to be one of the 47 cosponsors of this resolution honoring our Nation's postal workers.

I would like to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) for drafting this resolution, as well as the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCHUGH) for his support.

I grew up in the post office. My mother worked for the Postal Service in Los Angeles at the Old Terminal Annex for 3 decades. And as a working parent, one could say that she raised my sisters, my brother and myself there. I myself worked there for seven Christmas seasons, sorting the Christmas mail.

My mother worked hard for the post office, as do all the other postal workers who each day labor to keep millions of letters, checks, cards, packages, and even bills moving around our country. These hard-working Americans provide a vital link for each and every community across our country, across our world, no matter how remote.

One irony of the Information Age is that it has made us more dependent on the mail. There has to be some way to get packages we order over the World Wide Web; and the Postal Service has seen their duties expanded with the expansion of the Internet. It should come as no surprise then that postal workers would be on the front lines, exposed to a bioterrorist threat that tried to exploit our society's infrastructure for the free exchange of information.

What is surprising and galling is that it took so long for the authorities to respond to the threat that anthrax posed to our postal workers. When anthrax was discovered on Capitol Hill, Congress moved quickly to seal off the impacted buildings and protect ourselves and our staff. It pains me that the authorities failed to act in a similar manner to protect the postal workers who faced an even greater threat of exposure. It took the death of postal worker Thomas Morris, Jr. for postal officials and law enforcement to acknowledge that they had failed to respond in time to the threat anthrax posed to Postal Service employees.

The debate in this resolution is not the forum to analyze what went wrong to lead to the unnecessary deaths of Thomas Morris and the others, or the dangerous exposure of his colleagues to anthrax. However, I hope that this is an opportunity to celebrate the contributions of American postal workers, and I hope that with our greater awareness of their roles comes a renewed commitment to provide for their safety.

Madam Speaker, one might remember and recall that I dedicated a post office in the 32nd district to our late Congressman Julian Dixon. I think he would be very proud of the work that is being done here with the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCHUGH) and all of the other colleagues of Congress to recognize our committed, loyal and dedicated postal workers.

Mr. MCHUGH. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman for his leadership on this issue, and the leadership of the majority, as well, on this very important issue.

So many of us live with our Postal Service workers as neighbors. They are our friends. They are community activists. They help support our community. And I applaud this resolution to acknowledge the work that they have done through the years.

In Houston, my postal workers every holiday season gather to collect food goods and gifts to give to the needy in our community. We have gone through a terrible and tragic time. But I was gratified in visiting the postal workers at the Franklin Street Station in Houston, one of the largest centers in

Houston, and to hear both their concern as I toured their facility in the early stages of the impact of the anthrax threat, but also hearing their commitment to service to the American people.

I too have worked for the U.S. Postal Service. It was always the commitment of the Postal Service, I recall, as a person growing up, rain or shine, the mail would go; and I recall working during the holiday season to ensure that that would happen. It is tragic that we lost two valiant lives, men that were on the front line serving their country and serving the American public.

I want to say to the postal workers that as the tragedy occurred, let us make a commitment to you, that we will not fail you again. I believe that part of the tragedy was because of the lack of information and knowledge in the public health system about how anthrax was able to travel. We believed it was through an open envelope, and the envelope was opened in the Hart Building. But those mistakes should never be made ever again.

I offer my deepest apologies and sympathy to those who lost their lives and their families. But it is now important for us to join together with the U.S. Postal Service in making sure that every employee has every protection that they desire and deserve. If it is rubber gloves and a right kind of facial mask that has been dictated by the science, then they should have it. If it is sanitizing all the mail, then they should have it. If it is closing down units because there has been anthrax or anything else discovered there, they should have it.

As we move forward to fight terrorism as a unified nation, we must make sure that we commend and acknowledge those men and women who continue to press forward in the service of their country, our men and women in the military; but the U.S. Postal Service every day carries our economy forward and our service to those forward.

Let me thank you very much for this legislation. I hope my colleagues will unanimously support this very fine piece of legislation.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, in closing, let me just ask all of my colleagues and all Americans to remember those postal workers and others still suffering from inhalation of anthrax. As I understand it, we still have a postal worker who is hospitalized. Our thoughts and prayers go out to them, their families friends and coworkers.

Madam Speaker, I also want to thank the Postmaster General for agreeing to work with us as we try and get a handle on how to most effectively and safely carry out the work of our Postal Service.

Again, I want to thank my ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN) and the gen-

tleman from Indiana (Chairman BURTON), who have indicated that they will be working with the National Academy of Sciences and the Postal Service as they convene a conference with a panel of experts to discuss and evaluate how to respond to threats in the mail. The conference, being held all day tomorrow, will focus the expertise of the Nation's top scientists on the biological threats confronting the Postal Service.

I commend all of the unions, the letter carriers, mail handlers, supervisors unions as well as the APWU for the outstanding work they have done delivering the mail, but also for the outstanding work that they were doing trying to help shape a new system, trying to help make sure that we can reform the Postal Service so that it does not linger and does not have the fear of not being able to carry out its duties and responsibilities.

And again, I want to thank my colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCHUGH) for his continuing leadership. It is always indeed a pleasure to work with him.

Madam Speaker, I would urge passage of this resolution.

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

Madam Speaker, before I yield back the balance of my time, let me just say that the old saying, you do not know what you have got until it is gone is perhaps somewhat applicable here. Fortunately, the Postal Service is not gone. It is still with us. And that too is a tribute to these hard-working men and women who do so much for us in such an efficient and yet such a quiet way.

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I do think it is unfortunate that the tragedies that we have spoken about here today, the loss of life, those who are still struggling to regain their health had to occur to make us once again appreciate the great job that the employees of the Postal Service do for each and every American in their efforts to deliver the mail.

This resolution is, as I said earlier, a most-fitting recognition of that and, again, my praise and appreciation, particularly to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) for his leadership in that regard; but it seems to me that if we do not take the next step in expressing our concern into real ways that ensure to the greatest extent possible that these 800,000-plus employees are never again asked to make the kinds of sacrifices they have made in the past weeks, we will still have failed; and I know the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS), the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), and so many others are anxious to work together to ensure that that does not happen.

Madam Speaker, with a final sense of appreciation to those great employees and a final sense and word of consolation to the families of the two fallen

postal workers, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 257, of which I am a cosponsor.

The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 200 billion pieces of mail a year and handles about 680 million pieces of mail each day. Letter carriers work tirelessly six days a week, providing over 136 billion homes and business with an invaluable service. Unfortunately, as a result of the September 11 terrorist attacks and the national anthrax scare, the U.S. Postal Service has been placed on the front lines of our war against terrorism. Three pieces of mail were recently confirmed as being contaminated with anthrax. On a grand scale, that's a low ratio, but not when human lives are concerned.

The three letters exposed workers from a wide array of postal distribution centers to anthrax and many are being treated medically as a precaution. But despite the risk of anthrax infection, our Postal Service continues to sort the mail. 34 billion pieces of mail were delivered since September 11, equaling about five pieces for each person in the world. I visited my local postal facilities and am reassured by the steps they are taking to protect their workers on Long Island.

This resolution, H. Con. Res. 257, commends the hard-working men and women of the United States Postal Service for their commitment to mail delivery during this time of national emergency. Postal workers are known for delivering mail no matter what the situation and I'm proud of their work in the face of terrorism.

Mr. MCHUGH. 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 New York (Mr. MCHUGH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 257, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. 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.

#### REAL INTERSTATE DRIVER EQUITY ACT OF 2001

Mr. LATOURETTE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2546) to amend title 49, United States Code, to prohibit States from requiring a license or fee on account of the fact that a motor vehicle is providing interstate pre-arranged ground transportation service, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2546

*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 "Real Interstate Driver Equity Act of 2001".*

#### SEC. 2. REGULATION OF INTERSTATE PRE-ARRANGED GROUND TRANSPORTATION SERVICE.

*Section 14501 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:*

*"(d) PRE-ARRANGED GROUND TRANSPORTATION.—*

*"(1) IN GENERAL.—No State or political subdivision thereof and no interstate agency or other political agency of 2 or more States shall enact or enforce any law, rule, regulation, standard or other provision having the force and effect of law requiring a license or fee on account of the fact that a motor vehicle is providing pre-arranged ground transportation service if the motor carrier providing such service—*

*"(A) meets all applicable registration requirements under chapter 139 for the interstate transportation of passengers;*

*"(B) meets all applicable vehicle and intrastate passenger licensing requirements of the State or States in which the motor carrier is domiciled or registered to do business; and*

*"(C) is providing such service pursuant to a contract for—*

*"(i) travel from one State, including intermediate stops, to a destination in another State; or*

*"(ii) travel from one State, including one or more intermediate stops in another State, to a destination in the original State.*

*"(2) MATTERS NOT COVERED.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed—*

*"(A) as subjecting taxicab service to regulation under chapter 135 or section 31138;*

*"(B) as prohibiting or restricting an airport, train, or bus terminal operator from contracting to provide preferential access or facilities to one or more providers of pre-arranged ground transportation service; and*

*"(C) as restricting the right of any State or political subdivision of a State to require that any individual operating a vehicle providing prearranged ground transportation service originating in the State or political subdivision have submitted to a criminal background investigation of the records of the State in which the operator is domiciled, by the motor carrier providing such service or by the State or political subdivision by which the operator is licensed to provide such service, as a condition of providing such service."*

#### SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

*(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 13102 of title 49, United States Code, is amended—*

*(1) by redesignating paragraphs (17), (18), (19), (20), (21), and (22) as paragraphs (18), (19), (21), (22), (23), and (24), respectively;*

*(2) by inserting after paragraph (16) the following:*

*"(17) PRE-ARRANGED GROUND TRANSPORTATION SERVICE.—The term 'pre-arranged ground transportation service' means transportation for a passenger (or a group of passengers) that is arranged in advance (or is operated on a regular route or between specified points) and is provided in a motor vehicle with a seating capacity not exceeding 15 passengers (including the driver)."; and*

*(3) by inserting after paragraph (19) (as so redesignated) the following:*

*"(20) TAXICAB SERVICE.—The term 'taxicab service' means passenger transportation in a motor vehicle having a capacity of not more than 8 passengers (including the driver), not operated on a regular route or between specified places, and that—*

*"(A) is licensed as a taxicab by a State or a local jurisdiction; or*

*"(B) is offered by a person that—*

*"(i) provides local transportation for a fare determined (except with respect to transportation to or from airports) primarily on the basis of the distance traveled; and*

*"(ii) does not primarily provide transportation to or from airports."*

*(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—*

*(1) MOTOR CARRIER TRANSPORTATION.—Section 13506(a)(2) of title 49, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:*

*"(2) a motor vehicle providing taxicab service;"*

*(2) MINIMUM FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY.—Section 31138(e)(2) of such title is amended to read as follows:*

*"(2) providing taxicab service (as defined in section 13102);"*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE).

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

The Real Interstate Driver Equity Act of 2001, H.R. 2546, was introduced by our colleague, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT). This legislation is needed to solve a problem that arises when a for-hire motor carrier travels across a State line in interstate commerce.

During testimony before the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, sort of an anomaly presented itself where if someone wanted to hire a car in Cleveland, Ohio, for instance, and take it over to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to watch the Browns beat up on the Pittsburgh Steelers, as we hope will happen next month, the car for-hire could drop the person at the stadium in Pittsburgh but could not pick them back up and bring them back to Ohio without a dual licensure.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BLUNT) and his co-sponsors, I know the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS), have put their finger right on the pulse of what we need to do to solve this problem and hence have introduced H.R. 2546.

On November 7 of this year, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure ordered by a voice vote that this bill be reported with one amendment.

Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the primary author of the legislation.

Mr. BLUNT. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE) and the members of his committee for bringing this bill to the floor today. Certainly, I also want to thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS), the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE), the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO), and almost 20 others who have joined with us as co-sponsors on this bill.

In my district in southwest Missouri, we frankly do not have lots of limousine transportation; but we do make lots of limousines. In fact, I think we may be the biggest manufacturer of limousines anywhere in the country;