

When Jerry was elected to Congress, he took on several important issues. For starters, Jerry Solomon spent many years devoted to ending the scourge of drugs, where I had the opportunity to work closely with him. In this capacity, he successfully championed many pieces of legislation requiring random drug testing and penalizing users and sellers of illegal drugs. He was a strong believer that illegal drug use is one of the most pressing issues facing our Nation's youth and fought it wherever and whenever he could.

In addition, when Republicans took control of the House, Jerry Solomon served as the Rules Committee chairman, where he presided over sweeping reforms in the way the House operates. Among other things, his committee abolished proxy voting, opened all meetings to the media and the public, and made Congress subject to the same laws that the American people live under. These were important reforms that fundamentally changed the way this House conducts its business.

In addition to this important work, Jerry served as ranking member on the Veterans Affairs Committee, where, as a veteran of the Korean war, he understood firsthand the importance of meeting the needs of our military veterans to the fullest extent possible. In this capacity, Jerry made sure that veterans were heard and represented when he sponsored the bill that created a cabinet level Department of Veterans Affairs. And, of course, he made certain that we remembered our country's military veterans when he fought for 15 years to see that the Saratoga National Cemetery was established.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation. This country cannot and should not forget the efforts of those like Jerry Solomon who by word and deed made this country a better place.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. 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 Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3392.

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.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. 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. 3392.

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

There was no objection.

□ 1830

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THAT VETERANS DAY CONTINUE TO BE OBSERVED ON NOVEMBER 11

Mrs. MORELLA. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to

the resolution (H. Res. 298) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Veterans Day should continue to be observed on November 11 and separate from any other Federal holiday or day for Federal elections or national observances.

The Clerk read as follows:

Whereas the veterans of the Armed Forces are owed a tremendous debt of gratitude for their service and bravery;

Whereas veterans play important roles in communities throughout the United States;

Whereas maintaining Veterans Day as a legal public holiday separate from all other Federal holidays and days for elections or national observances is the least that a grateful Nation should do in recognition of its veterans; and

Whereas November 11 is a solemn commemoration of the contributions of those who have served and defended the Nation, especially those who gave their lives securing the freedoms enjoyed by all citizens of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that Veterans Day should continue to be observed on November 11 and separate from any other Federal holiday or day for Federal elections or national observances.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. MORELLA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 298.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mrs. MORELLA. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of House Resolution 298. The message of this resolution is simple and straightforward. It is the sense of the House of Representatives that Veterans Day should be observed on November 11. It should be observed separate from any other Federal holiday, election day, or any other national observance.

Madam Speaker, Veterans Day is the one day on which America honors all of those who have served in our Armed Forces. Its roots trace back to Armistice Day, which established November 11 as the day to honor veterans of World War I; but in 1954, after World War II and the Korean War, the name of the holiday was changed to Veterans Day.

For a brief period, from 1968 to 1975, Veterans Day was not observed on November 11. By law it was observed on a Monday in order to provide Federal employees with 3-day weekends, but in 1975 President Ford signed legislation to return the observance of Veterans Day on November 11, where it remains to this day.

President Ford's action supported the expressed will of the overwhelming majority of State legislatures, veterans service organizations and the American people. Yet today, there are those who would alter this distinct opportunity to honor our veterans by merging Veterans Day with other public activities such as election day.

This would be wrong, Madam Speaker. Since our Nation's founding, some 48 million men and women have stepped forward to defend our way of life. There are more than 25 million living veterans who have served in peace and war. More than a million died in service to America; and more than a million and a half have been wounded, and some very seriously.

As we debate this resolution today, America's servicemen and women are fighting in Afghanistan to defend us and our way of life from the terrorists who attacked us on September 11. As President Bush said in his Veterans Day proclamation this year: "Our Nation will always be grateful for the noble sacrifices made by these veterans. We can never adequately repay them, but we can honor and respect them for their service."

It would be a shame and a travesty, Madam Speaker, to allow the special meaning of Veterans Day to be submerged amid a welter of campaign activities. Election campaigns focus on issues that divide us. That is how our democratic system works. We engage in a great national debate over a variety of serious issues. Campaign ads flood television and radio. Campaign activities dominate the news, and then the American people vote and determine who will represent them.

This is a great process, Madam Speaker; but we would lose something very special if it were combined with Veterans Day. We would lose the opportunity to pause and honor our veterans as a Nation united in gratitude for their service. Maintaining Veterans Day as a legal public holiday, separate from all other Federal holidays, is the least that a grateful Nation should do.

I want to congratulate and thank the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY) for introducing this legislation; and, Madam Speaker, I urge all Members to support this important resolution.

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, as we just listened to the debate and tributes being paid to Representative Solomon, I think that gives us one of the reasons why this bill is so important; and so I rise in strong support for H. Res. 298, a bill expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Veterans Day should be observed on November 11 and separate from any other holiday or day for Federal elections or national observances.

Madam Speaker, in 1921 an unknown World War I American soldier was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.