

annual cost-of-living adjustment. It also directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make a lump sum payment to existing medal recipients for any retroactive amounts due as a result of this increase.

□ 1845

Moreover, the measure requires an individual awarded a medal, upon request, be issued another medal for display. The measure also requires criminal penalties for any unauthorized purchase or possession of a medal or for false representation as a medal recipient.

It also directs the Secretary to grant to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society appropriated amounts for the operation of its principal office, and directs the Secretary of Defense in providing space-available transportation to a medal recipient for an official Department of Defense activity, and provide such transportation to an accompanying spouse.

Madam Speaker, this measure is long overdue and recognizes the contributions made by the Medal of Honor recipients to secure the freedoms which we cherish in this Nation. I urge my colleagues to fully support this measure.

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

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. 2561, 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. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. 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.

GENERAL SHELTON CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL ACT

Mr. KING. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2751) to authorize the President to award a gold medal on behalf of the Congress to General Henry H. Shelton and to provide for the production of bronze duplicates of such medal for sale to the public, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2751

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 "General Shelton Congressional Gold Medal Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds the following:

(1) General Henry H. Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the principal military adviser to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense, has displayed strong leadership, competence, and professionalism in fulfilling his statutory responsibilities throughout Operation Allied Force.

(2) General Shelton and his subordinates brilliantly planned and coordinated at the national level the successful air campaign in support of Operation Allied Force.

(3) General Shelton's leadership, foresight, and determination were directly responsible for ensuring a decisive military victory without a single allied combat casualty in Kosovo in 1999.

(4) As the principal military adviser to the President of the United States, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense, General Shelton's assessments, judgments, recommendations, and determination were invaluable and instrumental in the unprecedented military victory against the forces of Slobodan Milosevic.

(5) General Shelton's distinction as a "soldier's soldier", as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and throughout his military service, including command of the Special Operations Command, the 18th Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, helicopter forces in Operation Desert Storm, and special forces Green Berets in Vietnam, serves as an inspiration to the Congress and the people of the United States, a grateful Nation.

SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The President is authorized to present, on behalf of the Congress, to General Henry H. Shelton a gold medal of appropriate design in recognition of his performance as a military leader in coordinating the planning, strategy, and execution of the United States and NATO combat action and his invaluable contributions to the United States and to the successful return to peace in the Balkans as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

(b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For purposes of the presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (hereafter referred to in this Act as the "Secretary") shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions to be determined by the Secretary.

SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

The Secretary may strike bronze duplicates of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3, under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, and may sell such bronze duplicates at a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses, and the cost of the gold medal.

SEC. 5. NATIONAL MEDALS.

Medals struck pursuant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS; PROCEEDS OF SALE.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated not to exceed \$30,000 to carry out section 3.

(b) PROCEEDS OF SALES.—Amounts received from sales of duplicate bronze medals under section 4 shall be credited to the appropriation made pursuant to the authorization provided in subsection (a).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING) and the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) each will control 20 minutes.

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KING. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation, and insert extraneous material on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise this evening to urge all Members to support H.R. 2751, the General Shelton Congressional Gold Medal Act which would grant the Congressional Gold Medal to General Hugh Shelton, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in recognition of his long and distinguished service to the Nation.

Madam Speaker, General Shelton was a soldier's soldier throughout his military service, which included command of the Special Operations Command, the 18th Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, helicopter forces in Operation Desert Storm, and special forces Green Berets in Vietnam.

I want to especially congratulate the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) for his efforts in bringing this bill to the floor this evening.

Madam Speaker, as chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Shelton was the principal adviser to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. In that role, he displayed an extraordinary degree of ability and professionalism. His leadership, foresight and determination were directly responsible for ensuring that proper military force was applied to bring about decisive military victory without a single allied combat casualty in the Kosovo campaign in 1999. General Shelton's career serves as inspiration to the Congress and the people of the United States, which is indeed a grateful Nation. Madam Speaker, I urge adoption of the legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2751, the General Shelton Congressional Gold Medal Act. This bill honors a truly great American hero and military leader.

In October of this year, General Hugh Shelton retired as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The General wore our Nation's uniform for 38 years, and America owes him a special debt of gratitude for his unsurpassed leadership as our senior military officer.

As the principal military adviser to the President and other civilian officials, General Shelton played a key role in the historic success of Operation Allied Force in extracting the Serbian forces of Slobodan Milosevic from Kosovo. His leadership, foresight and determination were directly responsible for this decisive and historic

military victory without a single allied combat casualty. Throughout his near four decades of service to our Nation's military, General Shelton has displayed an admirable dedication to duty and professionalism.

The General Shelton Congressional Gold Medal Act will bestow a fitting tribute to this superior warrior and great American. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2751.

Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE), and commend the gentleman on his hard work in bringing this important bill to the floor this evening.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time. I thank the chairman and the ranking member of the Committee on Financial Services for approving this important piece of legislation and getting it to the floor this evening.

Madam Speaker, the two previous bills really set the stage for this piece of legislation this evening because we really are talking about our heroes in this country. I am reminded as we start to talk about this legislation this evening, I remember when I presented General Shelton to the Members of Congress right after he was sworn in as chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

He grew up in what was then my congressional district. North Carolina changed districts in 1998, and his parents now live in the district of the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON), but I said that evening that General Shelton and I came from areas so small that we would use the adjoining town to determine where we were from, we were from crossroads communities, but that has nothing to do with a man that has risen to the heights of General Shelton.

Madam Speaker, as Members have heard, on October 1, U.S. Army General Henry H. "Hugh" Shelton retired as Joint Chiefs of Staff of the United States. General Shelton's retirement capped an extraordinary military career that brought him from the farm fields of eastern North Carolina to the jungles of Vietnam, to Desert Storm and the sands in the Middle East, to the top command of the most powerful military force on the face of the earth.

This bipartisan bill will bestow a fitting tribute to this superior warrior and great American who served our Nation with distinction for 38 years. Henry H. Shelton was born in 1942 in a small, rural crossroads community of Speed, North Carolina. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree from North Carolina State University in my congressional district before going on to earn a Master of Science degree from Auburn University. Having joined ROTC, the Reserve Officer Training Corps, while in college, Hugh Shelton was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the infantry in 1963.

General Shelton served two tours of duty in Vietnam, the first with the Fifth Special Forces Group, the second

with the 173rd Airborne Brigade, before rising to command the 1st Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. After promotion to brigadier general, he served with the 101st Airborne Division during his 7-month deployment to Saudi Arabia for Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. He returned to Fort Bragg after the Persian Gulf War and commanded the legendary 82nd Airborne Division. He served as Commander-in-Chief of United States Special Forces Command prior to his two tours as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. General Shelton's awards, decorations and medals are too numerous to list now, but I include them for the RECORD.

The text of the article is as follows:

GENERAL HENRY H. SHELTON

CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

General Henry H. Shelton became the fourteenth Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Oct. 1, 1997, and was reconfirmed by the Senate for a second two-year term in 1999. In this capacity, he serves as the principal military advisor to the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Council. Prior to becoming Chairman, he served as Commander in Chief of the United States Special Operations Command.

Born in Tarboro, North Carolina in January, 1942, General Shelton earned a Bachelor of Science degree from North Carolina State University and a Master of Science degree from Auburn University. His military education includes completion of the Air Command and Staff College and the National War College.

Commissioned a second lieutenant in the Infantry in 1963 through the Reserve Officer Training Corps, General Shelton spent the next 24 years in a variety of command and staff positions in the continental United States, Hawaii, and Vietnam. He served two tours in Vietnam—the first with the 5th Special Forces Group, the second with the 173d Airborne Brigade. He also commanded the 3d Battalion, 60th Infantry in the 9th Infantry Division at Fort Lewis, Washington, served as the 9th Infantry Division's assistant chief of staff for operations, commanded the 1st Brigade of the 82d Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and served as the Chief of Staff of the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, New York.

Following selection for brigadier general in 1987, General Shelton served two years in the Operations Directorate of the Joint Staff. In 1989, he began a two-year assignment as Assistant Division Commander for Operations of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), a tour that included the Division's seven-month deployment to Saudi Arabia for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Upon returning from the Gulf War, General Shelton was promoted to major general and assigned to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where he assumed command of the 82d Airborne Division. In 1993, he was promoted to lieutenant general and assumed command of the XVIIIth Airborne Corps. In 1994, while serving as corps commander, General Shelton commanded the Joint Task Force that conducted Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti. In March 1996, he was promoted to general and became Commander in Chief of the U.S. Special Operations Command.

General Shelton's awards and decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal (with 2 oak leaf clusters), Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit (with

oak leaf cluster), Bronze Star Medal with V device (with 3 oak leaf clusters), and the Purple Heart. He has also been awarded the Combat Infantryman Badge, Joint Chiefs of Staff Identification Badge, Master Parachutist Badge, Pathfinder Badge, Air Assault Badge, Military Freefall Badge, and Special Forces and Ranger Tabs.

General Shelton is married and has three sons.

Madam Speaker, General Shelton's leadership helped transform our Nation's military into the versatile power projector the world has witnessed in Afghanistan. General Shelton is a genuine American hero, and Congress has the opportunity to act this evening on this appropriate honor. H.R. 2751 is virtually identical to the legislation I introduced earlier, and virtually identical to legislation that was passed almost a decade ago honoring another Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Colin Powell, who is now our Secretary of State, and later it was awarded to General Norman Schwarzkopf.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank my many colleagues on both sides of the aisle who have worked with me over the past 2 years to bring this bill to the floor. I urge this House to pass this piece of legislation this evening to honor a great American.

Mr. KING. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the chairman emeritus of the Committee on International Relations.

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in strong support of H.R. 2751 which authorizes the President to award the Congressional Gold Medal on behalf of the Congress to a good friend and an exceptional soldier, General Henry "Hugh" Shelton, the 14th Chairman of our Joint Chiefs of Staff.

On October 1, 2001, General Shelton concluded his second term as the principal military adviser to the President, the Secretary of Defense, and to the National Security Council. Madam Speaker, during his distinguished career, General Shelton served in a variety of command and staff positions in the United States and abroad, as a combat veteran of Vietnam and the Gulf War. During his two tours in Vietnam, he served with the 5th Special Forces Group and with the 173rd Airborne Brigade. It was during his service in Vietnam where he earned the Purple Heart.

A testament to General Shelton's exceptional leadership and his commitment to the Nation, was his meteoric rise through the Army's general officer ranks from brigadier general through general in 9 years. Madam Speaker, General Shelton sought and received the largest across-the-board pay increases for the military in nearly 2 decades, pushed for greater salary increases for mid-grade noncommissioned officers, and instituted a retirement reform package that reinstated

benefits for those who entered our Nation's military after 1986. He implemented an enhanced housing allowance that gradually eliminated out-of-pocket expenses for service members living off their post or base, and advocated for medical health care reform which made health care more responsive to the needs of our military and their families, and included military retirees over the age of 65.

During General Shelton's distinguished career, he was awarded numerous awards and decorations, including the Defense Distinguished Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, and Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star with V device with three oak leaf clusters, and a Purple Heart for injuries received during combat in Vietnam.

During his tenure as the 14th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Shelton served our Nation with honor and distinction. And while he may have served as a senior military officer and operated at the highest levels of government, he never lost touch with his men and women in uniform, and no matter how busy or over-committed he was, he always made time to assist others.

While H.R. 2751 authorizes the President to confer the Congressional Gold Medal on General Shelton, it also is conferred on his family for their support. General Shelton's wife, Carolyn, deserves our recognition and thanks for her hard work, tireless efforts, her dedication and support of our military families during her service to our Nation. General and Mrs. Shelton's three sons, Jonathan, Jeffrey and Mark, deserve our thanks for supporting their father during his distinguished service.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join in expressing our gratitude to General Henry "Hugh" Shelton, the 14th chairman of our Joint Chiefs of Staff by supporting this measure and authorizing the President to award the Congressional Gold Medal to a superb leader, a quiet, diplomat warrior, a gentleman in the truest sense of the word, and a true friend of our great Nation.

□ 1900

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KING. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES).

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. I want to say to my friend, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE), one of my colleagues, that I fully support his H.R. 2751.

Madam Speaker, I am from eastern North Carolina. I am from a small area in rural America. My county of Pitt County actually connects with the county where General Shelton was from, Edgecombe County, a little town

called Speed. I think if I wanted to make my comment for the record tonight, which we all have talked about his outstanding military record, and it is outstanding, there is no question about it, but the fact is that Hugh Shelton came from rural America where they fully understand the values of family, church and patriotism and dedication to this great Nation known as the United States of America. General Shelton, quite frankly, takes great pride in the fact, and I am sure that the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) mentioned this, that he is a graduate of NC State University, and he distinguished himself there as a student and also as he was in the ROTC program.

As Chairman GILMAN said, I have been on the Committee on Armed Services for 7 years, going on my eighth year now. Most of us on the Committee on Armed Services, both parties, we fully work together in a very bipartisan way for the good of our military. When you look at the leadership that General Shelton brought to the Armed Forces, in particular the Army, and then when he became Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, that he could be the leader to remind the Congress, quite frankly, that our men and women in uniform deserve the very best. He was a strong advocate for the men and women in uniform.

As has been mentioned by the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), General Shelton fully understood the quality-of-life issues that many in this Nation take for granted when we talk about our military. We must do more. That is what General Shelton fought for, to make sure that the men and women in uniform had the very best housing and adequate housing possible. He also was one who led the fight here in the Congress when he appeared before the committees on pay increases, that our men and women in uniform need to have the very best pay possible, because these are the men and women when called upon that will give their life for this Nation, like they are doing now in Afghanistan and other parts of the world.

I really cannot add a whole lot to what has been said already. General Shelton is very deserving of this award, should the Congress, which I am sure we will 100 percent, decide that he should be recognized in this way. I want to say to General Shelton and his family that he has been a great soldier for the United States of America, he has been a great leader of our military for the United States of America, and his service to this Nation will be long remembered.

I would just like to say to General Shelton, thank you for your leadership in wartime; thank you for your leadership in peace. God bless General Shelton and his family and God bless America.

Mr. KING. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the

gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HAYES).

Mr. HAYES. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Today we are honoring a great American. I am proud to support this legislation that will award General Shelton the Congressional Gold Medal.

General Henry H. Shelton was born and raised in Edgecombe County, North Carolina. As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Henry H. Shelton advised President Clinton and was his principal military strategist. He also played a great role in the air war in Kosovo in 1999. As a North Carolinian, I am most proud to say that General Shelton commanded both the 18th Airborne Corps and Special Operations Command in my district at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. General Shelton is distinguished as a "soldier's soldier" and time and time again has displayed an extraordinary degree of leadership, competence, and professionalism.

While it is right and appropriate that we recognize the service to our Nation that the General has performed today in Congress, I have also been working on commemorating him down home in my district in North Carolina right at Fort Bragg. Folks at Fort Bragg think of him as one of their own. In order to properly keep his legacy alive, it is proper to recognize him at Fort Bragg. That is why I worked to include language in the defense authorization bill for the fiscal year 2002 that was passed just this past Thursday to name a soldier support center currently being renovated on post in General Shelton's honor. So today while we honor General Hugh Shelton with the Congressional Gold Medal, we can be certain that the troops he led and commanded at Fort Bragg will also remember this great American.

I am proud that today we are recognizing the accomplishments and service of General Hugh Shelton and commemorate General Shelton for his dedication and selfless contribution to our great Nation.

I thank the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) for bringing this forward.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCINTYRE).

Mr. MCINTYRE. Madam Speaker, General Shelton is a man of concern, commitment, and courage. His concern for freedom and family and faith led him in his desire to join the ROTC when he was a young man at North Carolina State University. His commitment to God and to his country and to his fellow man led to his staying in the U.S. Army not only after college but, as we all know, for quite a long and distinguished career. His courage to withstand the assaults upon liberty and freedom as a general throughout serving all the ranks in the Army as well as ultimately serving as Chairman

of the Joint Chiefs of Staff led him to serve the United States of America with character and integrity, a testimony both to his Christian faith and to his unselfish sense of public service.

We in the United States Congress should be pleased to have this opportunity to stand with a man who has stood for what America is all about through his concern, his commitment, and his courage.

May God bless us with more leaders like Hugh Shelton, and may we honor General Shelton here tonight with this legislation that is pending before us.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KING. 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 New York (Mr. KING) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2751, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING THE CLERK TO MAKE CORRECTIONS IN ENGROSSMENT OF H.R. 2751, GENERAL SHELTON CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL ACT

Mr. KING. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that in the engrossment of the bill (H.R. 2751) the Clerk be authorized to correct section numbers, punctuation, and make such other technical and conforming changes as may be necessary to reflect the actions of the House.

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

There was no objection.

AMENDING PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE ACT WITH RESPECT TO ORGAN PROCUREMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3504) to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to qualified organ procurement organizations.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3504

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That section 371(b)(1) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 273(b)(1)) is amended by striking subparagraph (D) and all that follows and inserting the following:

“(D) notwithstanding any other provision of law, has met the other requirements of this section and has been certified or recertified by the Secretary as meeting the per-

formance standards to be a qualified organ procurement organization through a process that granted certification or recertification with such certification or recertification in effect as of January 1, 2000, and remaining in effect through the completion of certification or recertification, no earlier than July 31, 2004, as is defined through regulations that are promulgated by the Secretary that—

“(i) require recertifications of qualified organ procurement organizations not more frequently than once every 4 years,

“(ii) rely on outcome and process performance measures that are based on empirical evidence, obtained through reasonable efforts, of organ donor potential and other related factors in each service area of qualified organ procurement organizations,

“(iii) use multiple outcome measures as part of the certification process, and

“(iv) provide for a qualified organ procurement organization to appeal a decertification to the Secretary on substantive and procedural grounds,

“(E) has procedures to obtain payment for non-renal organs provided to transplant centers,

“(F) has a defined service area that is of sufficient size to assure maximum effectiveness in the procurement and equitable distribution of organs, and that either includes an entire metropolitan statistical area (as specified by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget) or does not include any part of the area,

“(G) has a director and such other staff, including the organ donation coordinators and organ procurement specialists necessary to effectively obtain organs from donors in its service area, and

“(H) has a board of directors or an advisory board which—

“(i) is composed of—

“(I) members who represent hospital administrators, intensive care or emergency room personnel, tissue banks, and voluntary health associations in its service area,

“(II) members who represent the public residing in such area,

“(III) a physician with knowledge, experience, or skill in the field of histocompatibility or an individual with a doctorate degree in a biological science with knowledge, experience, or skill in the field of histocompatibility,

“(IV) a physician with knowledge or skill in the field of neurology, and

“(V) from each transplant center in its service area which has arrangements described in paragraph (3)(G) with the organization, a member who is a surgeon who has practicing privileges in such center and who performs organ transplant surgery,

“(ii) has the authority to recommend policies for the procurement of organs and the other functions described in paragraph (3), and

“(iii) has no authority over any other activity of the organization.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and to insert extraneous material on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Madam Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 3504, a bill to clarify certification requirements for organ procurement organizations, OPOs as we refer to them. Last Congress, the House of Representatives approved a bill to address concerns regarding our national organ transplant system. As we all know, we do not have enough organs in this country to satisfy the needs of those awaiting a transplant. This legislation recognized the importance of the vital network of organ procurement organizations which are responsible for developing, establishing, and maintaining medical criteria and standards for organ procurement and transplantation.

Today the House will consider legislation to clarify that important measure. Last year's legislation changed the 2-year organ procurement organization certification cycle to a 4-year cycle. Switching to a 4-year cycle allows the OPOs to focus on recovering donated organs. Today's legislation will make a technical change to define the start date for the 4-year OPO certification cycle adopted last year by Congress.

This legislation, Madam Speaker, is important for guaranteeing that the 4-year cycle is implemented as quickly as possible to allow for organ procurement organizations to concentrate on organ donation and on serving those Americans in need of organ transplants. Madam Speaker, this is a technical correction to a very important organ donation bill. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 3504.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Last year Congress passed a bill sponsored by my friend and colleague from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE), a valuable member of the Subcommittee on Health, to allow organ procurement organizations to better obtain their recertification. Current practice is causing OPOs to lose their certification due to an inaccurate way of assessing their performance. This process is disruptive to obtaining organs and tissue for transplant.

The gentleman from New Jersey's bill corrected the existing problems, ensuring the smooth recertification of these important organizations. But to implement the OPO organization language, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services requested clarification from Congress.

This language, Madam Speaker, will ensure that OPO certification will be conducted fairly and will improve the system of procuring organs for transplant and tissue.