

of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act of 2001 is now a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

VETERANS DAY

Mr. KERRY. Madam President, on Monday I was privileged to stand with thousands upon thousands of veterans and their families who traveled to Washington to visit the Vietnam Wall for its 20th anniversary, to reconnect with those with whom we had served, and above all to honor our fallen brothers and sisters.

These veterans, some of whom traveled for days and all at their own expense, proved something I think every American knows deep down in their heart—something that cuts to the quick of what we as Americans stand for—that part of being an American means keeping faith with our citizens and those heroes who gave so much to our country. That responsibility extends to those of us who have the honor to serve here in the Chambers of Congress.

Today, my friends, after another Veterans Day where words of praise for America's veterans were spoken, at a time when it is an increasingly real possibility that more Americans will be sent into harm's way for their Nation, we must keep faith—in deeds and not just words—with the veterans of our country. We must do the duty we were sent here to do, as they did their duty wearing the uniform of our country.

Because of a 111 year-old law, when our soldiers have returned from combat wounded, debilitated by illness, missing limbs, confined to wheelchairs—disabled for life these veterans have been told that their retired pay would be reduced dollar-for-dollar for any VA disability benefits they received. Yesterday the House and Senate reached a compromise on the issue of concurrent receipt in the National Defense Authorization Act. The authorization act has been held up for weeks because the administration has threatened a veto if concurrent receipt language was included in this bill. The compromise that was reached yesterday begins to correct the injustice created by this archaic law but it does not go nearly far enough.

The compromise language applies only to veterans injured during combat, combat-oriented training, or certain other hazardous activities, with a disability rating of 60 percent or greater, and those with a rating of at least 10 percent if they received a Purple Heart. This compromise leaves a bitter taste in the mouths of anyone who believes we have a faith to keep with our veterans. On October 10, the House passed overwhelmingly a motion to instruct their conferees to accept the far more comprehensive Senate-passed concurrent receipt language—which

would have provided all disabled veterans the full amount of their disability benefits and their retirement pay. There is strong bipartisan support for full concurrent receipt in both Chambers of Congress, yet because of the considerable pressure from this administration we have been forced to accept a compromise that will leave hundreds of thousands of our veterans behind.

I cannot believe that this administration is willing to tell a veteran who, through service to his country, has suffered an injury leaving him 50 percent disabled, that he is not entitled to both disability compensation and retirement pay earned for 20 years of service. Military retirees are the only category of federal employees who are required to relinquish a portion of their retirement pay when they receive VA disability benefits. Not only does this practice unjustly penalize our disabled career soldiers—it weakens our military by effectively encouraging injured servicemembers to leave the military early in their careers. We have been working for years to right this wrong. This change in law is a beginning, but much remains to be done.

The issue of compensation for our disabled veterans is only one aspect of a much larger problem—we are failing to meet our promises to the people who have so courageously served our country. Nothing punctuates this fact more than the ongoing financial crisis facing the veterans health care system.

We must address simple mathematics. From 1996 to the present, the number of veterans seeking health care from the VA has grown from 2.9 million to 4.5 million, while the VA's health care staff has decreased from 195,000 to 183,000—forcing many veterans to wait 6 months or longer for care. But this administration's continued refusal to fully fund our VA has done nothing to help them hire new staff, let alone offer better care to our Nation's veterans.

The overall thrust of their approach to this funding crisis has been to push reforms aimed at reducing enrollment in the veterans health system rather than providing the funds necessary to ensure that every veteran gets the best health care we have to offer. Even VA Secretary Principi identified a \$400 million shortfall in the fiscal year 2002 budget of the VA health care system. But the administration requested only \$142 million to compensate for this shortfall, and plans to make up much of the remainder of the shortfall by imposing "efficiencies" on a system that's already reached a crashing point.

In July Congress passed \$417 million for veterans health care as part of the fiscal year 2002 emergency supplemental—to reduce waiting times for health care, keep clinics open, and establish new Community Based Out-patient Clinics. But in August the President blocked \$275 million of the amount provided by Congress, announcing the administration would

only spend the \$142 million it requested for VA health care.

This is not the way to keep faith with our veterans. They are aging and in need of medicine and health care, they are sitting in our waiting rooms, and struggling to pay hefty bills and still afford rent and food. Many are homeless—in fact, nearly one quarter of all homeless Americans are veterans. By any measure, we are not doing enough for those who have done so much for us.

That is why I am asking the Congress to provide full funding for veterans medical care in the fiscal year 2003 VA/ HUD Appropriations bill. The committee reported bills in the Senate and House both provide \$25.3 billion for the VA health system, an increase of \$3.3 billion over the fiscal year 2002 level, and \$1.8 billion more than the administration's request for 2003.

Because we are not doing enough for our veterans, I am asking the Senate to reject the President's proposed \$1,500 health care deductible for Priority 7 veterans included in his fiscal year 2003 VA/ HUD budget. So far the House and the Senate have rejected the President's request to include this deductible in the VA/ HUD Appropriations bill.

I am also asking this body to join me in urging the administration to rescind the VA memo dated July 18, 2002 that ordered the directors of every veterans health care network in the country to cease outreach activities such as health fairs, open houses, newsletters, and public service announcements.

And I ask the Senate to call on the VA to rescind its new regulations which require the rationing of health care. These regulations—which give priority for health care to veterans with service-connected conditions, without taking into account the medical needs of patients—could add to the VA's red tape, making the already long waiting times at many VA facilities even longer.

I believe it is also important the Senate join in supporting Senator JOHNSON's Veterans Health Care Funding Guarantee Act, which would assure adequate funding of these important priorities.

Regrettably, this administration has launched an assault on Priority 7 veterans, those who lack a service-connected disability and whose income is higher than the current VA eligibility standard—\$24,500 for a single person. Priority 7 veterans have grown from 2 percent of VA patients in 1995 to about 33 percent currently—a total of 1.6 million veterans. Although this increase coincides with the 1996 law that changed the VA's eligibility system, veterans have turned to the VA mainly because they have nowhere else to go for affordable prescription drugs. These are the same people who would benefit most from a Medicare prescription drug benefit—their incomes are too high for Medicaid, but too low to handle the health system's growing reliance on expensive prescription drugs.

Where are our priorities when we are content with not passing a prescription benefit plan for our seniors—including these honorable men and women—and then say that we will not fight for adequate funding for our VA hospitals? I find these misplaced priorities disturbing and I think it high time we finally did something about it.

We should remember the words of George Washington: “The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation.” Today, after one of the most meaningful days in our year, it is time for us to show our commitment to our veterans and, by doing so, show our soldiers that their service means something to this country and to this government—that we won’t just send them into harms way and forget about them when they come home. We will remember their service and always keep faith.

AMERICA’S POWER

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I join my colleagues today to commemorate September 11, 2002, and the Special Joint Session of Congress held in New York City. Americans are a generous people, with both our time and our money. We are a people committed to our religious beliefs. We are a people who place great value on education and the individual. We seek opportunity at every turn for our children, and we strive to take care of those who are elderly, infirm, and less fortunate.

We are also a people who take great pride in the protections we collectively offer one another through a common defense. We wear most humbly the mantle of “Super Power.”

Last September 11, our collective vulnerability in securing the borders of our nation was made known to all. In those initial chaotic hours, we watched the opening battle of what is now called the “War on Terror.”

Like many states, Alabama lost sons and daughters that day. Indeed, five Alabamians died in the Pentagon. Families were broken and great symbols of our might and entrepreneurial achievement made waste. We felt, and I believe we still feel, a collective pain in our hearts that will never heal. But the world has witnessed the development of a new resolve among Americans. A resolve too quiet for too long.

In the past year, we have taken a long and hard look at our defense posture. We have found great problems that must be fixed. We have found strength. We have committed our uniform services to battle, and we must give our President tools and the authority to get the job done.

Nearly a year has elapsed. Our emotions still run high.

America is demanding much from itself and its governmental leaders. The creation of the Department of

Homeland Security has resulted in a vigorous and healthy debate and a strong interest in making our homeland safer and improving our intelligence gathering capabilities.

Fundamentally, the homeland defense debate is about change. Specifically, it is about protection of American citizens.

I am proud of this country and how we have reacted. Everything has not been perfect, but great progress has been made. Noted columnist Mr. Charles Krauthammer recently wrote, “National character does not change in a day. September 11 did not alter the American character, it merely revealed it.” I could not agree more.

The American character displayed “courage, resolve, resourcefulness and above all resilience” Krauthammer wrote and I agree. We are a great power and indeed a super power.

We are a nation that believes in freedom and progress and are forgiving and slow to anger, but when aroused we have proven once again we can be a terrible force.

Our President is leading us with strength and resolve. Homeland defense is but a part—an important part—of that resolve. Foreign policy initiatives, social policy changes and prosecution of the War on Terror are other aspects as well. Of the latter, winning is no simple matter. Patience, superior planning, and the support of the military are all required to complete the tasks which lie ahead.

The nation has met the challenge this year. Now we must work hard as the memories of the horror of September 11 fade, to finish the job of making our homeland safe and ensuring that our magnificent military continues to expand its capabilities and world leadership. We must not sleep.

CLARENCE MILLER POST OFFICE

Mr. VOINOVICH. Madam President, I speak today on behalf of a bill considered by the Senate, H.R. 4755, to designate a post office in Lancaster, OH, as the “Clarence Miller Post Office Building.” I strongly support this bill honoring a long-time Member of the Ohio Congressional delegation.

Clarence Miller is a native and life-long resident of Lancaster, OH. The third of six children, Clarence grew up during the difficult times of the Great Depression. He learned the value of hard work at an early age and began his professional life by delivering newspapers for the Lancaster Eagle Gazette. After graduating from high school, he started his career at Ohio Fuel and Gas digging ditches. Through determination and hard work he eventually earned a position of electrical engineer. While employed full time at Ohio Fuel, he joined his family in opening a small electric wiring business in Lancaster and worked there during his “off” hours.

At Ohio Fuel, Clarence was introduced to politics when he participated

in a civics course offered to help employees better understand government. Clarence was enthralled by the subject and soon began teaching the course.

He was able to put into practice all he learned when he was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Lancaster City Council. Subsequently, he was elected to a full term and then was elected mayor. Following his term as mayor, Clarence served the people of 10th District of Ohio in the U.S. House of Representatives for 27 years, from 1966–1993. Representative Miller served for 6 years on the House Agriculture Committee and the Public Works and Transportation Committee, and then he was selected to serve on the Appropriations Committee, where he served for 20 years, and fought hard to reduce Federal spending during times of skyrocketing deficits.

Mr. Miller’s achievements did not go unrecognized by his fellow Ohioans. His many awards include honorary doctorate degrees from Marietta College and Rio Grande College, and the Phillips Medal of Public Service from Ohio University.

I thank my colleagues for their consideration of this matter important to the people of Ohio.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CHANDLER RAYMOND KELLER: IN MEMORIAM

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to share with my colleagues the memory of one of my constituents, Chandler Keller, of Manhattan Beach, California, who lost his life on September 11, 2001. He was a passenger on American Airlines Flight 77. As we all know, that plane crashed into the Pentagon, killing everyone on board. Mr. Keller was a 29 year-old lead propulsion engineer and project manager with Boeing Satellite Systems in El Segundo, California.

Chandler Keller was known to his family and friends as “Chad”. He was born in Manhattan Beach, California. Chad mostly grew up there, with the exception of some time spent in Hong Kong, New York and Sydney, Australia due to his father’s work assignments with Security Pacific Corporation.

As a child, Chad enjoyed a great love of rocketry and an avid interest in space. As a young boy he had an innate ability to understand machines and how to make them work. In 1993, Chad graduated from the University of Colorado’s aerospace engineering program and pursued his career at Hughes/Boeing, working in their satellite launching program.

Chad and his wife, Lisa Hurley Keller, were married on July 22, 2000 at the Old Mission in Santa Barbara. During their brief time together Chad and Lisa enjoyed travel, outdoor activities, and most of all, being with one another.

Chad Keller enjoyed surfing, skiing and snowboarding. He loved to cook