

(Rept. No. 108-75) on the resolution (H. Res. 197) waiving a requirement of clause 6(a) of rule XIII with respect to consideration of certain resolutions reported from the Committee on Rules, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

CONGRATULATING UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT HUSKIES

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Education and the Workforce be discharged from further consideration of the resolution, (H. Res. 187) congratulating the University of Connecticut Huskies for winning the 2003 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I women's basketball championship, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Connecticut?

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 187

Whereas the University of Connecticut Huskies women's basketball team won its third National Collegiate Athletic Association championship in 4 years by defeating the University of Tennessee by the score of 73-68;

Whereas, after losing 4 All-American players to graduation, the Huskies were still able to finish the 2002-2003 season with a nearly perfect 37-1 record, becoming only the 3rd NCAA Division I women's basketball team to repeat as national champions;

Whereas Diana Taurasi was chosen as the consensus national women's Player of the Year and named the Final Four Most Outstanding Player;

Whereas the University of Connecticut Huskies set an NCAA Division I women's record by winning 70 games in a row;

Whereas University of Connecticut Huskies head coach Geno Auriemma was named NCAA Division I women's basketball Coach of the Year, won his 501st game and 4th National Championship;

Whereas the high caliber of the University of Connecticut Huskies in both athletics and academics has significantly advanced the sport of women's basketball and provided inspiration for future generations of young men and women alike; and

Whereas the University of Connecticut Huskies' championship season has rallied Connecticut residents of all ages behind a common purpose and triggered a wave of euphoria across the State: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives commends the University of Connecticut Huskies women's basketball team for winning the 2003 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I women's basketball championship and for completing the 2002-2003 season with a 37-1 record.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today and to join all of my Connecticut colleagues to honor the 2003 NCAA Women's Basketball Champion, the University of Connecticut Huskies. This resolution congressionally recognizes a group of young women who have excelled both on and off the court. Connecticut is incredibly proud of them.

This is the University of Connecticut's second consecutive basketball championship, only the third time an NCAA women's basketball team has ever repeated as national champions.

Led by the NCAA Player of the Year, Diana Taurasi, the Huskies capped a 37 and 1 season by beating the University of Tennessee Tuesday tonight, 73 to 68. All of the State of Connecticut watched with pride as the Huskies claimed their place as the repeat national champions.

The University of Connecticut was founded in 1881 and has a rich history of providing educational and athletic opportunities to undergraduates of diverse interests, abilities, and backgrounds. It is with great joy, Mr. Speaker, that as a former teaching assistant at the University of Connecticut I take the floor today to say way to go, Huskies.

I wanted to congratulate Diana Taurasi, Maria Conlon, Ann Strother, Jessica Moore, and Barbara Turner. But do not forget the other players on the team who contributed so much to the success and overall efforts of the team: Ashley Battle, Willnet Crocket, Stacey Marron, Nicole Wolff, Ashley Valley, and Morgan Valley. And a special "way to go" goes to Head coach Geno Auriemma, associate head coach Chris Dailey, Tonya Cardoza, and Janelle Elliot, athletic director Lew Perkins, and the parents of all of the members of this national championship team. And finally to my friend, UCONN president Philip Austin, and his administration for fielding such a fine team of scholar-athletes.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS), my colleague from the Connecticut delegation, for introducing this resolution honoring the Huskies for their fourth NCAA women's basketball championship and their third and fourth seasons. An extraordinary group of young women.

This year's victory is especially inspirational because the Huskies overcame incredible odds this year, to repeat with only one starting player returning from last year's championship team. They are the first women's basketball team in history to win a national championship without a single senior on the roster and only the third to win back-to-back championships. With this title victory against the mighty Tennessee Vols, and I might just say to my colleague from Tennessee that we honor today these

young women for their competitive spirit and their heart, our Huskies are certain to be remembered as one of the greatest basketball teams in sports history.

The people of Connecticut are tremendously proud of their Huskies, who have set an example for all us with their teamwork and with their standard for perfection. Though this victory was a team effort, as the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS) has said, and he listed the names of all of the members of the team, I just want to make particular mention of guards Maria Conlon, who is from Derby, Connecticut, and I represent Derby, Connecticut. It is in the third congressional district. And Diana Taurasi, a fellow daughter of Italian immigrants who scored 28 points on her way to being named the Final Four Most Outstanding Player and Consensus National Player of the year. Diana was nothing less than dominating. She scored the third-most points in Division I tournament history, the fourth most-ever in the Final Four, and tied for the second most-ever in a title game. She did this all with an aching back, one good ankle, and a heart whose size is only matched by that of the Huskies' dreams and their determination.

The game of women's basketball has changed since the days when women in my generation played it on only a half court, and I did that for 4 years at the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy Laurelton Hall in Milford, Connecticut. I am sure that in the days when my mother played, and she did, and my mother is 89 years old, but she played in the leagues when they had them in New Haven, Connecticut, women's leagues all those years ago, but no one dreamed at that time that women would one day play before a national audience of millions. The game may have changed, but the need to get young girls involved in sports has not.

Without question, the Huskies have illustrated for us that the results of Congress's commitment and my colleagues' commitment through title IX, that when given the resources, women are just as talented and as exciting to watch as any men's team that is out there. Women now constitute 40 percent of college athletes compared to the 15 percent 30 years ago before title IX became law. As evidenced by the trailblazing UCONN Huskies, the values that women learn from sports participation, leadership, teamwork, discipline, pride and accomplishment are irreplaceable. Today's athletic successes help us to increase our participation in tomorrow's workforce, like the number of business management and ownership positions. In fact, 80 percent of female managers of Fortune 500 companies have a sports background. There may be a future Fortune 500 executive on the Huskies right now.

Either way, one cannot deny that participation in athletics has given women many of the tools they need for

success. Because of their hard work, absolute determination, and a commitment to teamwork on and off the court, these talented young women will be remembered as we debate title IX and its impact on the women in this country. They will be the image in our minds of women reaching for their dreams and succeeding.

The UCONN Huskies have set a new standard of excellence that teams in the future will strive to match. They achieved perfection, and they have inspired all of us.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Huskies on their championship win and on their incredible season. They have once again earned our recognition and respect. Let's go, Huskies.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from the second district of Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN).

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS) for yielding me this time.

I will not take the full 5 minutes, but I do rise in the spirit of good sportsmanship that we see exhibited in our wonderful system of collegiate athletics on almost a daily basis to offer credit where credit is due and congratulate the great women's basketball team at the University of Connecticut on their victory over my own hometown Lady Vols.

I have had the privilege on two occasions of being Pat Summitt's honorary assistant coach, and my collegiate coaching record is two and zero, I am proud to say, because Coach Summitt has been certainly one of the most outstanding coaches in the history of basketball, having led her teams to six national championships. But certainly our number one rival in women's basketball has been the great teams and program that Coach Geno Auriemma has established and built at the University of Connecticut. And those University of Connecticut women certainly showed in every way that not only were they talented athletes but they were wonderful young women as well and outstanding examples for young people all over this Nation.

□ 1330

Unfortunately, I do wish that I was on the other side of this resolution and that I was offering it, and that my friend the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS) was up congratulating me. I do now, unfortunately, owe him some Tennessee country ham and some honey, that I will bring following the recess.

Mr. Speaker, I will simply end by saying once again, congratulations to a really outstanding team and also by saying, wait until next year.

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for his remarks and to extend our commendations to his team. It was a tough game, it was a tight game, it was an exciting game. I had promised that if we came

up short I would give him an evening's supply of our fine Mystic Pizza from Mystic, Connecticut. Fortunately I do not have to do that. But I look forward to getting some of that fine Tennessee ham.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield further, I did say some good things about Pat Summitt; and I do want to say that I am really very, very proud of my Lady Vols, because coming in second in the entire Nation is really a great, great accomplishment. I wish we were number one, but number two is not bad at all, and I am very, very proud of my hometown Lady Vols.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I just say to my colleague from Tennessee, who has an office across from mine in the Rayburn Building, that our staffs had a wager, and they have been gracious in making sure that we were the recipients of the goodness of the State of Tennessee and the district.

As I said in my comments, it is wonderful and marvelous to watch these young women, whether they are the Huskies or the Lady Vols, just play their hearts out. I think it is a tremendous tribute to them and to what they do in terms of their leadership of our country, now and for the future. We are proud of the Lady Vols as well, and I thank my colleague.

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 10 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON).

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the outstanding accomplishments of the University of Connecticut women's basketball team, who defeated the University of Tennessee Volunteers 73 to 68 to win the NCAA tournament on April 8, 2003.

These young women demonstrated throughout their season an ability to focus, to maintain effort even when losing, to work as a team and to hone their individual skills that was truly inspiring, month after month.

That much said, the Lady Vols did a fantastic job as well, and Connecticut admires and respects their skill and ability each year.

I would note that without title IX, none of these young women would have had the opportunity to develop into world class athletes.

I would like to offer, as well, special congratulations to head coach Geno Auriemma, who won his second consecutive national title. After losing four senior starters last year, junior Diana Taurasi took control of the team and led them to victory, scoring 28 points herself.

Mr. Speaker, these extraordinary young women do not need me to tell them they are champions or that their accomplishments are appreciated. This year was supposed to be a year of rebuilding, but the Huskies were not

going to rest on their laurels. Over the past years, they have only lost one game.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to point out that the outstanding achievements of this team offer a fine example to our Nation's young people. We can rise to incredible heights if we are able to combine individual excellence of skill and dedication with the communication and overarching commitment to shared goals that the small word "teamwork" denotes.

I applaud the UCONN Huskies for their remarkable achievements, both on and off the court, individually and as a team. We are proud of each one of you, and of our UCONN Huskies.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON).

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I thank my dear friend and colleague for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I am amazed that I learn something every time I come to this floor. I have always known of the gentlewoman's great tenacity and ability to put on a full court press, but I had never known that she was a basketball player before, and clearly am astonished to learn that her mom was a basketball player as well, although certainly she was in the center of her life and a point guard in the women's movement in Connecticut.

I am honored, as well, to be joined by my colleagues from Connecticut, and want to especially thank the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS) for organizing this. The University of Connecticut at Storrs is in the heart of the Second Congressional District. I thank, of course, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON) for joining us as well.

The University of Connecticut's women's basketball team is special to the State of Connecticut. They are virtually embraced by all of our citizens, and there has been a love affair in the State of Connecticut with this team. As most of you and everyone knows, throughout the Northeast the winters can get pretty severe, and this was no exception. But the Huskies, both the men's and women's teams, bring extraordinary delight into people's homes all across the State of Connecticut.

We, day in and day out, have the best fans anywhere in the United States, as witnessed by sellout after sellout after sellout of our games, and it is because of the extraordinary program that has been put together at the University of Connecticut.

So, along with the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS), the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON) and the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO), I want to give the tribute that rightfully belongs to Geno Auriemma and his entire coaching staff, Lew Perkins, and President Austin for the outstanding job they have done at the University of Connecticut.

I would also like to point out that this was a special final four, and, as both the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) and the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON) have pointed out, underscored by the importance of those that are thinking about changing title IX. So, in many respects, though the University of Connecticut Huskies walked off the court victorious, the real winners were women's athletics and its importance.

I say that because I think that there is a unique purity about this game and those that watch athletic competition. I liken it to baseball in the 1950s and 1960s. For sports enthusiasts and purists who watched the women's final four and got to see Duke and Tennessee and Connecticut and Texas, and then the final game between Connecticut and Tennessee, you saw athleticism, sportsmanship, camaraderie and gamesmanship at its very best, something certainly that we all can be proud of and something that I know, having two girls and a son at home, that by watching that kind of play are inspired and get to dream the big dreams that the Lady Vols and the University of Connecticut Huskies have dreamt.

For UCONN it was a tremendous victory. I sincerely hope that Geno and Kathy and their family get to really live this moment, because for the coach and for Chris Dailey and all of the assistant coaches, a three-peat is already expected of them.

Their accomplishments are legendary. They set a national record for consecutive victories this year by winning 70 games in a row, they won 76 of 77 games on their way to their second national championship, and they beat every ranked team along the way. As was pointed out, this was done for the first time by a team of all underclassmen.

In Connecticut we like to say that the Supremes had Diana Ross, certainly the British had Princess Diana, but in Connecticut, we have D, Diana Taurasi, simply the best basketball player in the country. Throughout this past week people from West Virginia have been coming up to me and talking about how she reminds them of Jerry West; and people from Indiana have been coming up and saying how she reminds them of Larry Byrd. And we had Sue Byrd last year, who was not a bad player either; but Diana Taurasi is in a class of her own.

They say a team is an extension of its coach, and certainly this team is the personification of Geno Auriemma, of his spirit, his style, his manner of coaching. He does so with class. Geno Auriemma won his 500th game against the University of Texas and his 501st against Tennessee, and his remarks on beating Tennessee were a tribute to Pat Summitt and the Lady Vols, saying that they had beat the best women's basketball program in the country, and Tennessee arguably was playing the best basketball of any team in

the tournament at that point. Of course, Pat Summitt's credits are legendary as well.

This is a rivalry that has been established and will continue for some time to come, but it is one, I think, that again highlights the importance of making sure that people all across this country get to see women's athletics played out on a national stage with all the excitement, drama and athleticism that this competition has brought to the country.

I would also point out that what makes us so proud of our Huskies is that, as extraordinary as they are on the court, they are equally extraordinary off the court, not only academically, in the classroom, but as ambassadors.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the outstanding success of the Big East throughout this tournament. Our colleagues from New York, of course, are very proud of the Syracuse team that went on to win the national championship; and our men's team, again going to the Sweet 16, and also being joined by three other teams, and, of course, the eventual winner, Syracuse.

I know New York and the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS), if he is still within earshot and is listening, is proud of the great job that St. John's did in winning the NIT; and I know that the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURTHA) was somewhat chagrined that Pitt did not make it all the way. But nonetheless, nonetheless, it was a stellar achievement on the part of the Big East. Geno Auriemma, again, pointed that out.

So I am very proud to stand with my colleagues here today and pay tribute to the University of Connecticut and their outstanding women's basketball team. They are a credit to their families, to their university, to our great State of Connecticut and to the entire Nation.

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP), a gentleman who is himself a great basketball player and distinguishes himself on the court in congressional play.

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, certainly I thank the authors of this resolution for coming to the floor today, just a few hours after there was significant rancor and division, to a point of unity here, to recognize the best in college athletics.

□ 1345

There is no doubt that Geno and Diana and the entire UConn team deserve the national championship, one of the greatest games I think in the history of women's basketball, certainly the two most prominent programs in the land. And as a basketball player myself, and I appreciate the compliment, but great is a relative term, and the older I get, the better I used to be. That is the way most of us are.

The best lessons I have learned in my life were in the game of basketball.

Sports are very important at every level. Also, I am the chairman of the Congressional Fitness Caucus, and it is important that we promote physical activity and to see the example of these female college athletes, the heart that they have, the dignity that their coach displayed, in victory and, a long time ago, in defeat. It has been a long time since the UConn Lady Huskies have not had a good year. It is really incredible.

I just have to tell my colleagues, I am a Lady Vols fan, rooted for them, so proud of our program. But I tell my colleagues, this was a very special team and a very special year for a great bunch of ladies. And to see Geno, I watched every minute of the game and watched Geno's comments, and for him to even hail the proud Italian heritage that we saw demonstrated in the heart and soul, just the hustle, the determination.

Of course, Tennessee played their hearts out as well: Karen, the Jacks, incredible female athletes.

This game of women's basketball is one of the fastest moving sports climbs in the history of this country. There is excitement filling up the greatest domes in the country with sports fans and enthusiasts of all shapes and sizes and ages. It is just really good that women's sports are doing so well. And boy, the apex I think of the competition was the University of Connecticut's victory for the national championship.

So I applaud my colleagues. In a time of unity today on the House floor, we can come and praise this dedication. It is just wonderful that physical exercise and athletic competition can bring out the best in people, both physically and mentally, because I think that there is a tremendous respect between Pat Summitt and Geno and the greatest coaches in the land in female sports. It is great for women's basketball that these two teams made it all the way to that final game. I do not know what the ratings were, but they had to be high; and I know many of my colleagues were glued to the television that night as they knew the two most successful programs in women's basketball had made it to the final game of the national championship. They played their hearts out, and my hat is off to the Connecticut Huskies. They deserved to win, they deserve to be champions, and they are true champions with dignity. They have the respect of every person, I think, in this country.

So this brings out the best in America where two good teams compete and the best team won. So congratulations, Connecticut. We will see you next year.

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments, for his sportsmanship, and for his encouragement of physical fitness among those of us who serve here in Congress. He is a terrific leader in that regard.

Seeing no further speakers on my side, I would ask my colleague if she would like to close.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, and I do have someone else who would like to speak, another colleague. I just want to say to my colleague from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) I had no idea that he aspired to sports commentary. We have talked about Maryland and Missouri and Texas, but we have to deal with California as well.

But the long and the short of it, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES).

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut for yielding, and I congratulate her and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS) for hosting this resolution for congratulations for UConn.

I rise to celebrate the coaches and the rest of the team. But I rise in support of Barbara Turner. Barbara Turner is my constituent. She attended East Technical High School in the 11th Congressional District of Ohio, which is Cleveland. I watched her play basketball in high school. My son Mervyn graduated at the same time she did; he is a basketball player as well, and I wish I could say their school was doing as good as UConn. I cannot. But I am so pleased to join with all of my colleagues in celebrating UConn.

I want to just close with two things. Is it not wonderful to see how well we are doing with this program as a result of the strong support of title IX? It is time for us to stand up and continue to support a successful program. It is time for us to stand up and continue to support another successful program in colleges and universities: affirmative action. I would just ask my colleagues across this country to think about how great those programs are.

Finally, I invite my colleagues to Cleveland, Ohio, in 2007 for the women's NCAA finals. I am the Chair of that event. Come on to Cleveland, and we will celebrate another victory.

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, we have no further speakers, if the gentlewoman wishes to close; and then I will close.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I will take my colleague up on the trip to Cleveland.

Mr. Speaker, I am reluctant to do this, but my colleague from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) has asked for a minute, so I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON).

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time. I would feel remiss, with the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP) taking most of the time here, that I did not get an opportunity to mention that the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. FORD) had also been involved in a wager, far more dramatic, I might point out, I say to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS), than the pauly ham that you were able to get. The gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. FORD) had committed that the Tennessee delegation, working

through the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. WAMP), was going to get us a new wing at the University of Connecticut; and we want to greatly thank him for that as well.

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. I yield to the gentleman from Connecticut.

Mr. SIMMONS. That is not ham. That would be what?

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Pork.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, we have a rally going here. I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Washington State (Mr. INSLEE).

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

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, we just wanted, from the State of Washington, from the University of Washington Huskies, to congratulate the Connecticut Huskies on this tremendous achievement. I just want to tell my colleagues, it is a particular personal satisfaction to see women's basketball so successful nationally.

My dad was the athletic director for the Seattle public schools in the 1970s when we were starting to break these barriers to fight the sort of coaches of the boys' team to get them to share the gym. This was a very controversial effort to get some of these old codgers to see the light to share the gym, and it is really satisfying to see this tremendous satisfaction. I hope we can work together to make sure that our title IX continues to protect the wonderful growth of women's athletics. Congratulations.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I think it is absolutely clear that we do have to work together and we will work together to make sure that we preserve title IX.

In closing, I want to thank the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SIMMONS) for bringing this resolution to the floor. We all wholeheartedly congratulate the number one NCAA women's team in the country, the UConn Huskies.

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

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the remaining time.

In closing, I would like to say that my colleague, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS), was unavailable for this colloquy and to speak to this resolution because he is chairing a committee at this time; but I suspect he will submit comments for the RECORD.

I would also like to point out that one of the things that I have always admired about the UConn Huskies as a basketball team was the fact that when we look at their jerseys, and I have a T-shirt in front of me that commemorates their great victory this year, but when you look at their jerseys as they play, you will not see the players' names on the jerseys. You will only see the name of UConn, University of Con-

necticut. I think that that is important because what it shows is that in spite of the tremendous talent of the members of this team and the tremendous talent of all of the members of this team, they play as a team, not as individuals. And even somebody like Diana Taurasi, who is so talented, so gifted, who plays such a marvelous game of basketball, but she plays as part of the team, and the team does so well for those reasons.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, my constituents and all of Connecticut congratulate the University of Connecticut Lady Huskies for winning the 2003 NCAA Women's Basketball Championship.

Last year, I stood on this same floor to congratulate the 2002 championship squad, which I felt was the greatest team in the history of women's college basketball. That 39-0 team never trailed in the second half all season. During the NCAA tournament, they won their six games by an average margin of 27 points.

Going into this season, the Lady Huskies had lost four All-American players to graduation. Without their senior leadership, many questioned whether the team would be able to win a third national championship in just 4 years.

But UConn women's basketball has always been a program rich in tradition and a desire to excel. Quite simply, they would not be denied.

Led by junior Diana Taurasi, the national women's player of the year, a pair of freshman sensations, Barbara Turner and Ann Strother, and the unyielding dedication of teammates Maria Conlon, Jessica Moore, Ashley Battle, Nicole Wolff, Morgan and Ashley Valley, Wilnett Crockett and Stacey Marron, the UConn Lady Huskies again finished the season as the finest team in the land.

I also want to commend the hard work of Geno Auriemma, the NCAA Coach of the Year, who along with his coaching staff put together another unbelievable team. With the championship victory, Coach Auriemma won his 501st game and fourth national championship.

Mr. Speaker, this team's speed, precision shooting, and hustle have all contributed to its success. But what strikes me the most about the Lady Huskies is their ability to rise to any occasion.

In the semifinal game, UConn was down 50-41 with 12 minutes left against the University of Texas Longhorns. All game long Texas had stunned the Lady Huskies with its strong rebounding and intense defense. But the Lady Huskies settled down and received a spark off the bench from Wilnett Crockett. In two of the greatest final minutes of women's Final Four history, the Lady Huskies found a way to win. They hit key shots and shut down the Longhorns on their way to a hard-fought 71-69 victory and a ticket to the national championship game.

By the time the Lady Huskies met the Lady Vols of Tennessee in the title game, they could taste victory. Against the most successful women's basketball program in NCAA history, UConn never trailed throughout the game. The result was a 73-68 victory!

I want to congratulate these young women for being such extraordinary role models for Americans of all ages.

These UConn Lady Huskies continue to be the team by which all others are measured.

They were really a joy to watch, and I congratulate them on their tremendous achievement.

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 187.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURGESS). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Connecticut?

There was no objection.

SMALLPOX EMERGENCY PERSONNEL PROTECTION ACT OF 2003

Mr. BURR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 1770) to provide benefits and other compensation for certain individuals with injuries resulting from administration of smallpox countermeasures, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

Mrs. CAPPs. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, the emergency supplemental appropriations bill which the Congress should pass shortly was going to include a smallpox vaccination compensation program. Now it is being presented for unanimous consent.

For many months I have worked closely with the community of first responders. Many of them are nurses. I commend the leadership of the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) and the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), who have worked with many other Members of this body to make this program, this compensation program as good as possible. And when we beat a bad bill, which was on the suspension calendar a few days ago as we did, then it gives us an opportunity to improve the program as it was presented. That is what has been attempted to do. Great efforts have been expended and have resulted in marked improvements on the woefully inadequate proposal that the administration initially put forward.

I salute again my colleagues who have worked hard from within this body to represent the needs of our first responders as they anticipate and step

forward to become a part of the shield against bioterrorist attack.

The administration, however, was difficult in this area. I am not convinced that this end product which is before us today really will inspire enough confidence in nurses to make the vaccine program work. However, again, I reiterate that there are improvements in the initial bill that were put forward.

But the process back and forth from the White House to the House of Representatives was very much in the arena of parsimonious, as the progress that was made came in bits and pieces. It felt to the community of first responders as if they were being nicked and dined. And now, with the product that we have, the nursing community, many of the people who will be the first responders, many of them tell me that the safety net provided in the bill before us today still has large holes in it. And it is told to us that the administration has refused to go any further than what is in this bill.

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Now, time will tell us if this proposal succeeds, and the proof is actually not right here in this body but out in the community, in our homeland security efforts, in our communities where firefighters, police officers, EMTs, nurses will be asked to roll up their sleeves to become heroes on behalf of us all.

If they feel confidence that the government will stand behind them with a good compensation package, they will be more inspired to do this. I wish I could be more confident. However, again I remark that there has been progress made.

For example, I myself was recently asked by the Capitol physician to be a first responder here in the Congress. For that reason, I have been asked to get a smallpox vaccination myself; and I am presently consulting with my doctor, as I should do, and with other medical experts about the advisability of this.

But if I do take this vaccine and something goes wrong, I know that my family and my dependents will be taken care of because I am covered by the Federal Employees Compensation Act.

Under the bill that we will pass today under unanimous consent, a nurse in Santa Barbara, a firefighter in any community across this country who takes a vaccine to serve his or her country, may not have that same confidence. So this goes beyond the consideration of a particular vaccine; it really gets down to how we value our first responders and what we are asking them to do on behalf of their country.

Many have said that on 9/11 we crossed through a threshold in this country, and life has been different ever since. We now face the prospect lurking every single day, the possibility of a terrorist attack.

One of the real threats that we face as a nation to which we desire to pro-

tect ourselves is the threat of a bioterrorist attack. We saw that as the anthrax situation came upon us.

Who are the first responders who are called upon to answer the call in the event of such an attack? These are those who work and live among us, ordinary citizens asked now by their government, by their President, to take on extraordinary responsibility.

For many, life goes on as normal. They take the vaccine and nothing will happen. But for a few, and a very few, a drastic reaction could happen. There is a risk to this act of patriotism that we are asking our fellow citizens to take on.

I want us to be, with every measure within us, standing behind them; so that for that handful of people who have life permanently altered for themselves and are never able to be the breadwinner for their family, as they have been in the past, because they stepped forward on behalf of their country, I want them to have the full measure of protection such as I have as a Federal employee.

Reluctantly, I look at the package before us: parsimonious, in my regard. I will withdraw my reservation, but I will do so reluctantly, because I want this process to be better.

Mr. Speaker, I will withdraw my reservation of objection with the hope that our administration, our leaders, will continue to work to give the assurance that screening, that education be available for every first responder to avoid the risks, as many of them as we can.

We can work to make this package even better.

Mr. BURR. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. CAPPs. I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me.

This process has been enhanced by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPs) and her expertise and her passion on this particular issue.

There is no doubt that this initiative is one that is needed for first responders, regardless of the community that they come from, because without identifying specifically where the threat may be, we have to make sure that we prepare 100 percent of our first responders and health care workers.

Mr. Speaker, the unanimous consent request before us today for the Smallpox Emergency Personnel Protection Act of 2003, a bill critical to our public health security and to our national security against the potential devastating threat of a terrorist release of the deadly smallpox virus, this bill is based on H.R. 1463, which I introduced in the Committee on Energy and Commerce, but it contains refinements, refinements that have been agreed to on a bipartisan basis with the ranking member, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPs), the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), and the