

The soldiers of the 507th Maintenance Company, while exceptional, are not the only heroes who call Fort Bliss home. Each and every one of the more than 3,600 other United States Army soldiers who were deployed to Iraq from Fort Bliss is also a hero, and all of their sacrifices should be remembered. The thousands of soldiers who contributed to the war effort from home and the family members who offered their unwavering support must also be recognized. El Paso is a city full of soldiers—they and their families deserve our respect and gratitude.

El Paso is proud to be the home of so many of our nation's soldiers. During the week of August 3–10, 2003, El Paso will celebrate "Freedom Fiesta Week," a series of events to welcome home and honor the region's armed services personnel. The celebration will kick off on August 3rd with the "Freedom Fiesta Picnic," featuring free food and drinks and live music and entertainment. Throughout the week, active duty and reserve military personnel and their families will have free or reduced admission on selected days to Wet n' Wild Water Park, Western Playland Amusement Park, the El Paso Diablos, the El Paso Zoo, and various clubs and restaurants in Downtown El Paso. The week will culminate in Saturday's parade, featuring more than 6,000 of our Fort Bliss soldiers.

The organization of Freedom Fiesta Week was a collaborative effort, and I would like to commend the Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce, the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the El Paso Black Chamber of Commerce, the City of El Paso, the County of El Paso and the Association of the U.S. Army for their hard work in planning what promises to be an exciting week. I must also thank all the organizations participating in Freedom Fiesta Week for their generosity. I do not have the words to express my thanks to our troops, but Mr. Speaker, it is with events like Freedom Fiesta Week that we can begin to show them how grateful we are for their hard work and dedication during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

HONORING JAMES DOUGLAS
THOMAS

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise before this body of Congress and this nation today to pay tribute to a selfless community servant and dedicated veteran from my district, Doug Thomas of Craig, Colorado. An active member of the Craig community, Doug is the newly elected Chaplain for the American Legion in the State of Colorado. I would like to join the Craig community and American Legion in honoring Doug's commitment and recognizing this distinct honor.

When members of American Legion had the opportunity to select their new Chaplain, Doug was an obvious choice. His reputation as a dedicated Chaplain had preceded him; Doug had done great work as both the District Chaplain and Chaplain of Post 2700. He made it clear at the state conference that he would work harder than any other nominee, an attribute that is essential to the position.

Doug's commitment to the American Legion is evident in his plans as Chaplain. He hopes

to visit all 164 American Legion Posts throughout the state during his one-year term, sponsor workshops at state conventions, and start a Prayer Program that will be mailed to families around the state. Doug enjoys all aspects of the Chaplain position, but he particularly enjoys having an impact on families across the state.

Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleagues here today in applauding Doug's civic-mindedness and in recognizing this prestigious honor. This recognition to Doug for the work he does in his community is long overdue, and I am proud to bring his achievements to the attention of this body of Congress today. Congratulations and thanks again, Doug, for your many years of hard work on behalf of Craig and the State of Colorado. May you have many more to come!

INTRODUCTION OF THE STEVE
GRISSOM RELIEF FUND ACT

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 2003

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today my colleague NATHAN DEAL and I have introduced the Steve Grissom Relief Fund Act.

This legislation would compensate individuals who contracted AIDS through HIV-contaminated blood products and transplants. It is modeled on the bipartisan Ricky Ray Hemophilia Relief Act of 1998, and honors the late Steve Grissom, a North Carolina resident who was infected with HIV while undergoing treatment for leukemia.

A study conducted by the Institute of Medicine at the request of Congress found that "blood became a vector for HIV infection in the early and mid-1980s and caused more than half of the 16,000 hemophiliacs and over 12,000 blood transfusion recipients to contract AIDS." The Food and Drug Administration, the report claimed, failed to protect the blood supply when it chose not to implement screening options recommended by the Centers for Disease Control in 1983. In addition, the report recommended that a fund be established to compensate people who have become infected with HIV from contaminated blood products.

In 1995, legislation was introduced to help hemophiliacs who contracted HIV through such transfusions. The Ricky Ray Act established a trust fund for making one-time payments of \$100,000 to persons with hemophilia who contracted HIV through tainted blood products. The bill passed with overwhelming support, and was fully funded in 2001. However, the bill did not address the problem of people like Steve Grissom, who received blood transfusions or transplants for other reasons. Our bill would resolve the current inequity and extend the same benefits to non-hemophiliacs, their secondarily infected spouses, and children infected perinatally.

Steve Grissom was a resident of North Carolina's 4th District and my constituent. An Army veteran, Steve was an avid pilot and outdoorsman, a loyal husband, a loving father, and a tireless advocate for others. He advanced legislation for terminally ill parents at the state level, and founded the National Association for Victims of Transfusion-Acquired

AIDS (NAVTA) organization. In 1998, he tried very hard to get individuals like himself included in the Ricky Ray Act. However, rather than contribute to the demise of this legislation, Steve pulled back so that at least some would be compensated for the horrors that occurred during the early 1980s.

Americans who have contracted AIDS through HIV-contaminated products deserve the same consideration regardless of whether they are hemophiliacs. We owe it to people like Steve Grissom, and their survivors, to try and compensate for this terrible tragedy.

I invite my colleagues to join us in completing the work begun with the Ricky Ray Act by cosponsoring the Steve Grissom Relief Fund Act.

HONORING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 2003

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the March on Washington, the most significant civil rights demonstration in United States history. The march was a watershed event that led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

On August 28, 1963, more than 250,000 people of all ages, races and religions traveled from every corner of America to Washington on "freedom" buses and trains. Some participants walked as far as 230 miles to reach our nation's capital. The march was by far the largest and most peaceful of its time and its volume greatly exceeded the expected 100,000 participants. The purpose of the March for Jobs and Freedom was to encourage passage of the Civil Rights Act presented to Congress by President John F. Kennedy. The United Auto Workers union, one of the march's biggest sponsors, printed hundreds of signs with slogans such as "UAW Says Jobs and Freedom for Every American."

My dear friend, colleague and genuine American hero JOHN LEWIS, had the honor of speaking alongside Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who concluded the event with his renowned "I Have A Dream" speech. Dr. King's eloquent words should be remembered today: "When we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

Reverend King's powerful words did not fall on deaf ears. After President Kennedy's tragic death, his successor President Lyndon Johnson, in his first address to Congress and the nation, called for the passage of the Civil Rights Act. "Let us continue," he declared, promising that "the ideas and the ideals which [Kennedy] so nobly represented must and will be translated into effective action." Finally, on July 2, 1964, President Johnson signed into law the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the most important piece of civil rights legislation in United States history.