Thus, it is an appropriate time that we recognize and thank those volunteers. They are indeed proud and patriotic veterans who selflessly give back to their comrades and provide comfort to the veteran's family and friends. As any veteran will tell you, their allegiance to the military and its service members does not end when they are discharged from service. This is a bond that lasts for a lifetime.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. BONO) for introducing concurrent resolution, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 260. This important measure recognizes and honors the service of individuals who volunteer as honor guards during funeral and memorial services at national cemeteries.

I thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Chairman SMITH), the ranking member, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS), and my good friend, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Benefits, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. BROWN), for their steady leadership of veterans issues in the committee.

I also want to commend the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. BONO) for her work on this resolution, and I want to thank all my colleagues who helped to bring this before us today. Additionally, I would like to recognize the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) for her work on a similar resolution that recognizes the United States Army Volunteer Reserve for its distinguished service to veterans and their families.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to represent the Second Congressional District in the State of Maine. My State has one of the highest percentage of veterans populations in the country. I am sure that they support this resolution and join me when I say that the veterans of this Nation deserve nothing less than an honorable and dignified final resting place.

I would like to personally recognize the 23 members of Maine's honor guard for their service. Ten of these individuals are currently deployed and we pray for their quick and safe return. These 23 soldiers serve above and beyond their normal duties to participate in the honor guard, performing over 50 missions a year. Without their effort and sacrifice, our Nation would not shine so bright and we would not live as free as we do today.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, many of the brave men and women who put on the uniform to protect us during World War II and the Korean War are passing away every day. We also find ourselves engaged in hostilities in Afghanistan, Iraq and around the world, and, because of this, we are now burying veterans of a new generation much too soon.

Mr. Speaker, it is our responsibility to provide our brave men and women in uniform an honorable and dignified memorial service. Indeed, without the sacrifice of these volunteer honor guards, we would have a more difficult time fulfilling our responsibility. I thank them for their service and appreciate their efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I support this measure, and I urge all Members to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support House Concurrent Resolution 260.

Mrs. BONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 260, which I introduced last year on behalf of myself and Representatives HENRY BROWN, MIKE BILIRAKIS, KEN CALVERT, JIM DEMINT, JOHNNY ISAKSON, JERRY LEWIS, JOHN SHADEGG and ZACH WAMP. This resolution recognizes and honors the important service of those who volunteer their time to participate in funeral honor guards. These volunteers serve at the interment or memorialization of deceased veterans of the uniformed services of the United States at national cemeteries across the country.

A veteran's family may request the presence of active duty military personnel to provide honor guard services at their loved one's funeral. Unfortunately at times like this when our military is so desperately needed overseas, there is a shortage of available active duty personnel who can perform this duty. Numerous veteran volunteers help fill this void and perform the honor guard duty themselves. These volunteers are once again answering our Nation's call by honoring the military service of their fellow veterans. I feel it is incumbent upon Congress to recognize the service of volunteer honor guards as well as the continuing contribution that these individuals make to our Nation and the families of their fallen brethren.

I would like to specifically honor the many of my district's military retirees who are members of Semper Fi No. 1, an organization that performs volunteer honor guard services at Riverside National Cemetery and has been a driving force behind the creation of volunteer honor guard service throughout the Nation. I am proud to represent the many military retirees who serve as volunteer honor guards.

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. BROWN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 260.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MODIFYING CERTAIN DEADLINES FOR MACHINE-READABLE, TAMPER-RESISTANT ENTRY AND EXIT DOCUMENTS

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4417) to modify certain deadlines pertaining to machine-readable, tamper-resistant entry and exit documents.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4417

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. MODIFICATION OF CERTAIN DEADLINES FOR MACHINE-READABLE, TAMPER-RESISTANT ENTRY AND EXIT DOCUMENTS.

Section 303 of the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act of 2002 (8 U.S.C. 1732) is amended, in each of subjections (b)(2)(A), (c)(1), and (c)(2), by striking ''2004,'' and inserting ''2005,''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. 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.R. 4417.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4417. The Visa Waiver Program allows travelers from certain designated countries to come to the United States as temporary visitors without having to obtain a non-immigrant visa. There are currently more than 10 million foreign visitors entering the United States every year under this program.

Since its creation in 1986, the program has greatly facilitated travel to the United States from participating foreign countries. Through reciprocal arrangements, American international travelers also benefit with greater ease of travel.

The Visa Waiver Program was established on the premise that nationals from participating countries pose little security risk or threat of overstaying their period of admittance, which under the current program is a maximum of 90 days. After the tragic events of September 11, we recognize that a traveler from a visa waiver country can pose a serious threat, especially when the country of origin differs from the country that issues the passport used to enter our country.

It was, in part, to address threats like this that I offered the Enhanced Visa Security and Visa Entry Reform Act of 2002. The act requires the Visa

Waiver Program countries to certify that they have established systems to issue their nationals machine-readable passports that are tamper-resistant and incorporate biometric identifiers that comply with the biometric identifier standards established by the International Civil Aviation Organization.

The act sets a firm deadline of October 26, 2004, after which anyone applying for admission to the United States under the program, with passports issued after that date, must present a passport that meets these standards or otherwise obtain a visa from a United States embassy or consulate overseas.

This requirement will close several security loopholes. First, it will allow the Department of Homeland Security inspectors at ports-of-entry to determine whether a passport properly identifies its bearer. This will combat terrorist imposters and prevent them from defeating lookout lists on which they are posted.

Second, it will make passports much harder to alter or counterfeit.

Third, in conjunction with the installation of scanners at ports-of-entry to read these passports and the completion of exit controls, the DHS can track the arrival and departure of travelers and identify those who overstay their visas.

My goal as author of this act in selecting the October 2004 deadline was to compel countries to act promptly to modernize their passports. I have written to the foreign governments participating in the Visa Waiver Program to ascertain how soon they will be ready to issue biometric passports. I regret that most visa waiver countries will not meet the October 2004 deadline.

However, many are making significant progress and have indicated that the October 2005 deadline is reachable. An example is Belgium, which had one of the weakest passport regimes in Europe, and now has so completely revised its approach that it is the first visa waiver country to meet the new biometric requirements. Belgium has also recently won the Interpol award for the best passport security. Likewise, Austria, Denmark and Slovenia have working prototypes of biometric passports and will begin issuing them as soon as the European Union sets its internal standards for member countries.

Nonetheless, the Secretaries of Homeland Security and State have testified before the House Committee on the Judiciary that most visa waiver countries are still resolving privacy issues, chip durability concerns and production and procurement delays. Accordingly, they asked for legislation to extend the biometric passport deadline.

To minimize the risk of extending the deadline, the administration has initiated security procedures that begin in September of this year. Specifically, the Department of Homeland Security will begin fingerprinting each traveler from the Visa Waiver Program countries so as to strengthen current abbreviated inspection process for visa waiver travelers.

H.R. 4417 simply extends the October 26, 2004, deadline by one year. While this extension provides more time to meet the requirement, this additional breathing space should not lead visa waiver countries nor our own government to become complacent.

The committee will conduct bipartisan oversight to ensure that the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security are working as hard as they can to get their own systems ready to validate biometric passports when they are presented at ports-of-entry. While the visa waiver countries are committing their resources and intellectual talent to comply with our new requirements for identity, our own government should do no less.

I also expect that the State Department will step up pressure on visa waiver countries to meet the new October 2005 deadline instead of providing erroneous assurances that Congress will again provide an extension should they fail to meet the new date.

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On the other hand, it is also crucial that we enact this legislation expeditiously in order to provide our own travel and tourism industry the certainty they need to plan events for the coming months that involve large numbers of travelers from the visa waiver countries.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the gentleman from Wisconsin (Chairman SENSENBRENNER) and I can join forces to make a necessary adjustment in our immigration and homeland security laws that would ensure that the millions of Americans who work in the travel industry do not suffer while we continue to improve new immigration security technologies.

Today we are considering legislation to extend by 1 year the requirement that travelers from visa waiver countries present biometric machine-readable passports at United States ports of entry. A 1-year extension will allow business visitors and tourists from the 27 nations in the visa waiver program to continue to make plans for the near future with currently valid passports and travel to the United States while technology is improved.

Using biometric passports will make us safer, but only if the technology is effective, durable, and part of a globally interoperable system that is compatible between nations. A 1-year extension will give Congress and the State Department more time to assess the very important questions of protecting privacy and ensuring efficient processing, while continuing to make serious steps toward a system that will secure our ports and national security.

As we balance serious threats to national security with our needs to protect our liberty, we must adhere to our fundamental values as an open society. Most visitors come with goodwill, contribute to our economy, share their knowledge, learn about our culture, and spread the promise of democracy and freedom around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join the gentleman from Wisconsin (Chairman SENSENBRENNER) and me in supporting this legislation to ensure that the benefit of travel and exchange are not lost in the war on terror.

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support and as a cosponsor of H.R. 4417, which will extend for one year the deadline for countries to continue eligibility in our Visa Waiver Program by issuing passports which are both machine-readable and also include biometric identifiers.

I do so with a clear focus on tourism, the primary industry in my state. According to the State of Hawaii Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, in 2002, tourists spent more than $11 billion during their vacations in the state. A significant part of these expenditures come from international tourists. And while facilitated international travel is essential not only to recreational tourism, it is also key to international commerce, especially from Asia, and to the education in Hawaii of foreign nationals, a major and growing component of our economy.

Each day, thousands of visitors arrive to Hawaii from foreign destinations, including those countries in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). The tourism industry not only in my state, but every state in the Nation, faces grave consequences if this extension is not granted. According to the State Department, if the deadline is not extended, it expects to process an additional 5 million visas in 2005 alone. This will cripple our embassies and consulates worldwide, compound the existing program of visa issuance, and spell great hardship not only for the travel industry but also business and commerce in general throughout the United States.

The Patriot Act justifiably legislated the machine-readable passport requirement for VWP travelers, and additionally gave the Secretary of State authority to postpone the effective date. However, the Secretary of State lacks further authority to extend the deadline on his own. The Secretary of State, working with the Secretary of Homeland Security, has granted a postponement only until October 26, 2004 of the date by which VWP travelers from 21 countries must present a machine-readable passport at a U.S. port of entry to be admitted to the United States without a visa. Another year is needed; only Congress can extend the deadline, and we must do so passing this legislation today.

While most of the VWP countries are located in Western Europe, there are several countries in the Asia-Pacific Rim which will benefit from an extension of the October 26, 2004 deadline, including Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Brunei, and Japan. These are the countries of most concern to my home.

Mr. Speaker, I share some additional thoughts from key officials within my State's tourism industry. The Director of the State of Hawaii Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism, Mr. Theodore E. Liu,

recently wrote that his department is ''in total support of extending [the deadline of] the Visa Waiver Program countries to have machine readable passports.'' The President and Chief Executive Officer of the Hawaii Tourism Agency, Mr. Rex D. Johnson, wrote that the implementation of ''the program before countries are ready to comply would undoubtedly create mass confusion in international travel.''

To be clear, I support the overall requirement of machine-readable passports as well as the use of biometrics on travel documents, both American and international. And I call upon the executive branch to place biometrics upon a machine-readable American passport as quickly as possible, because biometrics can assist not only our country, but every country, to ensure that the person listed on the passport is the same person who presents the passport upon entering the country. As a biometric identifier is an electronic scan of a physical feature or features, including an eye, hand, fingerprint, or face, use of a biometric identifier allows an immigration inspector to know for certain that the person appearing before him or her is the same person to whom a passenger or visa was issued.

But, Mr. Speaker, given the current situation, we must extend the deadline at least this one year. I therefore agree with the proposal of chairman and ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, the chairman and ranking member of the International Relational Committee, and others, and implore my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the visa waiver program (VWP) allows nationals from 27 countries to enter the United States as nonimmigrant visitors for business or pleasure without first obtaining a visa from a U.S. consulate office. This facilitates international travel and commerce and eases consular office workloads. Last year, approximately 13.5 million visitors entered the United States under this program.

The Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act of 2002 mandated that by October 26, 2004, the government of each VWP country must certify that it has established a program to issue machine-readable passports that are tamper-resistant and incorporate a biometric identifier. This only would apply to new passports that are issued after the October 26, 2004, deadline.

While all 27 VWP countries have a program in place to develop a machine readable, biometric passport, few of the countries will be in a position to start issuing them by the deadline. The required technical and interoperability standards have not yet been completed by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Preliminary ICAO standards were released in May 2003, but they failed to address some key issues, including interoperable chip security standards and interoperable reader standards. Also, ICAO's decision to make facial recognition technology the standard passport biometric was not made until May 2003, leaving VWP countries only 17 months to move a biometric passport from design to production, a process that normally takes years. It is apparent that very few VWP countries will be able to meet the deadline for incorporating the biometric identifiers. H.R. 4417 would extend the deadline for one year. If more time is needed, we can revisit the issue when that deadline approaches.

If the deadline is not extended, the participating countries that fail to meet it will lose the privilege of participating in the program, and the nationals of those countries will need visas to enter the United States. The State Department has estimated that this would result in the need to process an additional 5 million visas.

I am concerned about the effect that even a temporary disruption of the visa waiver program could have on the international tourist industry. In the year 2000, the State of Texas alone received revenue from the international tourist industry that totaled $3,751.3 million. This included $410.6 million on public transportation, $111.1 million on automobile transportation, $1,029.2 million on lodging, $731.4 million on food services, $320.2 million on entertainment and recreation, and $1,148.9 million in general trade. The numbers for the entire country would be much larger. A major reduction in such revenue would have an adverse impact on the economy of our country.

Consequently, I urge you to vote for H.R. 4417 to extend the deadline.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation.

I want to thank the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee for his leadership in this area. The visa waiver program is a critically important program, under which countries that send citizens that do not engage in visa fraud or overstay their visas do not have to obtain visas to visit our country for business or tourism. It has proven to be a very effective program for dealing with the increased global travel of the past few decades.

However, I firmly agree with my good friend from Wisconsin that citizens from countries who do not have to go through the visa process should have secure, tamper-proof passports to ensure that the visa waiver program is not abused by individuals who try to enter our country with counterfeit passports. Indeed, the statutory deadline of October 26, 2004 in the Enhanced Border Security Act of May 2002 encouraged International Civil Aviation Organization to accelerate its ongoing efforts in the development of uniform standards for secure passports, including the use of biometric data in such passports. Given the progress so far, I have no objection to an extension of this current statutory deadline to allow countries to implement these standards.

However, I believe that the Congress should seriously consider a two-year extension rather than the one-year extension in the current bill. I understand that ICAO did not complete preliminary biometric standards using facial recognition technology until May 2003 and is on only now finalizing these standards. In order for the new passports and the technology needed to read these passports to become mature and to be fully tested, as well as producing the new passports and acquiring and deploying the devices necessary to read the new passports, more than the one year extension being approved today may well be necessary.

In this context, I think it may well be prudent to consider moving towards a two-year extension as this legislation moves through the legislative process, and I would support that approach. if we do not, I predict we will be back here at the same time next year, approving a further one year extension.

I want to once again thank my good friend from Wisconsin for his leadership on this issue and urge my colleagues to support this legislation at this time.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I also have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PETRI). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4417.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING THAT FLAG DAY ORIGINATED IN OZAUKEE COUNTY, WISCONSIN

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 662) recognizing that Flag Day originated in Ozaukee County, Wisconsin.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 662

Whereas on June 14, 1777, the Stars and Stripes was officially adopted as the national flag of the United States;

Whereas in 1885, Bernard John Cigrand, a school teacher from Waubeka, Wisconsin, urged the students at the public school in Fredonia, Wisconsin, to observe June 14 as ''Flag Birthday'';

Whereas Mr. Cigrand placed a ten inch 38-star flag in an inkwell and instructed his students at Stony Hill School to write essays on what the flag meant to them;

Whereas on May 30, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson issued a Presidential Proclamation that officially established June 14 as Flag Day; and

Whereas on August 3, 1949, President Truman signed an Act of Congress designating June 14 of each year as National Flag Day: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) urges the people of the United States to study, reflect on, and celebrate the importance of the flag of the United States;

(2) encourages the people of the United States to display the flag of the United States in accordance with the provisions of chapter 1 of title 4, United States Code; and

(3) recognizes that Flag Day originated in Ozaukee County, Wisconsin.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. 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 House Resolution 662 currently under consideration.

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