

I attended Jesse's funeral and the outpouring of love and respect from his community was overwhelming. Over 300 people were there to honor him.

Jesse joined the Air Force in February of 2003 and was assigned to the 66th Rescue Squadron, an elite group that qualified for rescue duty on a HH-60 Para Rescue helicopter. His mother said Jesse loved that his job was to rescue and save people.

Mr. Speaker, Airman 1st Class Jesse Monroe Samek, at the age of 21, made the ultimate sacrifice for his country. He is a true American hero. I ask my colleagues to keep Jesse's family and friends in their thoughts and prayers during these difficult times.

DEDICATION OF CPL LARRY E.
SMEDLEY MEDAL OF HONOR
HIGHWAY

HON. JOHN L. MICA

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 19, 2004

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, on October 30, a dedication ceremony was conducted in Orlando, Florida in honor of Corporal Larry E. Smedley at the Orange County Courthouse Plaza.

Corporal Smedley who died in combat in Vietnam in December 1967 is Orlando's only recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor from that conflict. The ceremony conducted in our community was to commemorate the naming of a section of our Interstate 4 highway from Colonial Drive to State Road 436 in memory of this Central Florida hero. That section of our major thoroughfare was designated by an act of the Florida Legislature the "Corporal Larry E. Smedley Medal of Honor Highway." It was my privilege to attend that ceremony and meet Corporal Smedley's mother Mary Smedley Smith, from Virginia Beach, his brother, Russell Smedley, from Orlando, Florida, and his sister, Valerie Smedley, from Orlando, Florida. I know I join all those in attendance at that ceremony and countless Americans who appreciate Corporal Smedley's heroism and his family's incredible sacrifice to our nation. It is my honor to include in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD of the House of Representatives the outstanding and heartfelt remarks from The Honorable Anthony J. Principi, Secretary of Department of Veterans Affairs delivered at the dedication ceremony.

Good morning.

It has been said that "True heroism is remarkably sober . . . It is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but the urge to serve others at whatever cost."

History is defined by critical moments . . . sobering moments, costly moments . . . moments that are turning points in time. The United States of America has existed for less than three centuries. And throughout our history, we have been tested, time and again, by defining moments of conflict. Vietnam was one of those moments.

The men who fought there were young and untested. Citizen-soldiers from all walks of life . . . native-born and immigrants. From cities large and small . . . and from towns, villages, and farms. Yet they were bound together in a brotherhood whose lodestar continues to shine bright on an immutable truth given poetic definition by President Abraham Lincoln. "Our reliance" he said, "is in

the love of liberty. . . [and] in the preservation of the spirit which prizes liberty as the heritage of all men, in all lands, everywhere."

And so the young Americans of more than three decades past fought with a gritty sense of purpose . . . fortitude . . . and, many times, sheer obstinacy. They were tested in the raging fires of adversity at Ia Drang . . . Hue . . . Khe Sanh . . . Pleiku . . . and in a thousand clashes and skirmishes remembered, now, only by those who fought them.

Those battles, known and unknown, prove one thing—there is the possibility for triumph . . . dignity . . . and great honor in even the most difficult, the most trying of circumstances. Especially when these qualities are rooted in men dedicated to each other and to the principle—not the objective—for which they fight. Men descendant of a common creed—One Nation, under God . . . and guardian of a common trust—Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. Men like Corporal Larry E. Smedley, United States Marine Corps, who served America and served others in the highest tradition of America's greatest patriots . . . and who paid the cost of that selfless service with the coin of incredible sacrifice.

The true mettle of those who love Liberty is tested in moments such as the December night in 1967 when heroism emerged in the jungles of Quang Nam Province . . . heroism larger than life itself . . . full with its attendant valor, purpose, and sacrifice.

Corporal Smedley's awe-inspiring bravery is the stuff of American legend. In him we see the mighty strengths and quiet virtues of the American spirit. In him we see the outward courage and inner character of the American soldier . . . sailor . . . airman . . . Marine . . . and Coastguardsman. In him we see the very best of what it means to be an American. Though we are poorer that he was taken from us, we are richer for what he so selflessly gave us.

By his devotion to country and to his comrades on that night so long ago, Larry Smedley joined the revered ranks of America's heroes from Valley Forge . . . Fredericksburg . . . Belleau Wood . . . Normandy . . . and the Chosin. Together, they wrote boldly . . . largely . . . and indelibly . . . across our great National chronicle of military history.

For the story of America is the story of America's defenders . . . in war and in peace . . . at home and abroad. A story whose chapters speak eloquently of Duty, Honor, and Sacrifice. A story whose words and phrases recount unbreakable bonds of camaraderie forged in service to country. Whose words speak softly of beloved family and friends, and lives forever changed by the wounds of war . . . and whisper of faithful comrades forever young, cut down in life's prime. It is the story of Corporal Larry E. Smedley, United States Marine Corps. A hero who served his country . . . who served others . . . and who stands tall in the most honored pantheon of American patriots.

By today's ceremony, the spirit [of] liberty that Lincoln extolled lives here, among Central Florida's towns, fields and groves so familiar to Larry Smedley, the young boy. And by this dedication, the indomitable spirit of Larry E. Smedley, the young Marine, lives here in perpetuity . . . amid the expanse of the ribbon of highway stretching to the unbroken horizon of America's Sunshine State.

On this day of dedication . . . at this time of remembrance and reflection . . . we honor great deeds . . . great achievement . . . and great personal fortitude. We honor the memory of an ordinary American who served America in the most extraordinary way.

As one who, like Larry, served in the Republic of Vietnam, I struggle today to find

words that can give proper honor to the painfully short life of my brother-in-arms, Corporal Larry Smedley . . . knowing full well that words alone will never be enough.

And so, with your indulgence, let me close with the poignant words of the English poet, Laurence Binyon, whose poem "For the Fallen," was written in honor of England's World War I dead. I read from it today in memory of America's fallen hero—Corporal Larry E. Smedley:

They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old.

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun, and in the morning

We will remember them.

May God always bless America and the sons and daughters who so courageously defend her.

STATEMENT REGARDING IDEA
CONFERENCE REPORT

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 19, 2004

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, as a former teacher and principal, the issue of special education is very personal to me. I know firsthand that too many children in the United States are deprived of a quality education because the federal government has not met its commitment to special education.

That is why I give my qualified support to the conference report on the Improving Education Results for Children With Disabilities Act of 2003 (H.R. 1350). Above all, this legislation reaffirms that all children have right to a high quality education tailored to their needs, and that the federal government has an obligation to ensure that school districts and educators have the appropriate resources to provide it. Indeed, this conference report is a step in the right direction.

Every child learns at his own pace and our educational system must be able to accommodate the needs of each individual student. Accordingly, this legislation allows students, schools, parents, and teachers to focus more of their time and energy on the individualized education programs (IEPs), and less on paperwork and procedure. The effect will be a more stimulating and constructive environment for students.

The IDEA reauthorization conference report increases parental involvement in the education of children with disabilities. Parents will have more opportunities to consult with teachers to deal with problems in an early and effective way, without the need to go through formal due process channels. It provides Parent Training Institutes, where parents can learn to use the resources available to them when working with schools to get the best education for their child. Additionally, in fifteen states IDEA will implement a pilot paperwork reduction program to help expedite the development and execution of IEPs.

This bill contains provisions for early intervention for students with special needs and mandates ongoing updates on student progress. It allows students to stay in the same, specially tailored program throughout their entire educational career, even if they switch schools. This provision is especially