

current law only awards full pension benefits to those who have served in a designated "period of war" and excludes those who have fought valiantly in other parts of the world.

Tom Hayes of American Legion Post 93 in Kenova, West Virginia recently acknowledged this mockery of our benefits system in an article from the Huntington Herald Dispatch in Huntington, West Virginia dated April 11, 2007. In this article, Mr. Hayes stated "On Oct. 23, 1983, 241 of our finest died in Beirut, Lebanon. By the time the hostility ended on Feb. 8, 1984, 270 Americans had died. Some 20,000 Americans fought on or around Grenada between Oct. 23 and Nov. 21, 1983. Nineteen were killed and 116 were wounded. In Panama, 23 were killed in action and 322 wounded between Dec. 20, 1989 and Jan. 31, 1990. Public Law 101-478 expanded eligibility for membership in the American Legion to Veterans of Lebanon, Grenada, and Panama." In addition, Mr. Hayes wrote, "Subsequent to Jan. 31, 1955, the Vietnam and Gulf War periods (Aug. 5, 1964 to May 7, 1975, and Aug. 2, 1990, to present) have made Korean Veterans eligible for disability pension, leaving approximately half who served between those periods not eligible along with veterans of Lebanon, Grenada, and Panama who answered the call to fight and who may now need financial help and are not eligible for a penny from the VA."

My legislation will end this injustice. My first bill will extend eligibility for veterans' pension benefits to those who served in the areas of the Korean Peninsula, Lebanon, Grenada, and other areas of armed conflict, where their service involved hostile fire or aggression. The second piece of legislation will extend benefits to veterans who have received the expeditionary medal, which is earned by those with whom the Joint Chiefs of Staff have determined were engaged where hostile action by foreign armed forces was imminent.

The United States has sent service personnel to all corners of the globe and in every capacity they have made us proud. Unfortunately, when they return we do not always

treat their honor with the respect that it deserves. We don't fund veterans' healthcare adequately and continue to let our veterans get caught in a never-ending bureaucracy denying them access to basic medical care. I am proud that this Congress has passed substantial Veterans benefits legislation in the past month and I hope that it is signs of more to come.

Madam Speaker, I will end with this, we put these men and women in harm's way because we trusted them and their ability, and they ought to be able to trust our ability. These pieces of legislation would align the sacrifice made with the compensation awarded. I say that these veterans deserve the same benefits afforded their brothers and sisters in arms who participated in declared wars and especially those that are civilian employees and eligible for the same benefits. I urge the Congress to pass this legislation in a swift manner so that we may begin to respect and honor all of our veterans who have served.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 160TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HANSON PLACE CENTRAL METHODIST CHURCH

HON. YVETTE D. CLARKE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 19, 2007

Ms. CLARKE. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to pay tribute to a Brooklyn landmark, the Hanson Place Central United Methodist Church, on the occasion of their 160th Anniversary.

The first Hanson Place Methodist Church building was erected in 1847 at the corner of Hanson Place and St. Felix Street in Brooklyn. There, the history of ecumenical cooperation and community service began with a vibrant, Christ-centered congregation. Seventeen years later, to accommodate phenomenal congregational growth, a second and larger build-

ing was constructed, and dedicated on January 4, 1874. Then, on February 23, 1927, the Central Methodist Episcopal Church came into being by merging the Summerfield Methodist Church with the Hanson Place Methodist Church.

The church rose above challenges when its building purchased in 1874 was considered unsafe and had to be vacated leaving 1650 members belonging to a Church Without a Home as it was reported in the press.

By the end of 1930, sufficient investment had been committed in the Hanson Place Central Methodist Church that the church owned property that covered the entire corner on which to build its new cathedral. A lot on Hanson Place and on St. Felix Street was marked off for the structure, and today stands the Hanson Place Central United Methodist Church at 144 St. Felix Street.

The church's commitment to the community has been shown through their various ministries. Their Campaign Against Hunger has been a valuable resource for more than 15 years. This food pantry provides meals to over 110,000 individuals annually. It utilizes a customer choice approach and adopts a supermarket style of shopping with a nutritional education component.

For the past nine years, their Partnership for the Homeless ministry has provided a safe haven for men. This ministry serves as a resource for the Drop-In Center for the Bond Street Salvation Army. The shelter is open year round including public holidays.

The people who once belonged to a Church Without a Home, serves as a home for so many within a changing and rapidly developing neighborhood within and throughout Brooklyn.

I am honored that the Hanson Place Central Methodist Church has provided countless services to constituents within my district. I ask my colleagues to join me in commending this fine institution for their many years of service and commitment to the people of Brooklyn.