

Whereas the UC Irvine men's volleyball team accomplished these feats while playing a difficult schedule in the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation;

Whereas the title is UC Irvine's first Division I title since 1989; and

Whereas UC Irvine, under the leadership of Chancellor Michael V. Drake, M.D., has continued to establish itself as a world-class research university, and as one of the top universities in the Nation: Now, therefore, be it Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) congratulates the men's volleyball team of the University of California, Irvine, and its Chancellor, Michael V. Drake, M.D., for winning the 2007 NCAA Division I Men's Volleyball National Championship; and

(2) recognizes the achievements of the players, coaches, students, alumni, and staff who were instrumental in helping the University of California, Irvine, win the national title.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) and the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent for all Members to have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

I want to congratulate the University of California, Irvine, for winning the NCAA Division I Men's Volleyball National Championship.

On May 5, 2007, the University of California, Irvine, won the 2007 NCAA Division I National Championship by defeating Indiana-Purdue University, Fort Wayne, known as IPFW in Columbus, Ohio. I want to congratulate the student athletes and coaches on an excellent season. We all take great pride in these athletes.

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

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield such time as he may consume to the bill's sponsor, Mr. CAMPBELL of California.

Mr. CAMPBELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Delaware for yielding.

I rise today to congratulate the University of California, Irvine, men's volleyball team for winning the 2007 NCAA Division I Men's Volleyball National Championship, as was mentioned, on May 5, 2007. I am very proud of the Anteater volleyball team, who won the school's first men's volleyball national championship after finishing this 2006/2007 season with the most wins in the Nation.

I would like to especially honor the leadership of Coach John Speraw and the talent and effort of each athlete who performed all season long to win this championship.

I am proud today to celebrate the accomplishments of this team that represents a tradition of excellence at the University of California, Irvine. But, you know, it is not a very long tradition of excellence, because the University of California, Irvine, was only established in 1965. But already in just over 40 years, the school has grown accustomed to receiving accolades in both academics and in sports as well. So I would like to also extend my congratulations to Chancellor Michael Drake, who is continuing this, albeit short, but continuing tradition at UCI of excellence in both sports and in academic fields, particularly in the fields of science and technology.

So I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing this achievement and supporting H. Res. 511.

□ 1600

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I also would like to congratulate the University of California-Irvine for its tremendous victory and dominance in the Division I Men's Volleyball National Championship. And I congratulate the gentleman from California for his sponsorship honoring this team, which did such an extraordinary job.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 511.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL PROGRAM AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2007

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2707) to reauthorize the Underground Railroad Educational and Cultural Program, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2707

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

SECTION 1. UNDERGROUND RAILROAD EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL PROGRAM.

(a) PROGRAM ESTABLISHED.—The Secretary of Education, in consultation and cooperation with the Secretary of the Interior, is authorized to make grants to one or more nonprofit educational organizations that are established to research, display, interpret, and collect artifacts relating to the history of the Underground Railroad.

(b) GRANT AGREEMENT.—Each nonprofit educational organization awarded a grant under this section shall enter into an agree-

ment with the Secretary of Education. Each such agreement shall require the organization—

(1) to establish a facility to house, display, and interpret the artifacts related to the history of the Underground Railroad, and to make the interpretive efforts available to institutions of higher education that award a baccalaureate or graduate degree;

(2) to demonstrate substantial private support for the facility through the implementation of a public-private partnership between a State or local public entity and a private entity for the support of the facility, which private entity shall provide matching funds for the support of the facility in an amount equal to 4 times the amount of the contribution of the State or local public entity, except that not more than 20 percent of the matching funds may be provided by the Federal Government;

(3) to create an endowment to fund any and all shortfalls in the costs of the on-going operations of the facility;

(4) to establish a network of satellite centers throughout the United States to help disseminate information regarding the Underground Railroad throughout the United States, if such satellite centers raise 80 percent of the funds required to establish the satellite centers from non-Federal public and private sources;

(5) to establish the capability to electronically link the facility with other local and regional facilities that have collections and programs which interpret the history of the Underground Railroad; and

(6) to submit, for each fiscal year for which the organization receives funding under this section, a report to the Secretary of Education that contains—

(A) a description of the programs and activities supported by the funding;

(B) the audited financial statement of the organization for the preceding fiscal year;

(C) a plan for the programs and activities to be supported by the funding as the Secretary may require; and

(D) an evaluation of the programs and activities supported by the funding as the Secretary may require.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$3,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2012.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) and the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this important legislation that will reauthorize a competitive grant program administered by the Department of Education to research, display, interpret and collect artifacts relating to the history of the Underground Railroad.

During one of the darkest eras of American history, a group of courageous Americans, both black and white as well as free and enslaved, bound together to form what would be known as the Underground Railroad. For example, the Father of our Nation, George Washington, complained in 1786 about how one of his runaway slaves was helped by a society of Quakers formed for such purposes.

The Underground Railroad was a decentralized network of people who helped fugitive slaves escape to the North. The railroad consisted of many individuals who knew only of the local efforts to aid fugitives, and none of the overall operation. Amazingly, the railroad effectively moved hundreds of slaves northward each year. According to one estimate, the South lost 100,000 slaves between 1810 and 1850.

This racially integrated movement to bring about social change has familiar heroes, such as Harriet Tubman, John Rankin and Susan B. Anthony; but there are thousands more who risked their lives to help others escape the clutches of slavery as they fled to the North.

For the slave, escaping to the North was anything but easy. The first step was to escape from the slaveholder. For many slaves, this meant taking great risks while relying on his or her own resources. The fugitives would move at night and travel between 10 and 20 miles to the next station, where they would rest and eat, hiding in barns and other out-of-the-way places. The journey was difficult, but the determination to gain freedom was immense.

The Underground Railroad Educational and Cultural Program Act of 2007 would provide competitive grants to nonprofit organizations around the United States to shed light on one of the most important and courageous social movements in our history, while preserving and interpreting artifacts found from this critical era.

Moreover, this important legislation would ensure a strong public/private partnership exists to supplement and leverage Federal resources along with funds collected at the State and local levels. Since 1999, over \$15 million has been appropriated to seven different institutions. For example, in my home State of Ohio, the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center has delivered highly interactive learning experiences for over 130,000 school children from around the country. This is an important effort to educate citizens across the country and around the world about the Underground Railroad movement in America.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2707.

I would like to thank my colleague, Mr. KUCINICH, for introducing this bill to ensure that those organizations that work so hard to share the history of

the Underground Railroad are able to continue their good works.

The Underground Railroad Educational and Cultural Program was created in the 1998 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act to provide grants to nonprofit organizations that provide education about and research into the Underground Railroad. In addition, grants could be used for organizations to collect, display or interpret artifacts relating to the history of the Underground Railroad. For example, the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, located in Cincinnati, Ohio, houses eight permanent exhibits and hosts any number of temporary exhibits, including displays, musical programs, and group discussion.

Other grantees under this program host tours that try and recreate the journey taken by anyone brave enough to utilize the Underground Railroad and exhibits the detail of the development of the Underground Railroad.

I supported the reauthorization of this program when Republicans brought a complete reauthorization of the Higher Education Act to the House floor last Congress. I had hoped to support this program again in the context of a complete reauthorization of the Higher Education Act again this year. Even though this program is receiving the attention of the Congress now, I hope we can complete the HEA reauthorization bill when we return from the August recess.

I believe strongly in promoting programs and partnerships to commemorate this time in history and educating the public about the historical significance of the Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad was very active in the State of Delaware, I might also add. We have many of our own tributes to that in my small State.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2707, the Underground Railroad Education and Culture Act of 2007. I thank my colleague from Ohio, Mr. KUCINICH as well as Education and Labor Chairman GEORGE MILLER for bringing this important bill to the floor today.

Madam Speaker, this important bill will provide federal support to programs around the country that educate Americans about the courageous actions undertaken by ordinary people during one of the darkest eras in our history. During times of slavery, these courageous Americans, both Black and White as well as free and under slavery, bound together to form what would be known as the Underground Railroad. This racially integrated movement to bring about social change has familiar heroes such as Harriet Tubman, John Rankin and Susan B. Anthony, but there are thousands more who risked their lives to help others escape the clutches of slavery as they fled to the North.

The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, located in my Congressional District in Cincinnati, Ohio has successfully competed for grants under this program to connect the lessons of the past to the struggles for freedom in the current day through an informative educational curricula.

Should the Congress authorize and appropriate funds for this important grant program, educational centers such as the Freedom Center in my District as well as other sites around the country would be eligible to apply for competitive grants to shed light on one of the most important and courageous social movements in our history while preserving and interpreting artifacts found from this critical era.

Moreover, this important legislation would ensure a strong public-private partnership exists to supplement and leverage federal resources along with funds collected at the state and local level.

Madam Speaker, I want to again thank my colleague from Ohio, Mr. KUCINICH for his leadership in bringing this important bill to the floor. I ask my colleagues to support H.R. 2707.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker. I rise today in support of H.R. 2707, Mr. KUCINICH's resolution to reauthorize the Underground Railroad Educational and Cultural Program. I praise the initiative contained in this resolution to point out the historical, cultural, and educational legacy behind the Underground Railroad. It is through that network of tunnels and secret hiding places that many African Americans escaped slavery. As a symbol of freedom, the Underground Railroad deserves greater recognition and appreciation, regrettably of its artifacts and secrets remain hidden and lost.

I have long believed in and fought for more and better education of African American history. Well, an important part of that history is contained in the struggle for freedom that characterized the slave experience. Some would have us believe that slaves passively accepted their captivity in the plantations in the South. The truth is there was an active resistance to slavery; which included periodic uprisings and constant efforts to escape. The full role and extent of the Underground Railroad has yet to be discovered and remains unknown. The legislation authorizes the Secretary of Education to sponsor studies and make grants for programs that promote knowledge of the Underground Railroad.

With the resources and technology available today, we owe it to the history of African Americans and the history of the United States to study, preserve, and make available to all the hidden secrets of the Underground Railroad. Secret routes and safe houses still remain unknown. Secrets that may remain buried in our backyards.

The establishment of this facility would allow significant missing pieces in African American history to be properly studied and commemorated.

Through the passage of this legislation, the work of the National Park Service and its study of the phenomenon known as the Underground Railroad will be continued. Established by Congress in 1990, the National Park Service has made major progress in learning more about the secret routes and the processes used in escorting these fugitive slaves to freedom. The story is far from well enough known, and the study far from complete. Let us as members of the 110th Congress exhibit the same respect and appreciation of the Underground Railroad as was shown in 1990.

Please join me in support of H.R. 2707, as we move further in understanding the whole story and celebrating the legacy of the Underground Railroad.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2707, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

BELATED THANK YOU TO THE MERCHANT MARINERS OF WORLD WAR II ACT OF 2007

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 23) to amend title 46, United States Code, to provide benefits to certain individuals who served in the United States merchant marine (including the Army Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service) during World War II, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 23

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. PAYMENTS TO INDIVIDUALS WHO SERVED DURING WORLD WAR II IN THE UNITED STATES MERCHANT MARINE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF COMPENSATION FUND.—Subchapter II of chapter 5 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§ 532. Merchant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund

"(a) COMPENSATION FUND.—(1) There is in the general fund of the Treasury a fund to be known as the 'Merchant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund' (in this section referred to as the 'compensation fund').

"(2) Subject to the availability of appropriations for such purpose, amounts in the fund shall be available to the Secretary without fiscal year limitation to make payments to eligible individuals in accordance with this section.

"(b) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS.—(1) An eligible individual is an individual who—

"(A) before October 1, 2009, submits to the Secretary an application containing such information and assurances as the Secretary may require;

"(B) has not received benefits under the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (Public Law 78-346); and

"(C) has engaged in qualified service.

"(2) For purposes of paragraph (1), a person has engaged in qualified service if, between December 7, 1941, and December 31, 1946, the person—

"(A) was a member of the United States merchant marine (including the Army Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service) serving as a crewmember of a vessel that was—

"(i) operated by the War Shipping Administration or the Office of Defense Transporta-

tion (or an agent of the Administration or Office);

"(ii) operated in waters other than inland waters, the Great Lakes, and other lakes, bays, and harbors of the United States;

"(iii) under contract or charter to, or property of, the Government of the United States; and

"(iv) serving the Armed Forces; and

"(B) while so serving, was licensed or otherwise documented for service as a crewmember of such a vessel by an officer or employee of the United States authorized to license or document the person for such service.

"(c) AMOUNT OF PAYMENTS.—The Secretary shall make a monthly payment out of the compensation fund in the amount of \$1,000 to an eligible individual. The Secretary shall make such payments to eligible individuals in the order in which the Secretary receives the applications of the eligible individuals.

"(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—(1) There are authorized to be appropriated to the compensation fund amounts as follows:

"(A) For fiscal year 2008, \$120,000,000.

"(B) For fiscal year 2009, \$108,000,000.

"(C) For fiscal year 2010, \$97,000,000.

"(D) For fiscal year 2011, \$85,000,000.

"(E) For fiscal year 2012, \$75,000,000.

"(2) Funds appropriated to carry out this section shall remain available until expended.

"(e) REPORTS.—The Secretary shall include, in documents submitted to Congress by the Secretary in support of the President's budget for each fiscal year, detailed information on the operation of the compensation fund, including the number of applicants, the number of eligible individuals receiving benefits, the amounts paid out of the compensation fund, the administration of the compensation fund, and an estimate of the amounts necessary to fully fund the compensation fund for that fiscal year and each of the three subsequent fiscal years.

"(f) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall prescribe regulations to carry out this section."

(b) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall prescribe the regulations required under section 532(f) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item related to section 531 the following new item:

"532. Merchant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, before I get to these specific bills, let me just say, as chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, we are at a critical time in our Nation in dealing with our veterans. George Washington said it best over 200 years ago when he stated that "the morale of our active duty troops depends foremost on how they sense they're going to be treated when they come home." So we have a lot of work to do.

We have a Secretary who has announced his resignation. Recently, just last week, the Dole-Shalala Commis-

sion released its report on some major changes for the VA and the DoD for the way we deal with our veterans and our wounded warriors. We need someone in that position, I think, who will shake things up a bit, who will not only do the Dole-Shalala recommendations, but go further and really talk to two bureaucracies that have to do business far better than what they do. Too often, VA means for our veterans "veterans adversary" instead of "veterans advocate."

We have older veterans, like we're going to be dealing with in the bill up now, and we are going to have hundreds of thousands of new veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. It's a critical job that we must do. And I always say, no matter where we are in the war in Iraq, we're going to make sure that every young man and woman who comes back from the war gets all the love, the care, the attention, the honor, the dignity that a Nation can bestow.

So we have a big job to do. And this package of bills we have today addressed both older veterans that we still have to care for and make sure any injustices that came up in their treatment are taken care of, as well as the needs that are so critical, whether they be brain injury or PTSD of the new veterans. We have to deal with both groups, and we have to do it right.

I want to speak now on H.R. 23, the Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act.

This is a bill that is six decades overdue, Mr. Speaker. And I think today we are on the verge of doing a historic thing, that is, providing a way to finally give the heroic merchant mariners of World War II the belated compensation that they've so richly earned and deserve.

I think this Congress not only has to treat those new veterans coming back from Iraq, but we have the responsibility to correct the wrongs of the past, and this is one of the grave injustices that deserves rectification.

There are over 250 Members of this House who have cosponsored H.R. 23. But for those who haven't, let me tell you about the sad history of these forgotten heroes. The Merchant Mariners of World War II traversed the dangerous U-boat laden waters of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, faced down fierce attacks from enemy aircraft, and were instrumental in every theater of war by carrying 95 percent of all tanks, supplies and troops during World War II. As a result, they suffered the highest casualty rate of any of the military branches.

It is indisputable that the allied forces would not have been able to begin, sustain or end World War II in victory without their valiant and selfless service. It is also indisputable, Mr. Speaker, that these men now are entitled to be compensated for their service.

After the war, they did not receive the recognition as veterans, or the benefits of the unprecedented GI Bill of