

based inspection system for the Animal Care program, targeting investigative and enforcement resources on bad actors.

Throughout his career, Dr. DeHaven has exhibited creativity and commitment to ensuring animal welfare and promoting U.S. agriculture. This Congress and this Nation is grateful.

HONORING MESQUITE'S NEWEST
TEACHERS

HON. JEB HENSARLING

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2007

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, today I would like to honor the Mesquite Independent School District's new teachers for the 2007–2008 school year.

An excellent education is fundamental to the growth and development of our Nation's youth. With over 35,000 children in the Mesquite community, it is imperative that we continue to acquire high-quality teachers.

As a father of 2 young children, I understand and appreciate the impact teachers have on the lives of our children. We are gratefully indebted to them for enriching the lives of our students. Our teachers can make a difference in the lives of each and every child they teach.

As the Congressional representative of Mesquite, Texas, it is my distinct pleasure to honor Mesquite's newest teachers in the United States House of Representatives.

BELATED THANK YOU TO MERCHANT
MARINERS OF WWII ACT
OF 2007

HON. STEVE BUYER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2007

Mr. BUYER. Madam Speaker, I have reservations regarding H.R. 23, as amended, the Belated Thank You to Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2007. I believe that H.R. 23, as amended, sets a poor precedent by awarding a \$1,000 monthly payment to World War II Merchant Mariners. The authorization described in the bill has no requirement for the Merchant Mariner to have a disability or suffer from financial hardship. Currently, the only veterans authorized to receive a service pension are Medal of Honor recipients.

Whether or not to grant an unprecedented new service pension to World War II Merchant Mariners is not a question of bravery or contributions to victory over the Axis in 1945. Those questions have long been settled to the resounding credit of the mariners who braved unspeakable dangers to transport cargo that kept the Atlantic Alliance alive and fighting.

The Merchant Mariners serving during World War II were given veteran status under a system established by Congress in the G.I. Bill Improvement Act of 1977, Public Law 95–202. This process determined if civilian groups of World War II, like Merchant Mariners, should receive veteran status based on their service during the war. As of 1992, all World War II Merchant Mariners who served from the beginning of the war through victory in Japan

day received full veteran status under this system. This means that all of these World War II Merchant Mariners are veterans and qualify for all VA benefits and services including healthcare and old age pension.

An objective and carefully researched report on the contributions of Merchant Mariners during World War II and post-war benefits for which they were eligible can be found in the Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, Veterans Benefits: Merchant Seamen, May 8, 2007 (Order Code: RL33992: <http://www.congress.gov/erp/r1/pdf/RL33992.pdf>), by Christine Scott and Douglas Reid Weimer.

Thirty other groups that provided military-related service to the U.S. in World War II have received veteran status in the same manner as the Merchant Mariners. However, this bill ignores their service to the nation; it focuses only on the service provided by Merchant Mariners who served during that same period. These groups include the Women's Air Force Service Pilots, the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, the famed Flying Tigers and many others who gained their status decades after their service. They served loyally, selflessly, and courageously. Their service contributed directly to victory in 1945. Yet this bill does nothing for them.

During the full Committee markup of H.R. 23, I offered an amendment that would include these groups, which was defeated by voice vote. I attach a list of the other veteran groups that received veteran status under the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (P.L. 78–346) [Attachment A].

I also find the funding mechanism for this bill to be of concern. When this bill was introduced in previous Congresses, it was determined that because the benefit was an entitlement, it was subject to PAYGO offset requirements. However, the current bill uses a compensation fund to turn this entitlement into discretionary spending. This side-steps budget rules and places an unnecessary burden on the Appropriations Committees.

There is no current appropriations measure that would fund this benefit. The Committee on Veterans' Affairs, which is unable to identify the necessary PAYGO offsets to fund this benefit, is simply passing the buck to the Appropriations Committee. I do not believe this is a fiscally sound way to legislate. Further, if insufficient funds were to be appropriated, only some Merchant Mariners would receive the benefit, while others would not.

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), in opposing this bill said, "If these measures were approved, the annuity payable for even a single month of Merchant Marine service in World War II would significantly exceed those payable to thousands of World War II combat veterans who served far longer and suffered significant combat disabilities . . ." MOAA also wrote, "A World War II military veteran who served 20 years and retired in 1955 at the grade of E–5 [sergeant] is entitled to a military retired pay check of only \$900 today."

I believe this legislation, though well-meaning, breaches precedent of pension policy law and does not make the best use of taxpayer dollars. I fear that it will have unintended consequences for future Congresses.

ATTACHMENT A

RECOGNIZED GROUPS UNDER PUBLIC LAW 95–202

1. 8 Mar 79—Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WWII).

2. 22 Jan 81—Civilian Employees, Pacific Naval Air Bases, Who Actively Participated in the Defense of Wake Island during WWII.

3. 17 Jul 81—Male Civilian Ferry Pilots (WWII).

4. 7 Apr 82—Wake Island defenders from Guam (WWII).

5. 27 Dec 82—Civilian Personnel Assigned to the Secret Intelligence Element of the OSS (WWII).

6. 10 May 83—Guam Combat Patrol (WWII).

7. 7 Feb 84—Quartermaster Corps Keswick Crew on Corregidor (WWII).

8. 7 Feb 84—U.S. Civilian Volunteers Who Actively Participated in the Defense of Bataan (WWII).

9. 18 Oct 85—U.S. Merchant Seamen Who Served on Blockships in Support of Operation Mulberry (WWII).

10. 19 Jan 88—American Merchant Marine in Oceangoing Service during the Period of Armed Conflict, December 7, 1941, to August 15, 1945 (WWII).

11. 2 Aug 88—Civilian U.S. Navy IFF Technicians Who Served in the Combat Areas of the Pacific during World War II (December 7, 1941, to August 15, 1945) (WWII).

12. 30 Aug 90—U.S. Civilians of the American Field Service (AFS) Who Served Overseas Under U.S. Armies and U.S. Army Groups in World War II During the Period December 7, 1941, through May 8, 1945 (WWII).

13. 5 Oct 90—U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of American Airlines Who Served Overseas as a result of American Airlines' Contract with Air Transport Command during the Period December 14, 1941, through August 14, 1945 (WWII).

14. 8 Apr 91—Civilian Crewmen of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey vessels who performed their service in areas of immediate military hazard while conducting cooperative operations with and for the United States Armed Forces within a time frame of December 7, 1941, to August 15, 1945 (WWII).

15. 3 May 91—Honorably Discharged Members of the American Volunteer Group (Flying Tigers) Who Served During the Period December 7, 1941, to July 18, 1942 (WWII).

16. 12 May 92—U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of United Air Lines (UAL), Who Served Overseas as a Result of UAL's Contract With the Air Transport Command During the Period December 14, 1941, through August 14, 1945 (WWII).

17. 12 May 92—U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of Transcontinental and Western Air (TWA), Inc., Who Served Overseas as a Result of TWA's Contract with the Air Transport Command during the Period December 14, 1941, through August 14, 1945 (WWII).

18. 14 May 92—American Field Service (AFS) who served honorably on flights with the 3d Combat Cargo Squadron, Army Air Forces, December 7, 1941, through August 14, 1945 (Addendum to August 30, 1990 AFS (WWII) SAF decision) (WWII).

19. 14 May 92—Addendum which adds three ships (Oceanographer, Hydrographer, and Pathfinder) to the April 8, 1991, USCGS SAF decision (WWII).

20. 29 Jun 92—U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support Employees of Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corporation (Convair Division), Who Served Overseas as a Result of a Contract with the Air Transport Command during the Period (WWII) U.S. Civilian Flight Crew and Aviation Ground Support during the Period December 7, 1941, through August 14, 1945 (WWII).

21. 29 Jun 92—Honorably Discharged Members of the American Volunteer Guard, Eritrea Service Command during the Period June 21, 1942 to March 31, 1943 (WWII).