

a man who was one of the pioneers in transplant surgery.

I have such fond memories of working with him. We had our battles, but he was always a gentleman. I wish him well with his job. I know he will do a very good job.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now return to legislative session.

MEASURES INDEFINITELY POSTPONED—H. CON. RES. 172 AND H.R. 1154

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that Calendar Nos. 241 and 409 be indefinitely postponed, en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL VETERANS AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to S. Res. 357.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 357) designating the week of November 11 through November 17, 2007 as "National Veterans Awareness Week" to emphasize the need to develop educational programs regarding the contributions of veterans to the country.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, today I am submitting a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the week that includes Veterans Day, corresponding this year to November 11–17, 2007, be designated as "National Veterans Awareness Week". This marks the eighth year in a row that I have introduced such a resolution, which has been adopted unanimously by the Senate on all previous occasions.

The purpose of National Veterans Awareness Week is to serve as a focus for educational programs designed to make students in elementary and secondary schools aware of the contributions of veterans and their importance in preserving American peace and prosperity. This goal takes on particular importance and immediacy this year as we find ourselves again with uniformed men and women in harm's way in foreign lands.

Why do we need such an educational effort? In a sense, this action has become necessary because we are victims of our own success with regard to the superior performance of our Armed Forces. The plain fact is that there are just fewer people around now who have had any connection with military service. For example, as a result of tremendous advances in military technology and the resultant productivity increases, our current armed forces now

operate effectively with a personnel roster that is one-third less in size than just 15 years ago. In addition, the success of the all-volunteer career-oriented force has led to much lower turnover of personnel in today's military than in previous eras when conscription was in place. Finally, the number of veterans who served during previous conflicts, such as World War II, when our military was many times larger than today, is inevitably declining.

The net result of these changes is that the percentage of the entire population that has served in the Armed Forces is dropping rapidly, a change that can be seen in all segments of society. Whereas during World War II it was extremely uncommon to find a family in America that did not have one of its members on active duty, now there are numerous families that include no military veterans at all. Even though the Iraqi war has been prominently discussed on television and in the newspapers, many of our children are much more preoccupied with the usual concerns of young people than with keeping up with the events of the day. They just don't "feel" the war like many earlier generations did through both World Wars and the Korean and Vietnam conflicts. As a consequence, many of our youth still have little or no connection with or knowledge about the important historical and ongoing role of men and women who have served in the military. This omission seems to have persisted despite ongoing educational efforts by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the veterans service organizations.

This lack of understanding about military veterans' important role in our society can have potentially serious repercussions. In our country, civilian control of the armed forces is the key tenet of military governance. A citizenry that is oblivious to the capabilities and limitations of the armed forces, and to its critical role throughout our history, can make decisions regarding our military involvement that may have unexpected and unwanted consequences. Even more important, general recognition of the importance of those individual character traits that are essential for military success, such as patriotism, selflessness, sacrifice, and heroism, is vital to maintaining these key aspects of citizenship in the Armed Forces and even throughout the population at large.

The failure of our children to understand why a military is important, why our society continues to depend on it for ultimate survival, and why a successful military requires integrity and sacrifice, will have predictable consequences as these youngsters become of voting age. Even though military service is a responsibility that is no longer shared by a large segment of the population, as it has been in the past, knowledge of the contributions of those who have served in the Armed Forces is as important as it has ever been. To the extent that many of us

will not have the opportunity to serve our country in uniform, we must still remain cognizant of our responsibility as citizens to fulfill the obligations we owe, both tangible and intangible, to those who do serve and who do sacrifice on our behalf.

The importance of this issue was brought home to me several years ago by Samuel I. Cashdollar, who was then a 13-year-old seventh grader at Lewes Middle School in Lewes, DE. Samuel won the Delaware VFW's Youth Essay Contest that year with a powerful presentation titled "How Should We Honor America's Veterans"? Samuel's essay pointed out that we have Nurses' Week, Secretaries' Week, and Teachers' Week, to rightly emphasize the importance of these occupations, but the contributions of those in uniform tend to be overlooked. We don't want our children growing up to think that Veterans Day has simply become a synonym for a department store sale, and we don't want to become a nation where more high school seniors recognize the name Britney Spears than the name Dwight Eisenhower.

National Veterans Awareness Week complements Veterans Day by focusing on education as well as commemoration, on the contributions of the many in addition to the heroism and service of the individual. National Veterans Awareness Week also presents an opportunity to remind ourselves of the contributions and sacrifices of those who have served in peacetime as well as in conflict; both groups work unending hours and spend long periods away from their families under conditions of great discomfort so that we all can live in a land of freedom and plenty. It can also remind us of the importance of our country keeping its promises to our veterans and providing them with the proper support services.

Last year, my resolution designating National Veterans Awareness Week was approved in the Senate by unanimous consent. Responding to that resolution, President Bush issued a proclamation urging our citizenry to observe National Veterans Awareness Week. I ask my colleagues to continue this trend of support for our veterans by endorsing this resolution again this year. Our children and our children's children will need to be well informed about what veterans have accomplished in order to make appropriate decisions as they confront the numerous worldwide challenges that they are sure to face in the future.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, en bloc, and any statements be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 357) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 357

Whereas tens of millions of Americans have served in the Armed Forces of the United States during the past century;

Whereas hundreds of thousands of Americans have given their lives while serving in the Armed Forces during the past century;

Whereas the contributions and sacrifices of the men and women who served in the Armed Forces have been vital in maintaining the freedoms and way of life enjoyed by the people of the United States;

Whereas the advent of the all-volunteer Armed Forces has resulted in a sharp decline in the number of individuals and families who have had any personal connection with the Armed Forces;

Whereas this reduction in familiarity with the Armed Forces has resulted in a marked decrease in the awareness by young people of the nature and importance of the accomplishments of those who have served in the Armed Forces, despite the current educational efforts of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the veterans service organizations;

Whereas the system of civilian control of the Armed Forces makes it essential that the future leaders of the Nation understand the history of military action and the contributions and sacrifices of those who conduct such actions; and

Whereas in each of the years 2000 through 2006 the Senate has recognized the need to increase the understanding of the contributions of veterans among school-aged children by approving a resolution recognizing the week containing Veterans Day as "National Veterans Awareness Week": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of November 11 through November 17, 2007, as "National Veterans Awareness Week" for the purpose of emphasizing educational efforts directed at elementary and secondary school students concerning the contributions and sacrifices of veterans; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to observe National Veterans Awareness Week with appropriate educational activities.

NATIONAL BE BEAR AWARE AND WILDLIFE STEWARDSHIP MONTH

EXPRESSING SYMPATHY FOR THE VICTIMS OF THUNDERSTORMS IN ILLINOIS, IOWA, MINNESOTA, OHIO AND WISCONSIN

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed en bloc to the consideration of the following Calendar items: No. 444 and No. 445.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the resolutions by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 347) designating May 2008 as "National Be Bear Aware and Wildlife Stewardship Month".

A resolution (S. Res. 346) expressing heartfelt sympathy for the victims of the devastating thunderstorms that caused severe flooding during August 2007 in the States of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the amendment to the resolution, where applicable, be agreed to; that the

resolutions, as amended, if amended, be agreed to en bloc; the amendment to the preamble, where applicable, be agreed to; the preambles, as amended, if amended, be agreed to, en bloc; that the title amendment to S. Res. 346 be agreed to and the motions to reconsider be laid on the table, en bloc, the consideration of these items appear separately in the RECORD, and any statements be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 347) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 347

Whereas wildlife and wildlife viewing enrich the shared outdoor heritage of the people of the United States;

Whereas it is possible to enjoy wildlife in a way that is prudent, safe, and educational and that has minimal adverse effects on wildlife;

Whereas the people of the United States should be aware of the potential for conflict between humans and wildlife;

Whereas the people of the United States should learn the safety and stewardship techniques that can prevent such conflicts;

Whereas some groups, such as the Center for Wildlife Information and State and Federal wildlife associations, in cooperation with State and Federal wildlife and land management agencies, have taken important proactive steps to create educational toolkits and design programs to educate outdoor enthusiasts; and

Whereas educational efforts can raise awareness of the potential for such conflict, help minimize such conflict, and promote the responsible enjoyment of wildlife: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate designates May 2008 as "National Be Bear Aware and Wildlife Stewardship Month".

S. RES. 346

The Senate proceed to consider the resolution (S. Res. 346) expressing heartfelt sympathy for the victims of the devastating thunderstorms that caused severe flooding during August 2007 in the States of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin, and for other purposes, which had been reported from the Committee on the Judiciary with an amendment and an amendment to the preamble.

[Strike the preamble and insert the part printed in italic]

S. RES. 346

[Whereas, during August 2007, severe thunderstorms were responsible for bringing as much as 18 inches of torrential rain to parts of the States of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin, resulting in devastating floods;

[Whereas these storms tragically took the lives of 14 people;

[Whereas these storms injured countless other people, damaged or destroyed thousands of homes, and devastated businesses and institutions;

[Whereas, on August 21, 2007, the Governor of Minnesota declared Fillmore, Houston, Steele, Olmsted, Wabasha, and Winona Counties, Minnesota, to be in a state of disaster as a

result of these storms, and subsequently Dodge and Jackson Counties, Minnesota, received a Federal major disaster declaration as well;

[Whereas, on August 20 and 21, 2007, the Governor of Wisconsin declared Crawford, La Crosse, Richland, Sauk, and Vernon Counties, Wisconsin, to be in a state of disaster as a result of these storms;

[Whereas, on August 22, 2007, and in the days following, the Governor of Iowa declared Allamakee, Appanoose, Boone, Calhoun, Cherokee, Davis, Humboldt, Mahaska, Montgomery, Palo Alto, Pocahontas, Union, Van Buren, Wapello, Wayne, Webster, and Winneshiek Counties, Iowa, to be in a state of disaster as a result of these storms;

[Whereas, on August 22, 2007, the Governor of Ohio declared Allen, Crawford, Hancock, Hardin, Putnam, Richland, Seneca, Van Wert, and Wyandot Counties, Ohio, to be in a state of disaster as a result of these storms;

[Whereas, on August 24, 2007, and in the days following, the Governor of Illinois declared Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Lake, LaSalle, Kane, Knox, McHenry, Warren, and Will Counties, Illinois, to be in a state of disaster as a result of these storms;

[Whereas President Bush declared 8 counties in Minnesota, 8 counties in Ohio, 14 counties in Wisconsin, 6 counties in Illinois, and 14 counties in Iowa to be major disaster areas as a result of these storms, and individuals and families, State and local Governments, and certain private nonprofit organizations in these areas became eligible for individual or public Federal disaster assistance or both;

[Whereas numerous individuals and entities have selflessly and heroically given of themselves and their resources to aid in the disaster relief efforts; and

[Whereas the catastrophic injury, death, and damage in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin would have been even worse in the absence of local relief efforts: Now, therefore, be it]

Whereas, during August 2007, severe thunderstorms were responsible for bringing as much as 18 inches of torrential rain to parts of the States of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin, resulting in devastating floods;

Whereas these storms tragically took the lives of at least 20 people;

Whereas these storms injured countless other people, damaged or destroyed thousands of homes, and devastated businesses and institutions;

Whereas, on August 20, 2007, the Governor of Oklahoma declared Blaine, Caddo, Canadian, Cleveland, Comanche, Cotton, Custer, Dewey, Grady, Jefferson, Kingfisher, Kiowa, Lincoln, Logan, McClain, Muskogee, Okfuskee, Oklahoma, Okmulgee, Pontotoc, Pottawatomie, Seminole, Stephens, and Washita Counties, Oklahoma, to be in a state of emergency as a result of these storms;

Whereas, on August 21, 2007, the Governor of Minnesota declared Fillmore, Houston, Steele, Olmsted, Wabasha, and Winona Counties, Minnesota, to be in a state of disaster as a result of these storms, and subsequently Dodge and Jackson Counties, Minnesota, received a Federal major disaster declaration as well;