

was very proud to be a soldier. He didn't want to leave his newborn baby, but he left because that was his duty."

Every Member of Congress and every American owes a debt of gratitude to Louis Griese and his family for his dedicated and honorable service. Sergeant Griese made the ultimate sacrifice, and his service shall not be forgotten.

I ask all of you to join me in a moment of silence on his behalf.

#### DR. OSCAR ELIAS BIS CET

(Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, yesterday the President of the United States, President Bush, honored eight outstanding individuals with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. One of those individuals was Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet, a political prisoner in Cuba.

Dr. Biscet is a 46-year-old physician and peaceful advocate of freedom and democracy. Dr. Biscet is an honest and decent man of principle who cites Martin Luther King, Jr., Gandhi and the Dalai Lama as his role models. He has dedicated his entire life to defending human rights and advancing the cause of democracy in Cuba.

And for that, Madam Speaker, in 2003 Dr. Biscet was sentenced to 25 years in prison and today sits in solitary confinement in a totally darkened 3-foot by 6-foot cell commonly known there as "The Tomb."

Dr. Biscet and hundreds of other individuals just like him keep the hope for democracy alive for the Cuban people. He's a true patriot, Madam Speaker. He's a patriot for the Cuban people, a true hero and an example for everyone who loves freedom.

I want to thank President Bush for once again standing with the Cuban people and making a strong statement for freedom.

I am in awe of Dr. Biscet's bravery, and I look forward to the day that he can walk in freedom along with his people in his honor.

#### HONORING THOSE VETERANS WHO PROTECTED US

(Mr. BOUSTANY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOUSTANY. Madam Speaker, today my colleagues will enumerate the importance of funding bills that this Congress has yet to pass. One of these bills, the veterans appropriations bill, is particularly important, and the lack of progress for political purposes is simply atrocious.

This past weekend, I met with veterans from Louisiana who had come to visit the beautiful World War II Memorial. One man had stormed Omaha Beach on D-Day. Another was a mem-

ber of the famed Buffalo Soldiers, an original member of the famed Buffalo Soldiers. These men are heroes.

I heard firsthand their needs, the increased attention that's needed for mental health purposes and other better VA services.

Madam Speaker, as we approach Veterans Day, let us in Congress demonstrate our appreciation. Let us pass a veterans appropriations bill as promised without unrelated pork-laden spending bills attached. Let us pass it to honor those who have protected us so bravely and for those who continue to serve valiantly to protect us today.

#### MILCON-VA APPROPRIATIONS

(Mrs. SCHMIDT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to protest the majority's decision to tie the funding of our veterans to the Labor, Health and Human Services appropriation bill.

The facts of this case are simple. The House had passed a bill on June 15, followed by the Senate on September 6, that supports our veterans and the pay raises and the funding that they need. The differences in these bills are miniscule. The Senate has appointed their conferees. Our House has yet to do the same. What's the hold-up? Politics. Rather than bringing the MilCon-VA conference report to the floor as a stand-alone measure, a measure that will be supported by both parties, supported by the President and signed into law, the other side has decided to tie it to a controversial bill that the President has said time and time again he will veto.

Madam Speaker, our veterans have risked their lives for us without regard to political affiliation. We have to stop the politics. We have to work for our veterans.

I ask that we use this time in a bipartisan fashion and pass the MilCon-VA bill as a stand-alone bill.

#### MILCON-VA APPROPRIATIONS CONFERENCE REPORT

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, we celebrate Veterans Day on November 11. Every day in this country should be Veterans Day, that is, we should highlight veterans and thank them for their service to our country.

Yet, it's been over 140 days since the House passed the MilCon-VA appropriations bill and 8 weeks since the Senate passed it. The bill has strong bipartisan support and the President is ready to sign it. Yet Democrats have delayed bringing this bill to the floor.

The Democrats finally announced they're bringing it to the floor this week, but instead of voting on a stand-alone bill which would ensure quick

passage and provide funding for our troops and veterans, they're using it as a political tool by attaching it to the Labor-HHS bill.

The American people hate this kind of political posturing. They know that when bills are combined like that, that it's a political and cynical ploy. That's the only way the Democrats can get their pork-barrel spending passed is by attaching it to the military bill.

By using it as a political tool instead of an urgent spending priority, the Democratic leadership illustrates where their priorities are, and they aren't with our troops and veterans.

#### SUPPORTING OUR AMERICAN HEROES

(Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of our American heroes, the men and women who have served this great Nation, our veterans.

On June 15, the House passed the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations and did not appoint conferees. The Senate passed the same in September, on September 6, over 60 days ago; and they immediately appointed conferees.

This tactic of holding veterans funding hostage creates a dangerous precedent. The House is now faced with unrelated policies being forced into this bill.

Veterans funding is not a means of playing politics. Using our veterans and funding our next year's election is unconscionable.

Fund the veterans, and let's move on to the next piece of legislation. Our focus should be on keeping our promises to our veterans and those who have served so bravely.

Madam Speaker, separate these bills.

#### MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS BILL

(Mr. LAMBORN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LAMBORN. Madam Speaker, almost 5 months ago the House passed the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill. Eight weeks ago it passed the Senate.

I'm a member of both the Armed Services Committee and the Veterans' Affairs Committee; and I, like most Members of Congress, voted for the bill. It will provide funding to ensure our veterans receive their benefits in a timely fashion and will provide our troops with the resources necessary to keep America safe.

However, the Democrat leadership has failed to get this bill to the President's desk despite tremendous bipartisan support. It is sad that they are choosing to abuse their leadership position by playing politics with the needs