

As we approach Veterans Day, it is fitting that the House honor Americans who serve their country under the most unique of circumstances.

Earlier this year, we honored those servicemembers who participated in the D-day operations. Yet there is another group who faced incredible challenges and danger to ensure that victory would be possible for the United States and our allies during World War II, the United States Submarine Force.

Mr. Speaker, it is a special individual who will climb into a tightly confined space and willingly go deep underwater to serve the Nation. Today's nuclear submarines are a high-tech marvel, able to submerge for months at a time, cruise beneath the polarized caps, and carry strategic and tactical weapons of unbelievable power. But that was not always the case.

The first submarine used for military purposes was built in 1776 by David Bushnell. His Turtle was a one-man wooden submarine powered by hand-turned propellers and was used during the American Revolution against British warships.

During the Civil War, the use of submarines came into play again when the Union fielded the French-designed Alligator, which was the first U.S. Navy submarine to feature compressed air for air supply. The Confederacy also fielded several human-powered submarines, including the Hunley in Charleston Harbor.

Submarines saw much greater use during World War I, but it wasn't until World War II that the technological development of submarines enabled them to become a capable and feared weapons system.

During the Second World War, 314 submarines served in the United States Navy, including many built at the end of World War I. This force comprised less than 2 percent of the U.S. Navy ships, but they sank over 30 percent of Japan's navy, including eight aircraft carriers. More important, American submarines virtually strangled the Japanese economy by sinking almost 5 billion tons of shipping, over 60 percent of the Japanese merchant marine. Serving in many of the hardest fought battles of the war as part of the "silent service," the submarine crews rescued unlucky carrier pilots who ended up in the sea, like the future President of the United States, George H.W. Bush.

But victory at sea did not come cheaply. The Submarine Force lost 52 boats and 3,506 men during World War II. Just a few weeks ago, I had the good fortune of meeting a number of our World War II veterans from northwest Arkansas as they left the airport to visit Washington, DC, as part of the Honor Flight program. These brave men, many of whom were just boys at the time, answered the call of duty and changed the course of history through their selfless action and love for their country.

It was also a great honor to be able to attend the decommissioning cere-

mony for World War II Submarine Veterans, Diamond Chapter, hosted by the USS Snook Base of the United States Submarine Veterans in Rogers, Arkansas, last month. There, I had the privilege to recognize many of Arkansas' surviving submarine veterans and thank them for their efforts firsthand.

□ 1430

A special thanks goes to former submariner Pete Rathmell for making the event happen.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Chairman FILNER and Ranking Member BUYER for the opportunity to honor the "silent service" of World War II. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. SESTAK for his leadership in working with me on this legislation, and express my appreciation for the support of all the other cosponsors of the resolution.

I urge all of my colleagues to support H. Res. 773.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, so I yield back the balance of my time.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on House Resolution 773.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. BOOZMAN and Mr. SESTAK again, continuously on the forefront of making sure the respect shown to our veterans and the benefits that they have earned are there, and I urge my colleagues to unanimously support H. Res. 773.

I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 773.

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.

#### VETERANS RETRAINING ACT OF 2009

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1168) to amend chapter 42 of title 38, United States Code, to provide certain veterans with employment training assistance, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1168

*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 "Veterans Retraining Act of 2009".*

#### SEC. 2. EMPLOYMENT TRAINING ASSISTANCE.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Chapter 42 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

#### "§ 4216. Employment Training Assistance for Unemployed Veterans.

"(a) *MONTHLY TRAINING ASSISTANCE ALLOWANCE.*—Subject to the availability of appropriations for such purpose, the Secretary of Labor may pay to each covered veteran a monthly training assistance allowance under this section for each month that a covered veteran is enrolled in an employment and training program that teaches a skill in demand, as determined by the Secretary.

"(b) *AMOUNT.*—The amount of the training assistance allowance under this section is the amount equal to the monthly amount of the basic allowance for housing payable under section 403 of title 37 for a member of the Armed Forces with dependents in pay grade E-5 residing in the military housing area that encompasses all or the majority portion of the ZIP code area in which the veteran resides.

"(c) *DURATION.*—A covered veteran may receive training assistance under this section for not more than six months during each 10-year period beginning on the date in which the covered veteran first receives training allowance under this section.

"(d) *MOVING STIPEND.*—Subject to the availability of appropriations for such purpose, in addition to the training assistance allowance payable under subsection (a), the Secretary may reimburse each covered veteran, in an amount not to exceed \$5,000, for moving expenses related to the veteran's receipt of training for which an allowance is paid under this section.

"(e) *COVERED VETERAN DEFINED.*—In this section, the term 'covered veteran' means a veteran who is—

"(1) unemployed for a period of not less than four consecutive months at the time of applying for training assistance under this section;

"(2) able to successfully complete the employment and training program described in subsection (a), as determined by the Secretary; and

"(3) except as provided under this section, ineligible for education or training assistance under this title.

"(f) *AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.*—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$100,000,000 for each fiscal year."

(b) *CLERICAL AMENDMENT.*—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 42 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

"4216. Employment training assistance for unemployed veterans."

(c) *EFFECTIVE DATE.*—Section 4216 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall apply with respect to months beginning on or after the first day of fiscal year 2011.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

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

Again, I thank my colleagues from Florida and Arkansas for introducing an incredibly important piece of legislation.

H.R. 1168 is a much-needed piece of legislation to address the job retraining needs of America's veterans. Just this month, the Department of Labor reported that more than 30,000 recently

discharged veterans have filed for unemployment insurance benefits. Furthermore, as of September 2009, the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicated that 990,000 veterans were unemployed.

Mr. Speaker, these numbers are significant, and they demonstrate an immediate need to help our veterans receive the essential training needed to get their skills so they can be employed in a meaningful manner. We know the employment training programs can be effective in providing job counseling and retraining, an important part of successful transition to a civilian career.

H.R. 1168 goes one step further in support of veterans. The Veterans Retraining Act of 2009 would provide a stipend to veterans who are enrolled in employment and training programs to help cover living expenses and moving costs so veterans can move to an area where there is a demand for their newly acquired military skills.

This bill is good for the veteran, good for the underserved skill sector, and it is good for the country. Our veterans have invested in our country, and this legislation invests in our veterans.

H.R. 1168 is the result of continuously bipartisan work between the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee chairwoman, STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN, and the ranking member, Mr. BOOZMAN. I applaud both Mr. BOOZMAN and Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN for their leadership on the issue, their dedication to our veterans, and the example they set in the Veterans' Affairs Committee of bipartisan work for our veterans.

I urge all my colleagues to join me in support of this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I also rise in support of this bill, H.R. 1168, as amended, the Veterans Retraining Act of 2009. It is unfortunate this wasn't part of the stimulus package, because I think this could have been handled appropriately there. We have got a CBO estimate, but it is an authorization bill, and it is not an appropriations bill. But I think this is the kind of thing that would have been very pertinent to the stimulus bill.

This would amend chapter 42 of title 38, United States Code, to provide eligible veterans with employment training assistance.

Mr. Speaker, helping our returning veterans get back into the workforce is of the utmost importance. I believe this legislation will further that cause when, because of the recession, the unemployment level, particularly among veterans, continues to reach unacceptable levels.

I will be yielding shortly to the author of the bill, Mr. BOOZMAN, for a fuller explanation, but I would like to thank him for offering this bill, and also, as Mr. WALZ had mentioned, Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN and the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity for moving this bill through the legislative process, and also thank the

chairman and the ranking member for their support.

We must do more, obviously, to help our veterans today who have been hit especially hard by these tough economic times, particularly when they come back from Iraq or Afghanistan.

So I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1168, as amended.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, it is a real pleasure at this time to yield such time as she may consume to the coauthor of this bill, a tireless and effective advocate for our veterans and my colleague from right next door in South Dakota, Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN.

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend for yielding, for his service to our country, and for his tireless advocacy on behalf our Nation's veterans.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1168, the Veterans Retraining Act of 2009, which the Veterans' Affairs Economic Opportunity Subcommittee passed on October 8 and the full committee approved last week. I would like to thank the ranking member of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee, Mr. BOOZMAN, for his outstanding leadership in introducing this important legislation, and full committee Chairman FILNER and Ranking Member BUYER for their leadership as well and their support of this legislation.

The bill offers important updates to the employment training assistance available to veterans. It directs the Secretary of Labor to provide a monthly assistance allowance to veterans who are enrolled in an employment and training program. It teaches a skill in demand.

In addition, the veteran would be eligible to receive a monthly housing allowance, as well as a moving stipend of up to \$5,000 for moving expenses directly related to the receipt of this training. In order to be eligible for this assistance, veterans must be unemployed for no less than four months and ineligible for other education and training assistance.

Employment assistance is one of the essential benefits that our country gives its veterans. These benefits help our veterans adjust to life outside of the military and successfully transfer the skills and experience they acquired while serving in the Armed Forces to the civilian job force.

Again, I want to thank Chairman FILNER and particularly the hard work of Ranking Member BOOZMAN for their support on this issue, and I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the author of the bill, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN).

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman FILNER, Chairwoman HERSETH SANDLIN and Ranking Member BUYER for bringing H.R. 1168, as amended, the Veterans Retraining Act of 2009, to the floor.

I introduced this bill to encourage veterans to enroll in job training programs offered by the Department of Labor that train participants for jobs in the new economy.

In 2002, Congress enacted the Jobs for Veterans Act which gave covered veterans priority access to job training programs sponsored by the Department of Labor. Unfortunately, just as in other sectors of the workforce, veterans too have been forced to join the lines of the unemployed.

According to Bureau of Labor Statistics data for September 2009, 990,000 veterans were out of work, for an unemployment rate of 8.3 percent, the highest in decades. Of that number, nearly 600,000 were between the ages of 35 and 64, the years of prime earning power as well as peak financial obligations. These is also the group of veterans who no longer have access to any VA education or training programs. So while veterans may have priority access to training programs, the need to provide some income to the family while training is the prime goal of H.R. 1168, as amended.

To meet that goal, H.R. 1168, as amended, authorizes \$100 million per year to provide a living stipend and moving assistance to veterans who have been unemployed for at least 4 months, who are not eligible for training or education under title 38, and are enrolled in a U.S. Department of Labor retraining program. The amount of the living stipend would mirror that given to post-9/11 GI Bill participants.

The moving assistance is intended to help a newly trained veteran who lives in an area of high unemployment to move to an area where there is a demand for the veteran's skills. It is my hope that H.R. 1168, as amended, will be a step towards providing veterans with new skill sets and the ability to locate where the jobs are plentiful.

I want to especially thank Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN for her help and leadership on this bill and just in general her leadership on our subcommittee. I also appreciate Chairman FILNER and Ranking Member BUYER for bringing this bill forward to the floor.

As always, I want to thank the staff for your efforts. We don't do that enough. We really appreciate your efforts on behalf of our veterans and the tremendous job that you are doing.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, so I yield back the balance of our time.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, again, thank you to both our chairwoman and our ranking member for a wonderful and timely piece of legislation.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1168, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to unanimously support H.R. 1168.

I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1168, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### LOUISIANA HONORAIR DAY

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 828) to recognize October 24, 2009, the 20th chartered flight of World War II veterans through Louisiana HonorAir, as "Louisiana HonorAir Day," and to honor the invaluable service and dedication of the World War II veterans to our Nation.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

#### H. RES. 828

Whereas in late 2006, T.D. Smith of Louisiana founded Louisiana HonorAir, a non-profit organization, which charters flights for World War II veterans on an all-expenses-paid, day-long trip from Louisiana to Washington, DC, to see the World War II Memorial, the Marine Corps Memorial, and to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier;

Whereas since its first flight out of Lafayette, Louisiana in early 2007, Louisiana HonorAir has flown close to 2,000 World War II veterans to Washington, DC, to be honored for their invaluable service, sacrifice, and dedication to our Nation;

Whereas approximately 100 to 130 World War II veterans are selected by Louisiana HonorAir for each flight on a first-come-first-served basis;

Whereas Louisiana HonorAir is run by volunteers and sustained by donations and State grants;

Whereas before Louisiana HonorAir culminates in Lafayette, Louisiana, on April 10, 2010, its last three flights will be chartered from New Orleans, Louisiana, on September 26, October 10, and October 24, 2009;

Whereas the 100th chartered flight of World War II veterans aboard U.S. Airways occurs during Louisiana HonorAir's October 10, 2009, flight out of New Orleans, Louisiana, home to the National World War II Museum;

Whereas, October 24, 2009, marks the 20th chartered flight of World War II veterans through Louisiana HonorAir;

Whereas with the average World War II veteran being 86 years old and becoming too ill to visit the World War II Memorial in Washington, DC, there are not many opportunities left to honor them for their service: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives recognizes Louisiana HonorAir for its 20 chartered flights of World War II veterans to Washington, DC, to visit the National World War II Memorial, honors the invaluable service and dedication of the World War II veterans to our Nation, and supports the designation of a "Louisiana HonorAir Day".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from New Orleans for putting this piece of legislation forward. This is an incredibly important program, and it is one that any of us who have had the incredible honor of being in the presence of our World War II veterans as they get a chance to return back to their memorial would say is really moving.

The Louisiana HonorAir's mission is to provide that every single Louisiana World War II veteran have the opportunity to view the World War II Memorial for the first time. As the home of the National World War II Museum, Louisiana holds deep roots in celebrating our World War II veterans community.

Louisiana HonorAir provides the veterans a chance to stand in the presence of the landmark that memorializes their service to this country. They also visit Arlington National Cemetery and lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

The World War II Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery mark our country's gratitude for the heroic service our veterans have provided to the country. They are also a symbolic tie these veterans have to our country's history. This experience only lasts one day, but it hopefully stays in the hearts of our veterans and their loved ones forever.

This service provided by Louisiana HonorAir is an act of love for our World War II veterans. Operating solely on the efforts of volunteers and financial support from donors, Louisiana HonorAir is able to make these dreams possible at no cost to the veterans.

Because the youngest World War II veteran is 70 years old, and the average age of our veterans is 86, time is of the essence. Many of our last World War II veterans are becoming too ill to travel, and there are not many opportunities left to honor them for their service.

House Resolution 828 will recognize and celebrate Louisiana HonorAir's 20th chartered flight on October 24, 2009, Louisiana HonorAir Day.

□ 1445

We act on the limited chance to support our last surviving World War II veterans. Let's not forget them, and let's take advantage of every opportunity to celebrate their service to their country. With that, again, I

thank the gentleman for such an important resolution.

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

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

I also rise in support of House Resolution 828, a resolution recognizing October 24, 2009, the 20th chartered flight of World War II veterans through the Louisiana HonorAir, as Louisiana HonorAir Day, and to honor the invaluable service and dedication of World War II veterans nationwide.

Founded in late 2006 by T.D. Smith of Louisiana, Louisiana HonorAir provides World War II veterans an all-expense-paid, day-long trip from Louisiana to Washington, D.C., to see the World War II Memorial, the Marine Corps Memorial, and to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery. I want to congratulate them for their continued service to our Nation. Their flight on October 24, 2009, was the 20th Honor Flight organized by this organization, and I am sure it won't be the last.

I have also had the experience and privilege of honoring these Honor Flights in my congressional district. We've had four of these. Last week, in fact, we have just had one, and I will recognize that Senator Dole and Senator Libby Dole also were participants at the site to meet and greet these veterans as a tribute to them.

I know that I have been inspired by the veterans who have participated in honor flights from my district in Florida, and all Honor Flight Networks around our country deserve our support. Also on October 10, 2009, the 100th chartered flight of World War II veterans aboard U.S. Airways occurred during a Louisiana HonorAir Flight out of New Orleans, Louisiana, the home to the National World War II Museum. It is estimated by the National Honor Flight Network that over 42,000 veterans will have participated in honor flights by the end of this year. So I think it's a tribute to recognize this resolution, but it's also a tribute to my colleague Mr. CAO of Louisiana for introducing this resolution and honoring this worthy organization. I would like to thank both the chairman and the ranking member for moving this resolution so quickly, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALZ. I have no further speakers, and reserve the balance of my time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker I yield such time as he may consume to the author, Mr. CAO of Louisiana.

Mr. CAO. Thank you very much for allowing me to speak on behalf of my resolution.

I rise today in support of House Resolution 828, to designate October 24, 2009, as Louisiana HonorAir Day in honor of the invaluable service of World War II veterans to our Nation. October 24, 2009, marked the 20th charter flight of World War II veterans from Louisiana