HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC, June 29, 2010.

Hon. BENNIE THOMPSON,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security, Ford House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON, Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 5623, the Homebuyer Assistance and Improvement Act of 2010.

I appreciate your willingness to work cooperatively on this legislation, and I acknowledge that there are provisions within the bill that are within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Homeland Security. I agree that your inaction with respect to this bill does not in any way prejudice the Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future.

I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during consideration of H.R. 5623.

Sincerely,

SANDER LEVIN,
Chairman.

Mr. LEVIN. I can close very briefly. This bill is meritorious. It deserves bipartisan support, and I hope very much it will receive it. We owe this to the people who have essentially followed the rules who are caught by a closing date.

This is a credit. There is often question about, is the effort of the recovery program and like programs working? This is an example of it working, and in fact working so actively that now it is necessary and I think correct that we make sure that people who have advantaged themselves of it correctly are able to follow through.

So I urge a strong vote.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank Congress members DAHLKEMPER, KRATOVIL and CHILDERS for introducing this important and much-needed piece of legislation.

The mortgage crisis continues to affect millions of Americans, and has greatly interfered with the American dream of home ownership. It is imperative that we help everyday Americans in their effort to remain afloat in light of the ongoing effects of the economic meltdown. For these reasons, I support the proposed amendments to this Act which will extend the closing deadline for the First-Time Homebuyer tax credit to September 30, 2010.

The housing market is an area that was, perhaps, the most largely affected by the economic crisis. As of January, 2010, there were 315,716 foreclosures on properties in the United States reported just within the month. Additionally, 1 in every 409 U.S. housing units received a foreclosure filing in the same month. Texas received the sixth highest number of foreclosure filings in January, 2010. As of March, 2010, the foreclosure rate in Houston, Texas had increased by almost ten percent from the previous month. Although our economy appears to be on the path to recovery, these statistics are still cause for concern.

The programs set in place to counteract the effects of the economic downturn have attracted many ordinary Americans who are desperate to keep their homes. The first-time homebuyer tax credit, specifically, represented positive steps to guide ordinary Americans towards financial recovery. However, it is important to allow all who are eligible, and especially all who require the help, to benefit from the tax credit by extending the closing deadline. There has been a delay in processing due to all the new mortgages that have resulted from the tax credit. However, ordinary Americans who have attempted to obtain new mortgages, and are sincerely in need of the aid provided through the tax credit should not be punished for the backlog that resulted from factors entirely outside of their control.

We are all familiar with the ongoing effects of the economic meltdown. Jobs have been lost, homes have been foreclosed upon, and many have been left with no source of income or livelihood. In addition, many Americans have been stripped of the ability to achieve a goal that they have, in certain instances, worked decades to attain—owning a home. Extending the tax credit will provide everyday citizens with an opportunity to realize this dream, even in the midst of a recovering economy.

Mr. LEVIN. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5623, 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. LEVIN. 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.

RECOGNIZING HEROIC EFFORTS OF WEST VIRGINIA NATIONAL GUARD AND LOCAL RESPONDERS

Mr. CRITZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1153) recognizing the heroic efforts of the West Virginia National Guard and local responders for their work rescuing 17 individuals from a downed military helicopter on a rugged, snow-covered mountain on the Pocahontas-Randolph county line.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1153

Whereas the West Virginia National Guard and local responders safely and successfully rescued 17 individuals from a downed military helicopter on a rugged, snow-covered mountain on the Pocahontas-Randolph county line;

Whereas, on February 18, 2010, the West Virginia Army National Guard HH–60 Blackhawk helicopter, gallantly piloted by Bluefield, West Virginia, native Major Kevin Hazuka, located the downed aircraft in extremely adverse weather conditions;

Whereas two West Virginia Army National Guard Flight Medics, SSG Nicole Hopkins and SPC Casey Dunfee, were lowered to the landing site to assess the situation and to provide assistance to the injured through the night while emergency response and rescue teams worked their way to the survivors;

Whereas a C–130 Hercules aircraft from the 130th Airlift Wing of the West Virginia Air National Guard orbited the crash site to facilitate communications;

Whereas Snowshoe Mountain Ski Resort provided two snowcats and personnel that were invaluable to the safe evacuation of the injured;

Whereas local West Virginia civilians generously donated the use of their snowmobiles that enabled first responders to reach the site;

Whereas a Shavers Fork Volunteer Fire and Rescue Unit went as far as they could with special equipment and snowmobiles along a railroad grade to where it was still about a 45-minute trek in 5 feet of snow, straight up the side of a mountain with an approximate 50-degree pitch;

Whereas Valley Head Fire Department, Northern Greenbrier EMS, Greenbrier County Ambulance, White Sulphur Springs EMS, Cass Rescue, and Greenbank National Radio Astronomy Observatory operations staff all provided direct critical support for the effort;

Whereas the Pocahontas County Emergency Management, West Virginia State Police, Pocohantas County Sheriff's Department, Pocohantas County 911, and the U.S. Forest Service provided coordination and support efforts; and

Whereas the Bartow-Frank-Durbin Volunteer Fire and Rescue attempted an approach to the crash sight from the North side with support from State of West Virginia Departments of Natural Resources and Highways, neighboring Randolph and Tucker County Sheriff Departments and EMS units, Elkins, Harmon, and Huttonsville/Mill Creek Volunteer Fire Departments, and the American Red Cross: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) honors the heroic efforts of the West Virginia National Guard and local first responders;

(2) recognizes the countless volunteers, families, and neighbors who assisted in rescuing the 17 individuals; and

(3) recognizes the courage, ability, incredible determination, and willingness of West Virginians to lend a neighborly hand.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. CRITZ) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CRITZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 1153, recognizing the heroic efforts of the West Virginia National Guard and local responders for their work rescuing 17 people from a downed military helicopter on a rocky, snow-covered mountain on the Pocahontas-Randolph county line. I would like to thank my colleague from West Virginia, Mr. RAHALL, for putting this resolution together.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to spend this time recognizing the individuals and organizations involved in the execution of this tremendous rescue.

On February 18, 2010, a West Virginia Army National Guard HH–60 Blackhawk helicopter, skillfully piloted by a native of Bluefield, West Virginia, Major Kevin Hazuka, located the downed aircraft in extremely difficult circumstances. The snow and ice of the Pocahontas-Randolph county line at the time was treacherous, and the valor of Major Kevin Hazuka should be commended by all.

I would like to commend Staff Sergeant Nicole Hopkins and Specialist Casey Dunfee, two West Virginia Army National Guard flight medics. Sergeant Hopkins and Specialist Dunfee were lowered to the site in order to provide medical care throughout the night as rescue workers labored their way to the survivors.

Thanks are also deserved to the pilot of the 130th Airlift Wing of the West Virginia National Guard who assisted by orbiting the crash site in a C–130 Hercules aircraft in order to facilitate vital communication.

Volunteers, civilians, service men and women alike all gave a hand to help rescue the survivors. The Snowshoe Mountain Ski Resort assisted by providing invaluable machinery and staff to help evacuate the injured.

Local West Virginians helped by donating snowmobiles that enabled first responders to reach the site. The Shavers Fork Volunteer Fire and Rescue Unit was instrumental in using special equipment and snowmobiles to clear a path to the location of the crash.

The Valley Head Fire Department, Northern Greenbrier EMS, Greenbrier County Ambulance, White Sulphur Springs EMS, Cass Rescue, and Greenbank National Radio Astronomy Observatory staff all provided extremely vital support for the effort. In addition, the Pocahontas County Emergency Management, West Virginia State Police, Pocahontas County Sheriff's Department, Pocahontas County 911, and the U.S. Forest Service also lent a hand in order to help assist the victims of the crash. The coordination and support they provided was also invaluable.

Finally, the Bartow-Frank-Durbin Volunteer Fire and Rescue made a valiant attempt to approach the crash site from the north side with support from the State of West Virginia Departments of Natural Resources and Highways, neighboring Randolph and Tucker County Sheriff Departments and EMS units, Elkins, Harmon, and Huttonsville-Mill Creek Volunteer Fire Departments, and the American Red Cross.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution acknowledges and thanks the West Virginia National Guard, local first responders, and volunteers around the area for their successful efforts to rescue the 17 individuals. House Resolution 1153 recognizes the courage, ability, and determination of West Virginians.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 1153, which recognizes the heroic efforts of the West Virginia National Guard and local responders for rescuing 17 persons from a Navy helicopter that crashed in the wintry mountains of that State in February of this year. I want to commend Representative NICK RAHALL for sponsoring this legislation.

This incident, precipitated when a Navy helicopter was forced down in remote mountainous terrain, exemplifies all that is best about the National Guard and its ability to work cooperatively and effectively with local civilian responders in crisis situations.

Without the rapid, integrated response of the West Virginia Army and Air National Guard, the volunteer efforts of local citizens, the support of local emergency management services, and perseverance of State and local fire and rescue services and agencies, 17 people could have died from their injuries and from exposure. Thankfully, there were people at every level of government who were trained, equipped, and prepared to respond.

This resolution specifically honors those citizens of West Virginia, but it should also remind each Member to express appreciation to the people in our own States and districts, selfless Americans who willingly sacrifice their comfort and safety for others.

In my own district and State, Guards men and women have adopted a flexible ''plug and play'' organization model that enables members to report to the closest armory in time of emergency, thereby minimizing the overall response time during events like the unprecedented snowfalls we experienced this winter. Their round-the-clock vigilance exemplifies the spirit of the National Guard emergency personnel at all levels of government.

□ 1440

Thus it is fitting that we honor and thank the soldiers and airmen of the National Guard as well as the first responders and emergency and rescue personnel across our Nation, who, when disaster and tragedy strike, step forward to save and serve their fellow citizens. I urge all Members to support this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CRITZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to my friend and colleague and the sponsor of this resolution, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL).

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I first commend the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. CRITZ) for his invaluable support in helping us bring this resolution to the floor today. I know that it is a special recognition to a special group of people. I do support the heroic efforts of our West Virginia National Guard and our local responders and would urge all of my colleagues to support the pending resolution, H. Res. 1153.

I have personally visited with the National Guard members mentioned herein and the local responders and members of the Bartow, Frank, and Durbin communities' Volunteer Fire Departments in Pocahontas County a couple months ago. On Thursday, February 18, 2010, earlier this year, the heroic actions of West Virginians brought about the highly successful rescue of 17 military personnel who were on board a U.S. Navy helicopter participating in the Operation Southbound Trooper X annual military exercise, which went down in deep, snow-covered, and very rugged terrain in Pocahontas County, West Virginia.

The remarkable rescue was an outstanding and highly coordinated effort on the part of many highly trained professionals as well as private citizens, who worked under very difficult conditions to reach the crew and personnel on board the aircraft, many of whom had been injured in the crash. West Virginians are the best neighbors for whom you could ever wish. It is a truth that has been proven time and again. This historic rescue effort was, thankfully, a rare event, but it was not at all out of character for our State of West Virginia. In fact, it was merely illustrative of the best of our State.

The swift response, the astounding skills and abilities, the enormous courage, and profound determination of all those involved in the rescue operation, from those who serve in and lead our West Virginia National Guard to our local fire, rescue, law enforcement, and first responder units, and the countless volunteers, families, and neighbors nearby, most certainly made the difference between life and death. While no expression of gratitude would ever be sought for such selfless acts, the hope that one good turn deserves another never dims with our West Virginians.

On behalf of my fellow West Virginians and on behalf of my colleague from the neighboring congressional district, Representative SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO, we are pleased to support H. Res. 1153, to honor these good deeds and to illuminate them as a beacon for others. I would ask that my fellow Members join in support of this resolution. I, again, thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. CRITZ) for his invaluable support as well.

Mr. BARTLETT. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), an original sponsor of this resolution.

Mrs. CAPITO. I'd like to thank my friend from Maryland for recognizing me. I'd particularly like to thank my fellow member of the delegation, Mr. RAHALL, for bringing House Resolution 1153 forward. The occurrence of this crash straddled two of our counties. His is Pocahontas and mine is Randolph. We both know very well that we

don't call West Virginia ''Wild and Wonderful'' for no reason. This is one of the wildest parts of our beautiful State. And so I want to offer my congratulations to the brave men and women of the 130th Airlift Wing, which is headquartered in Charleston, West Virginia, in my district, and all the first responders and citizens who helped with this rescue.

As we've heard, Major Hazuka of Bluefield, West Virginia, of the 130th Airlift Wing of the National Guard, discovered the Navy Kittyhawk helicopter which had crashed over Randolph and Pocahontas Counties in terrible weather conditions. They acted very, very quickly. I would also like to honor Army National Guard Flight Medics Staff Sergeant Nicole Hopkins and Specialist Casey Dunfee, who were lowered to the landing site to give emergency medical care and to help coordinate the efforts.

The 130th Airlift Wing represents the best of West Virginia, and their heroic response to this crash further establishes their importance to this State. As my colleague from West Virginia so eloquently put it, it didn't surprise any of us. This unit and those around our State and around this Nation are known for their willingness to step up when they're most needed. But the terrain and the weather on that particular day was incredibly dangerous.

I know my colleague from Pennsylvania mentioned all of the different units of first responders that responded that day, but I would like to repeat their names: the West Virginia Civil Air Patrol, the Valley Head Fire Department, the Northern Greenbrier EMS, Greenbrier County Ambulance, White Sulfur Springs EMS, Cass Rescue, and the Greenbank National Radio Astronomy Observatory, which is very close in Pocahontas. I'd also like to thank the Snowshoe Resort for their willingness to share equipment. We also had the Pocahontas County Emergency Management, West Virginia State Police, Pocahontas County Sheriffs Department, Pocahontas County 9/11, U.S. Forest Service, Bartow-Frank-Durbin Volunteer Fire and Rescue, along with the Department of Natural Resources and sheriff departments from the surrounding areas.

As you can see, it was a collegial effort, an enormous effort, and one that when we first received the news of this accident over our local television and radio stations, really had us on the edge of our seats because I think we knew how treacherous a rescue in this area could be at this time of year.

So I'd like to say congratulations. Again, I'd like thank my colleague Mr. RAHALL for bringing this resolution forward, and I would like to ask my colleagues to join in congratulating not only our first responders and our National Guard, but also take the time to thank their local and State National Guard and local first responders for all the good work they do voluntarily every day for our benefit.

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

Mr. CRITZ. 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 Pennsylvania (Mr. CRITZ) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1153.

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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 5618, House Resolution 1244, H.R. 5552, and H.R. 5623, in each case by the yeas and nays.

Remaining postponed proceedings will resume later in the week.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

RESTORATION OF EMERGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION ACT OF 2010

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5618) to continue Federal unemployment programs, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 261, nays 155, not voting 17, as follows:

[Roll No. 398]

YEAS—261

Ackerman
Altmire
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Baldwin
Barrow
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Boccieri
Bono Mack
Boren
Boswell
Boucher
Boyd
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown, Corrine
Butterfield
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson (IN)
Castle
Castor (FL)
Chandler
Chu
Clarke
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly (VA)
Conyers
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Critz
Crowley
Cuellar
Dahlkemper
Davis (AL)
Davis (CA)
Davis (IL)
Davis (TN)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
Dent
Deutch
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Driehaus
Edwards (MD)
Edwards (TX)
Ehlers
Ellison
Ellsworth
Eshoo
Etheridge
Farr
Fattah
Filner
Foster
Frank (MA)
Fudge
Garamendi
Gerlach
Giffords
Gonzalez
Gordon (TN)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutierrez
Hall (NY)
Halvorson
Hare
Harman
Hastings (FL)
Heinrich
Heller
Higgins
Himes
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Honda
Hoyer
Inslee
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson Lee (TX)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Kagen
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilpatrick (MI)
Kilroy
Kind
Kirkpatrick (AZ)
Kissell
Klein (FL)
Kosmas
Kucinich
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
LaTourette
Lee (CA)
Lee (NY)
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Luján
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney
Manzullo
Markey (MA)
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McCotter
McDermott
McGovern
McMahon
McNerney
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Michaud
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Mitchell
Mollohan
Moore (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy (NY)
Murphy, Patrick
Murphy, Tim
Nadler (NY)
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perriello
Peters
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Platts
Polis (CO)
Pomeroy
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Reichert
Reyes
Richardson
Rodriguez
Rogers (MI)
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Rothman (NJ)
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schauer
Schiff
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sestak
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Space
Speier
Spratt
Stark
Stupak
Sutton
Tanner
Teague
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Towns
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch
Whitfield
Wilson (OH)
Wu
Yarmuth
Young (FL)

NAYS—155

Aderholt
Adler (NJ)
Akin
Alexander
Austria
Bachmann
Bachus
Baird
Barrett (SC)
Bartlett
Barton (TX)
Bean
Berry
Biggert
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Boozman
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bright
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite, Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Carter
Cassidy
Chaffetz
Childers
Coble
Coffman (CO)
Cole
Conaway
Cooper
Crenshaw
Culberson
Davis (KY)
Djou
Donnelly (IN)
Dreier
Duncan
Emerson
Fallin
Flake
Fleming
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Guthrie
Hall (TX)
Harper
Hastings (WA)
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Hill
Hunter
Inglis
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson, Sam
Jordan (OH)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kline (MN)
Kratovil
Lamborn
Lance
Latham
Latta
Lewis (CA)
Linder
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis