

Medgar Evers & Fannie Lou Hamer, Mission Mississippi Mayor's Prayer Breakfast and Governor's Prayer Luncheon, among others. In 2003, Mayor Alice Scott, of Canton, Mississippi presented the 'Key to the City' to Mrs. Palmer and proclaimed October 3 as "Cynthia Goodloe Palmer Day".

She is a singer, song writer, producer, entrepreneur, friend, humble servant and a lover of people. Her personal testimony is: 'In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths' Proverbs 3:6.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mrs. Cynthia Palmer for her dedication to serving others.

CLOTHE A HOMELESS HERO ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 27, 2012

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6328, the "Jamie Zapata Border Enforcement Security Task Force Act," which Directs the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security (Transportation Security Administration [TSA]) to transfer unclaimed clothing recovered at airport security checkpoints to local veterans organizations or other local charitable organizations for distribution to homeless or needy veterans and their families. Moreover, it authorizes the Assistant Secretary to enter into agreements with airport authorities for disposing of such clothing.

In my home state of Texas, we have nearly 1.7 million veterans. I represent 18th District in Texas which is home to over 32,000 veterans. Of the 200,000 veterans of military service who live and work in Houston; more than 13,000 are veterans from Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Veteran homelessness has been a substantial problem going back to at least the Vietnam era.

An estimated 10–16 percent of our nation's homeless population (between 76,000–136,000) are veterans.

Nearly one in seven homeless adults are veterans, as of * * *

More than 67,000 homeless veterans were counted on a given January night in America last year. More than 4 in 10 homeless veterans were found unsheltered.

Almost half of homeless veterans were African American in 2008 despite the fact that only 11 percent of veterans overall are African American.

1.5 million veterans are at risk of homelessness due to poverty, lack of support networks, and dismal living conditions in overcrowded or substandard housing.

30.2 percent of veterans ages 18 to 24 were unemployed according to unpublished 2011 Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

Nearly 1 in 10 veterans with disabilities were not employed in 2010.

According to Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, a 2007 survey showed that more than one-third of employers were unaware of protections they must provide to servicemembers, and more than half spent less than 2 percent of their recruitment budget

on military advertising and/or did not understand the qualifications of military service.

In that same survey more than half of all veterans were unsure of how to professionally network, and nearly three in four felt unprepared to negotiate salary and benefits and/or unable to effectively translate military skills.

More than 968,000 of veterans ages 18 to 64 had been in poverty in the past year in 2010.

More than 33,000 veterans were housed since 2009 by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Veterans Affairs in permanent, supportive housing with case managers and access to VA health care.

\$31 million of SNAP/food stamps funding in 2008 was spent at military commissaries to help feed military members and their families who struggle against hunger.

A veteran lives in one in five households benefiting from the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which provides heating and cooling assistance.

After serving this country and protecting our rights and freedoms, these veterans often sustain debilitating injuries or post-traumatic stress that make readjusting to life in the U.S. an arduous task. It is often difficult for them to find jobs and as they slip further into hopelessness, they become more susceptible to drug abuse and violent acts which can lead to homelessness.

This is a disturbing trend that must end. Surely, in this great nation, we can provide for those who fought to defend us. As our men and women in the armed forces have served us, it is our duty to, in turn, serve them.

H.R. 6328 is a step in the right direction towards finding creative solutions for the basic needs of certain veterans. By using unclaimed clothing that has been left at airports is a wonderful way to help ensure that veterans who have fallen on hard times have access to clothing.

With the epidemic of depression, anxiety, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in our military, along with the burden of long and repeated deployment during our nation's most recent wars, we must be vigilant about combating the issue of homelessness among our nation's heroes.

Throughout my tenure in Congress, I have remained committed to meeting both the needs of veterans of previous wars, and to those who are now serving. Veterans have kept their promise to serve our nation; they have willingly risked their lives to protect the country we all love. We must now ensure that we keep our promises to our veterans.

I have introduced and supported legislation that increases medical services to our troops, veterans and their families. I recently introduced a measure that resulted in \$500,000 additional funding for PTSD research and treatment. Yet, as we work to improve the physical and mental health of our returning heroes; we must also work to ensure that our service men and women retain their dignity when they return home, and providing them with access to clothes is the least we can do to honor their service. For that reason, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6328, the "Clothe a Homeless Hero Act," on Suspension.

U.N. IS NOT THE FORUM FOR RESOLVING MIDDLE EAST TENSIONS

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 29, 2012

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today, the United Nations will vote on whether or not to recognize the Palestinian Authority as a non-member observer state of the U.N. With 132 nations having already recognized the Palestinian territory as a sovereign state and only 97 votes needed, I suspect the Palestinian Authority's effort will be successful. Yet, despite a ceasefire reached between Israel and Hamas last week, the Middle East remains a volatile tinder box far from peace. Admitting the Palestinian Authority as a nonmember observer state will hurt, not help, a peace process that is already on shaky ground.

The United States has opposed the Palestinian Authority's effort from the very beginning because it recognizes the instability that such recognition would create. The Palestinian Authority wants all the benefits of a state, without any of the responsibility. They fully admit that they don't know what their borders are. By definition, a state is a geographic territory with a sovereign government. Yes, there are some countries with border disputes, such as India and Pakistan in the Kashmir region, but the Palestinians have not agreed upon border whatsoever. What is a state if it can't define its own land?

The Palestinians themselves agreed to resolve statehood issues at the negotiating table in the Oslo Accords (which means they are required to negotiate bilaterally with Israel). Now they are figuratively walking away from the negotiating table and literally blowing it up with attacks from Hamas. Meanwhile, Israel continues to help the Palestinian economy, including collecting over \$100 million a month in taxes for the Palestinians and allowing more and more Palestinians to travel to the West Bank. One thing is for sure: it is not Israel that is holding up the peace process.

With upgraded status at the U.N. come certain benefits. Here lies the real desire for the Palestinian U.N. gambit. A Palestinian state could bring war crimes charges against Israel in the International Criminal Court, putting the fate of Israelis in the hands of some international judge. This Court is so dangerous that even President Obama refuses to allow Americans to be prosecuted by it. The Palestinian Authority remains fiercely committed to bringing Israel to the International Criminal Court. Many of the nations who support Palestinian Statehood have requested assurance that Israel would be left alone if statehood was granted. The Palestinian Authority defiantly rejected these requests. Just yesterday, Hanan Ashrawi, a senior member of the PLO said: "We have not succumbed to pressure, we did not give any commitment." The world should know they mean what they say; granting them this request means endangering Israel.

Yes, the Palestinians may be successful today and no, the U.S. does not have veto power in a U.N. General Assembly vote, but there still can and should be consequences for the irresponsible actions of President Abbas and his old cronies in the Palestinian Liberation Organization, PLO. Last year, we gave