

The President has asked for an additional \$5.6 billion from Congress to augment the Pentagon's overseas contingency operations account, the OCO. About \$3.4 billion of that would go to the operations against the Islamic State, and another \$1.6 billion would directly support the Iraqi training and equipping mission. I have no doubt that all or most of those funds will be included in the omnibus appropriations bill next week.

Mr. Speaker, if this doesn't add up to our forces being engaged in sustained military combat operations, then what in the world does? Many Members keep talking about prohibiting U.S. troops from having boots on the ground.

Mr. Speaker, we already have nearly 3,000 pairs of boots on the ground in Iraq, and I don't know how many people we have supporting and carrying out bombing missions because the Pentagon and the White House haven't told us.

Enough is enough. This House needs to draft, debate, and vote on whether to authorize this vast array of military operations known as Operation Inherent Resolve before we adjourn this year.

This war began under this Congress, the 113th Congress. It has escalated under the 113th Congress. It has expanded from Iraq to Syria and now to Turkey under the 113th Congress. It is the responsibility of the 113th Congress to authorize it or not. We need to take care of our business—real, serious, life-and-death business—before we walk out the door next week. We need to do our jobs.

No more excuses, no more whining about how the White House should send Congress a request. It is the institutional and constitutional duty of the Congress of the United States to decide matters of war and peace. It is time for the leadership of this House to step up to the plate and bring an authorization to the floor to be debated and voted on before we adjourn.

If not, then shame on this House and shame on the leadership for failing to carry out our most sacred duty to our uniformed men and women, their families, and the American people.

#### IN HONOR OF THE BRAVERY OF PRIVATE JOHN SIPE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I call attention to the bravery exhibited during the Civil War by Private John Sipe during the Battle of Fort Stedman.

In addition, I recognize and commend the tireless efforts by his great-grandson, Mr. Reuben Troutman, a constituent of Pennsylvania's Fourth District, who has advocated for over a decade for the consideration of his great-grandfather to receive the Medal of Honor.

On March 25, 1865, Private Sipe's selfless actions in the face of grave danger

exhibited unparalleled bravery while fighting at the Battle of Fort Stedman with the 205th Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers.

After Confederate forces succeeded in capturing Fort Stedman, the 205th Regiment made a gallant charge to counter the rebel attack. Although still considered to be in training status at that time, these brave Pennsylvanians managed to force the opposition back into Fort Stedman, halting the Confederate onslaught.

During the intense hand-to-hand combat that occurred in retaking the fort, Private Sipe displayed extreme heroism when, without concern for his own safety, he fearlessly charged the rebel lines and captured the Confederate flag.

The commander of the IX Army Corps, Major General John G. Parke, recommended to Army headquarters that Private Sipe be awarded the Medal of Honor for his valor and selflessness in capturing the enemy flag.

Mr. Speaker, I must explain that capturing this flag at the time was not like this game that you might have heard about of capturing the flag. At the time of the Civil War, just imagine the fire and the sound of cannonade, muskets, the screams of compatriots on either side of the line in trying to manage the battle.

It was the flag, it was the guidon, it was the standard, that showed the soldiers what action their unit was taking, and without it, it would render them impotent because there was no communication. There were no radios during the Civil War, so capturing the flag meant everything; not only was it symbolic, but it had a huge purpose in determining what that unit could, would, or would not do.

Although recommended to receive the award by the commanding general, according to the National Archives and Records Administration, Private Sipe, however, never received the Medal of Honor.

In a process that has spanned more than a decade, Private Sipe's only living relative—his great-grandson Reuben Troutman of Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania—has worked with our office and the office of my predecessors to ensure that Private Sipe was given fair consideration for the Medal of Honor for which he was recommended.

Unfortunately, the Department of Defense determined this year that a lack of existing evidence precludes the award of the Medal of Honor for Private Sipe's bravery and service. Private Sipe's heroism warrants recognition, nonetheless.

Additionally, Reuben Troutman has dedicated an extensive amount of time over many years in researching his great-grandfather's contribution at the Battle of Fort Stedman, and he has worked diligently and tirelessly to bring to light historical facts of Private Sipe's military record.

I commend Reuben for his attention to detail, persistence, tenacity, and

zeal in seeking to honor his family heritage and for a valiant attempt at obtaining recognition for his great-grandfather's honorable and courageous service during the Civil War.

As a proud servicemember myself and as a combat veteran and on behalf of the millions of other uniformed personnel who have served after him, I thank not only Private Sipe, but also Mr. Troutman, for their selfless service and dedication to our Nation.

□ 1030

#### HUMAN DIGNITY FOR ALL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, in this season of reflection for many across the Nation, I will take a moment, first of all, to speak to my constituent Zeph to remind him that I have always supported the human dignity of all persons, and I will never fail to do so. I thank him for his warm embrace of those values and our commitment that we will continue to work together, which brings me to my concern of an ailing American who has continuously been held in Cuba.

I ask today on the floor of the House for the leadership of this government to continue to work diligently in the efforts to return Alan Gross to his family. I hope that we will join together, Republicans and Democrats, to work for his release and his return. I would note, Mr. Speaker, that I do not speak of the conditions of such, the reasons for such; just an American who is in failing health whom we need to work to bring home.

I think that is the kind of spirit of mercy that I would like to continue to speak of as we try to work our way through the understanding of the President's action on the executive order regarding immigration. It follows the directive of the Speaker of the House, who said:

A comprehensive approach to immigration reform is long overdue; and I am confident that the President, myself, and others can find the common ground to take care of this issue once and for all.

Spoken by Speaker BOEHNER in 2012.

Now, as we approach the new year, 2015, 3 years later, there has not been one vote on the floor of the House to bring mercy or relief to those who have been languishing in the shadows—not opening the borders, Mr. Speaker, but to really provide a framework for those who are here in the United States, almost as if there was a temporary pardon.

This is not, as the Judiciary Committee pounded over and over again yesterday, a change in the law. This is a work within the confines of the law under article II executive powers of the President and the language to take care. It is actually a recognition to frame, if you will, the interpretation that is given to laws of the land—