

rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

BRUCE W. CARTER DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4918) to name the Department of Veterans Affairs medical center in Miami, Florida, as the "Bruce W. Carter Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4918

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. NAME OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER, MIAMI, FLORIDA.

The Department of Veterans Affairs medical center in Miami, Florida, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the "Bruce W. Carter Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center". Any reference to such medical center in any law, regulation, map, document, record, or other paper of the United States shall be considered to be a reference to the Bruce W. Carter Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer my support for the bill to name the VA Medical Center in Miami, Florida, after Bruce W. Carter.

I have a biography, but I never knew Mr. Carter and I'm sure Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN knows him best or knows his record the best.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my support of H.R. 4918, a bill to name the VA Medical Center in Miami, Florida, after Bruce W. Carter.

For his actions during Operation Idaho Canyon in the Quang Tri Province of the Republic of Vietnam in 1969, PFC Bruce W. Carter was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in 1971. The citation reads, in part:

Pfc. Carter and his fellow marines were pinned down by vicious crossfire when, with complete disregard for his safety, he stood in full view of the North Vietnamese Army soldiers to deliver a devastating volume of fire at their positions. The accuracy and aggressiveness of his attack caused several enemy casualties and forced the remainder of the soldiers to retreat from the immediate area. Shouting directions to the marines around him, Pfc. Carter then commenced leading them from the path of the rapidly approaching brush fire when he observed a hostile grenade land between him and his companions. Fully aware of the probable consequences of his action but determined to protect the men following him, he unhesitatingly threw himself over the grenade, absorbing the full effects of its detonation with his body. Pfc. Carter's indomitable courage, inspiring initiative and selfless devotion to duty upheld

the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the U.S. Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life in the service of his country.

H.R. 4918, which would designate the VA Medical Center in Miami, Florida, as the "Bruce W. Carter Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center" honors the service and sacrifice of this Marine Corps hero.

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

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to Dr. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN of Florida to speak on the bill.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I thank the chairman and the ranking member.

Mr. Speaker, I am so honored that we have this legislation before us. H.R. 4918 honors a brave soldier, a brave marine, who gave his life for our country. And this legislation to name the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center located in my hometown of Miami, Florida, as the "Bruce W. Carter Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center" is a great honor not just to the family and to the legacy that Bruce left, but also it honors the selfless sacrifice of all of our members and all of our veterans.

Bruce was born in New York, and he moved with his family to Texas, then Louisiana, and then they settled in South Florida. He attended Miami Springs Elementary School and then Miami Springs High School before enlisting in the U.S. Marine Corps in Jacksonville, Florida. He was promoted to Private First Class January 1, 1969, and deployed to Vietnam in April of that year, serving as a radio operator with Hotel Company, 2nd battalion, 3rd Marines, 3rd Marine Division.

Sadly, his hopes, his dreams, his life-long ambitions were brutally cut short in Vietnam. On August 7, 1969, in combat north of the Vandegrift base in the Quang Tri province, Private First Class Carter threw himself on an enemy grenade, giving his life in service to our country so that his fellow Marines could survive.

His sacrifice embodies the honor, the courage, and the commitment to freedom which is characteristic of both a hero and a United States Marine.

On September 19, 1971, at a ceremony attended by his mother, Georgianna "Georgie" Carter-Krell and other family members, Private First Class Carter was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his unwavering patriotism and sacrifice. For his valor Private First Class Carter has also received the Purple Heart, the Combat Action Ribbon, the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with one Bronze Star, and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

However, the legacy of Private First Class Bruce Carter's commitment to our Nation endures. It endures in his mother, Georgie, who has carried on her son's legacy through her leadership in an organization known as the Gold Star Mothers organization. Today Georgie is serving her second term as national president of Gold Star Mothers,

an organization committed to paying tribute to the men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of liberty.

I am privileged to represent the 18th Congressional District of Florida, hometown to many servicemen and women who have bravely defended our interests every day. My husband, Dexter, served our country in Vietnam as a U.S. Army ranger and was severely wounded in combat. My stepson Doug and his wife are captains in the U.S. Marine Corps, having served our country in Iraq. And I am deeply and personally interested in all of the affairs related to veterans to make sure that we honor them with the benefits that they so richly have earned through their sacrifice. They have served our country proudly, and they deserve to be treated with great respect.

Those who dedicated their lives to the service of others truly embody the heart and the spirit of all that is best in America. And that can truly be said of Private First Class Carter, of his dedication to freedom and of his fellow Marines, and it must never be lost in the dusty pages of our history book. Through the naming of this medical center, we will be remembering not just Bruce's sacrifice but the sacrifice and service of all of the brave men and women who proudly serve and wear our Nation's uniform.

I thank the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee for this opportunity, and I especially want to thank the ranking member, my good friend from Indiana, for this time.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I would ask all colleagues to support H.R. 4918, a bill to name the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Miami, Florida, as the "Bruce W. Carter Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center."

I want to thank my colleague Dr. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN of Miami, Florida, for introducing the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I also thank the gentlewoman from Florida for telling us so eloquently about Mr. Carter.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 4918.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. I would urge my colleagues to support unanimously H.R. 4918 and yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4918.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

EXPRESSING GRATITUDE FOR THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE AMERICAN GI FORUM ON ITS 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1291) expressing gratitude for the contributions of the American GI Forum on its 60th anniversary.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1291

Whereas millions of veterans returning home from World War II looked to the guarantee of educational, medical, housing, and other basic benefits provided by the GI Bill;

Whereas these benefits were denied in large part to Americans of Mexican descent and other Hispanics throughout the United States;

Whereas the American GI Forum was founded in 1948 by Army Major Hector P. Garcia, a physician from Corpus Christi, Texas, in response to such inequities;

Whereas the Forum's motto is "Education Is Our Freedom and Freedom Should Be Everybody's Business";

Whereas in 1998 the Forum was granted a Federal charter pursuant to an Act of Congress (Public Law 105-231);

Whereas one of the purposes expressed in the Forum's charter is "fostering and enlarging equal educational opportunities, equal economic opportunities, equal justice under the law, and equal political opportunities for all United States citizens, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin";

Whereas the Forum's Veterans Outreach Program is based in San Antonio, Texas, and provides training, employment, and counseling for veterans in the Southwestern United States; and

Whereas the American GI Forum continues to be a beacon of hope and an avenue for involvement for returning veterans and ordinary citizens aspiring to improve conditions within their own communities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the need for equal access to veterans' benefits for all who have honorably served;

(2) supports the goals, ideals, and deeds of the American GI Forum and its members;

(3) commends the work of the American GI Forum on its 60th anniversary; and

(4) encourages others to join with the American GI Forum to ensure that veterans are never again denied the benefits they rightfully deserve.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

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

I rise in strong support of House Resolution 1291, which comes to us courtesy of Mr. RODRIGUEZ from Texas. I just want to point out that what we are doing here is expressing the gratitude for the contributions of the American GI Forum as it celebrates its 60th anniversary. We all know that the GI Bill of 1944 made an immense impact on the lives of returning veterans by guaranteeing educational, medical, housing, and other basic benefits.

Though this legislation was groundbreaking, it takes much more than words on paper to ensure that institutional goals are implemented. One man who understood this was Army Major Hector Garcia, who realized that the disparate treatment and denial of benefits to many Hispanic veterans must be ended. To carry out this purpose, he inspired to rally around him a group of fellow veterans who formed the American GI Forum.

Their motto is, "Education is our Freedom and Freedom Should be Everybody's Business." The ideals which they stand for, equal education opportunities, equal economic opportunities, equal justice under the law, and equal political opportunities are ingrained in the fabric of American values. Since its inception, branches around the country have reached milestones in veterans' issues, in education, and civil rights.

Knowing the effects of unequal treatment, Army Major Garcia devoted himself to standing up for the isolated Hispanic members of our veteran community. We are happy to honor the organization he founded. We look forward to working with them for the common good and welfare of veterans for many years to come.

The broad-ranging and comprehensive initiatives which the GI Forum has undertaken over the last 60 years include the cofounding of SER-Jobs for Progress, Incorporated, a top-10 national Hispanic nonprofit organization, and the National Veterans Outreach Program, which is designed to assist military veterans in securing affordable housing and provides counseling and employment assistance services.

It is not the years though, however, that the GI Forum has existed, but how much it has accomplished that indicates their impact and why we are honoring them today. Leaders of the forum, from Army Major Garcia, on to the current president, Antonio Gil Morales, have an irrepressible spirit and a dynamic energy, using their benefit for the benefit of others.

Today, the GI Forum continues to challenge disparate policies on behalf of Hispanic veterans by challenging barriers and enhancing understanding. For their support of all veterans, spe-

cifically Hispanic veterans, and their leadership in being a beacon of hope and an avenue of involvement for returning veterans and ordinary citizens aspiring to improve conditions within their communities, we take the occasion of the 60th anniversary of their founding to recognize the GI Forum with this resolution as evidence of the high esteem in which it's held by all its members.

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

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 1291 recognizes the contributions of the American GI Forum on its 60th anniversary. Mr. Speaker, the work of the founder of the American GI Forum, Dr. Hector Garcia, is one that shows the determination of the American spirit.

Serving during World War II as an infantryman, as a combat engineer, and a medical doctor, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with six battle stars and achieved the rank of major. Upon his return from the war, he worked to encourage other Mexican Americans to educate themselves in the Democratic principles, and founded the American GI Forum in 1948 to fight for equal treatment for Mexican American veterans, including proper medical treatment and educational benefits.

In reviewing the current legislative priorities for the American GI Forum, it is evident their efforts have continued to instill in the Hispanic/Latino community the desire to achieve through liberty.

Mr. Speaker, there is one clarification that I think should be made regarding the resolution whereas clauses, and I will take these up in a moment here with the author of the bill. In particular, the whereas clause reads, "Whereas, millions of veterans returning home from World War II look to the guarantee of educational, medical, housing, and other basic benefits by the GI Bill," and, "Whereas, these benefits were denied in large part to Americans of Mexican descent and other Hispanics throughout the United States."

By having these two statements like this in the whereas clause, this statement implies systematic denial of benefits as a matter of policy by the VA. Individual accounts of bigotry most likely did in fact occur, but I have great concerns with regard to the drafting of the bill. I was very disappointed that the chairman would not work with the minority on the drafting of this bill.

Those of us who wear and have worn the uniform, we embrace the ideals that veterans benefits are to be extended without regard to race, color, or creed. As I said, I will have some questions of Mr. RODRIGUEZ regarding the clarification of his intent on the whereas clauses.

Mr. Speaker, the work of the veterans service organizations like the