

For that reason, a national commission is appropriate and necessary to complement the commemorative programs and activities undertaken by the Commonwealth of Virginia's Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation. The national commission will assist in the development of Jamestown-related programs and activities, support scholarly research and publications, facilitate marketing and fund-raising efforts, and further encourage heritage tourism. These activities will expand the understanding and appreciation of the significance of the founding and early history of Jamestown. It will also perpetuate the memory of the first permanent English-speaking settlers of Virginia and the United States.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT. I thank the gentleman from Maryland for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4907, legislation to establish the Jamestown 400th Commemoration Commission. Mr. Speaker, this bill was introduced by our late colleague, Herb Bateman, who represented Jamestown. Jamestown is located in the First Congressional District of Virginia, and since we are talking about Jamestown, I think it is appropriate to note that Herb always called his district America's first district.

This bill authorizes the Jamestown Commemoration Commission that will head up the preparations for the 400th anniversary of Jamestown, which will be celebrated in 2007. Jamestown was not only the first permanent English colony but it also became the first capital of Virginia. The first legislative assembly was held in Jamestown; and it was there that the idea of common law, common customs, and common language began and continues to this day.

Mr. Speaker, planning for the 400th anniversary has been under way for several years and establishment of a national commission will complement the ongoing State efforts as well as extend national and international significance to this historic anniversary. The State has been conducting roundtables throughout Virginia to get citizen input to design a statewide commemoration. Efforts are also being taken to continue the rebuilding of ships which brought the 1607 colonists and which were originally reconstructed for the 350th anniversary, as well as rebuilding the Jamestown fort and the Native American village.

Mr. Speaker, passage of this measure will ensure that the 400th anniversary of Jamestown is recognized at a national level for its historic significance and contributions to the founding of our country. It is also a fitting manner in which to honor our late colleague, Herb Bateman. Before yielding back the balance of my time, I want to commend the Members of the staff of Vir-

ginia's First Congressional District for their tireless efforts in making sure this bill moved forward. The constituents of the First Congressional District have been well represented by the staff since the untimely loss of Herb Bateman, and it is in large part because of their efforts that this bill is before us today.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the passage of this measure.

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to recognize the work of particularly Dan Scandling, Herb Bateman's chief of staff, and Julie Newell, whom I know helped put this together, and the other staff members who put this together. This is a fitting legacy for Congressman Bateman who started this.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the adoption of this measure.

Mr. SISISKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of my late friend and colleague, Herb Bateman, to speak in support of legislation that was near and dear to his heart, H.R. 4907, legislation to establish a Federal commission to coordinate activities related to the 400th anniversary of the establishment of the colony at Jamestown.

Someone once said that a land without ruins is a land without memories, and a land without memories is a nation without history. Thanks to the National Park Service and the foresight of the people of Virginia, the memory and history of Jamestown are alive and well.

Jamestown is to the United States what the historical centers of Rome and Athens are to the people of Italy and Greece.

The Jamestown visitors center, the replicas of the ships that brought the colonists to the new world, and the Jamestown fort and native American village are more than just tourist destinations, they are symbols of our democracy and values.

Consider that Jamestown was Virginia's first capital and held the first legislative assembly, leaving a legacy of common law, customs and language that we rely on today.

This 400th anniversary commemoration, to take place in 2007, is probably as historically important to our Nation as the bicentennial celebration of 1976. The progress made in planning events for 2007, are due in no small measure to the people of Virginia.

They've held roundtables throughout the State to solicit input from every corner of the commonwealth, and they've worked in conjunction with the National Park Service to conduct archaeological, historical and scientific research.

Creating a national commission is the last piece of the puzzle which will ensure that the Jamestown commemoration becomes a truly national celebration.

I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

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

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I urge the adoption of this important legislation.

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 Virginia (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4907.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1600

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIBBONS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SHERMAN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROSLEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. ROSLEHTINEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. YOUNG of Alaska addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

MILITARY RETIREE HEALTH CARE IN THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. SHOWS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHOWS. Mr. Speaker, today President Clinton is expected to sign the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2001. This will help promote a first-class military, and it is a great victory for our military retirees because it takes a giant step in correcting an injustice suffered by our military retirees and their families. The defense bill provides pharmacy benefits and extends TRICARE to retirees beyond age 65 as a supplement to Medicare, and fulfills the promise of lifetime health care to America's eldest military retirees.

Retirees joined the service with a promise of lifetime health care; but right now TRICARE, the military health care plan, ends at age 65. Unlike all other Federal retirees, military retirees get Medicare but nothing else if they cannot afford supplemental insurance; and many retirees under age 65 are not covered due to serious flaws in the TRICARE program.

To remedy this sad situation, last year the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. NORWOOD) and I and Senators TIM JOHNSON, JOHN MCCAIN, and our esteemed colleague, Paul Coverdell, introduced the Keep Our Promise to America's Military Retirees Act, H.R. 3573.

The Keep Our Promise Act united military retirees and families across the country. Their billboards, bumper stickers, e-mails, phone calls, and letters to newspapers and Congress have educated us to their plight. Their persistence gained the Promise Act 306 cosponsors in the House and 36 in the Senate.

We would not be celebrating historic improvements in military health care today without the grass roots support for the Shows-Norwood Keep Our Promise Act.

We should commend the efforts of every military retiree or family member across the country who participated in the grass roots efforts. I cannot allow Congress to adjourn without acknowledging the efforts of two very special Americans, two Mississippians. Jim Whittington of Laurel and Floyd Sears of Ocean Springs organized the meeting in March of 1999 that resulted in the introduction of the Keep Our Promise Act. They led the grass roots in the fight for justice for military retirees that brings us here today.

There are many, many more grass roots leaders who must be recognized. While it is not possible to name them all, I want to thank several people who communicated regularly with my staff and me for the outstanding work to keep our promise to America's military retirees: Colonel George "Bud" Day and everyone with the Class Act Group; General Robert Clements, Edith Smith, Floyd Felts, Dick Manion, Lonnie Vessel, Jack Hollinsworth, Chuck Huffman, and Joe Priestley.

I also appreciate the many veterans and military service organizations of the Military Coalition and the National Military and Veterans Alliance.

Particularly, I want to thank my friends at the National Association for Uniformed Services, the Retired Enlisted Association, the Retired Officers Association and the Air Force Sergeants Association. I am proud that the defense bill accomplishes part of what the Keep Our Promise Act would do by extending military health care to retirees over age 65; but the defense bill does not do everything the Promise Act would do. The Promise Act would offer military retirees the option to participate in the FEHBP plan because many retirees are not well served by TRICARE. We need to pass the rest of Keep Our Promise Act because it is the right thing to do, and I promise that the military retirees across the country will keep fighting for the benefits they were promised, earned and richly deserve.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SMITH of Michigan addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WU) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WU addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WHERE HAS THE STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE REALLY GONE?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, every American citizen will remember the heightened crisis that occurred in our oil situation and our fuel and its rising prices over the summer. Many of us wondered what was next. Well, what was next was that sometime in September the President, after being urged by Vice President GORE, released 30 million barrels of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Now, the first shock wave that occurred when that announcement was made was, what is going on here? The Strategic Petroleum Reserve is exactly that, Strategic Petroleum Reserve, meaning that it is to be used and was to be intended to be used for strategic purposes for defense purposes, for the national security of our Nation. That is, there would be a pool, literally a pool, of oil held back from the normal market so that if oil was cut off from the Middle East and we did not have our required fuel available for our Armed Forces, then this reserve would be at hand to protect our people in a national security situation.

Well, let us set that aside, as important as that is, and that is very important. We still have reservations about even approaching this Strategic Petroleum Reserve unless there be some kind of emergency action, some threat to our security at hand. In any event, put that aside for the moment. Many people were concerned that because of the rising fuel prices and even some shortages that were occurring, that the Northeast would find itself in this winter coming that it would be short of fuel for their home heating needs. So ostensibly, the directive by the President was to release these 30 million barrels for home heating. Well, at least we said the target is a humane one, is a proper one.

Then what did we learn? We found in the Wall Street Journal report and various other newspapers, including one from Bangor, Maine, where, of course, one of the areas would be that would most require this home heating oil, complained that what they discovered

was that the 30 million barrels that were being released from our strategic reserve were going to be sent to Europe by the oil refineries. That is, the oil bidders would buy this oil and then instead of sending it to New England would sell it on the market to Europe. Well, this is outlandish. We do not know if that is correct, but all the evidence yields a conclusion that that would be the case.

Moreover, out of the 30 million barrels, 30 million barrels that were released, it appears that only about 250,000 under any circumstances, 250,000 only would be delivered to the Northeast in time to help this winter. What we did was author a letter to the Secretary of Energy, our former colleague, Bill Richardson, to ask these questions: Is this oil going to Europe or is it not? And if it is not, why will only 250,000 barrels be finding its way to the home heating oil needs of the Northeast, which needs much more than that?

The letter was sent. No response was forthcoming. My staff contacted the Energy Department several times, and we did not receive a proper response, or any response. The Congress in its own way in committee hearings evoked the same kind of questions out of the circumstances. We do not know what the final answer is.

What all of this shows is, dipping into the Strategic Petroleum Reserves for our national security purposes already waiting in reserve, as the title implies, and using it for home heating oil which never arrives there, that is not government at its best. Yet, that is what Secretary Richardson said, this is government at its best. What it shows is that much more can be done and much better use can be made of our Strategic Petroleum Reserves.

I have introduced a bill, H.R. 4035, which calls upon a blue ribbon commission to be able to declare independence for the United States, again, to declare independence, this time energy independence, within 10 years, to take full cognizance of all the oil reserves in Alaska, in offshore drilling, in the Midwest and far West, in Oklahoma and Texas which have been traditionally the source of our domestic oil drillings; to look at solar energy; to look at hydroelectric; natural gas and coal, and declare independence for our country so that we do not have to depend on OPEC.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to insert the following articles into the RECORD.

[From the Wall Street Journal, Thursday, October 5, 2000]

EUROPE'S LOW OIL SUPPLIES MAY BLUNT U.S. EFFORT

(By Alexei Barrionuevo and John Fialka)

Low supplies of heating oil in Europe are threatening to blunt the impact of releasing 30 million barrels of crude from the U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Europe's market for heating oil is 50% bigger than the U.S. heating-oil market, Europe's stocks are even tighter and prices