

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I just want to encourage all of my colleagues to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 290, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 290, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1500

HARLEM HELLFIGHTERS CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL ACT

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3642) to award a Congressional gold medal to the 369th Infantry Regiment, commonly known as the "Harlem Hellfighters", in recognition of their bravery and outstanding service during World War I, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3642

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Harlem Hellfighters Congressional Gold Medal Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) When the United States officially entered World War I in April 1917, the Armed Forces were still segregated, even though African-American soldiers had served and distinguished themselves in every war since the Revolutionary War, and even the Colonial Wars preceding the American Revolution.

(2) After several years of advocacy and debate, in 1916 the State of New York authorized the recruitment of the 15th New York National Guard Regiment, which was called to Federal service on July 25, 1917, soon after arriving for training at Camp Whitman, New York.

(3) The 15th completed its basic military practice training at Camp Whitman, New York.

(4) To receive combat training, the 15th reported, on October 8, 1917, to Camp Wadsworth, in Spartanburg, South Carolina, where it experienced many incidents of racial discrimination.

(5) Consequently, the government agreed to remove the 15th from Camp Wadsworth, but, instead of receiving further training, the regiment began preparing for deployment to France in November.

(6) The 15th arrived in Saint Nazaire, France, on January 1, 1918, where it was redesignated the 369th Infantry Regiment

(7) Partly because many White soldiers within the American Expeditionary Forces (hereinafter, the "AEF") refused to perform combat duty with Black soldiers, members of the 369th were initially assigned manual labor tasks, such as loading and unloading supplies, and constructing roads and railroads.

(8) After receiving pressure from the 369th regimental commander about not having a combat mission, the AEF attached the 369th to the French Fourth Army.

(9) By mid-March of 1918, the 369th went to the Argonne Forest with the French 16th Division for training and soon entered the trenches.

(10) The 369th encountered its first German soldiers in combat in April, 1918.

(11) In May of 1918, Private Henry Johnson of the 369th received the French Croix de Guerre, with Palm, for extraordinary valor, becoming one of the first American soldiers to be awarded this honor.

(12) Johnson also belatedly received a Purple Heart, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, and in, 2015, was awarded the Medal of Honor.

(13) Throughout the remainder of the spring and into the summer the 369th served at Minacourt, in the Champagne-Marne Defensive, and during the Aisne-Marne Offensive in support of the French 161st Infantry Division.

(14) As summer turned to autumn, the 369th went on to participate in the Meuse-Argonne offensive, where it captured the important village of Sechault despite sustaining severe losses.

(15) On October 14, 1918, the 369th advanced to Alsace.

(16) On November 20, 1918, the 369th reached the banks of the Rhine River as part of the French Army of Occupation, the first Allied unit to do so.

(17) The 369th was relieved of its assignment with the French 161st Division in December, 1918, and elements of the regiment sailed for New York in late January and early February, 1919.

(18) The 369th Infantry Regiment received a parade up 5th Avenue in New York City on February 17, 1919, receiving applause and cheers from hundreds of thousands of onlookers.

(19) The 369th was demobilized on February 28, 1919.

(20) Over 170 individual members of the 369th received the Croix de Guerre, many were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, and the 369th was awarded a unit citation.

(21) It is generally believed that the 369th was dubbed the "Harlem Hellfighters" by German soldiers, who found the men to be incredibly determined and courageous in battle.

(22) The 369th was the first regiment of African Americans to deploy overseas during World War I and spent 191 days on the front line in World War I, more than any other American regimental sized unit.

(23) The 369th never lost a foot of ground nor had a man taken prisoner, despite suffering a high number of casualties.

SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the award, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold medal of appropriate design to the 369th Infantry Regiment, commonly known as the "Harlem Hellfighters", in recognition of their bravery and outstanding service during World War I.

(b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury shall

strike the gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

(c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the gold medal in honor of the 369th Infantry Regiment, the "Harlem Hellfighters", the gold medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where it will be displayed as appropriate and made available for research.

(2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should make the gold medal awarded pursuant to this Act available for display elsewhere, particularly at other locations associated with the Harlem Hellfighters.

SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck under section 3, at a price sufficient to cover the costs of the bronze medals, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

(b) PROCEEDS OF SALES.—The amounts received from the sale of duplicate medals under subsection (a) shall be deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.

(c) AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.—There is authorized to be charged against the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund such amounts as may be necessary to pay for the costs of the medals struck under this Act.

SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.

The gold medal struck pursuant to this Act is a national medal for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

SEC. 6. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled "Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation" for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and to insert extraneous material thereon.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, the soldiers of the 369th Infantry Regiment were known to both their enemies and allies alike for their fierceness in battle and dedication to their country. They were called the Black Rattlers, the Men of Bronze, and Hollenkampfer, but they were best known as the Harlem Hellfighters.

The Harlem Hellfighters were one of the first African-American regiments

to serve with the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I. Over the course of the war, the Harlem Hellfighters spent more time than any other American unit in the frontline trenches and suffered 1,500 casualties—the most losses of any American unit.

In addition to facing the dangers of frontline trench warfare, the men of the Harlem Hellfighters endured racist, derogatory attacks from their White compatriots, many of whom refused to perform combat duty with African-American soldiers. This resulted in the Harlem Hellfighters being transferred to a French Army where, despite racist warnings from American Expeditionary Forces headquarters of the alleged inferior nature of African-American troops, the Harlem Hellfighters were treated as welcome reinforcements and equals.

Despite the racism and derogatory attacks from their fellow countrymen, the Harlem Hellfighters were steadfast in their devotion to their country. Some members considered their service to be a way to prove they deserved respect from their White compatriots. Even German propaganda targeting the Harlem Hellfighters highlighting the racism of a segregated U.S. military failed to diminish their resolve.

Yet, despite their considerable sacrifices and being awarded the Croix de Guerre by the French Army for their efforts, the Harlem Hellfighters continued to face considerable racism when they returned home after World War I. Their bravery and accomplishments were similarly ignored by the broader American public. But their legacy and memory has been kept alive in their hometown. The annual Harlem Hellfighters Parade in Harlem, New York, became a marker of African-American service to their Nation, and their service was frequently referenced as part of the civil rights campaign.

This bill directs the U.S. Mint to strike a Congressional Gold Medal honoring the Harlem Hellfighters for their service during World War I. The gold medal will be displayed at the Smithsonian Institution so that others may learn of the patriotism and courage displayed by the men of the 369th Infantry Regiment.

So, Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. SUOZZI for introducing this bill. I urge Members to vote “yes,” and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3642, a bill that awards a Congressional Gold Medal to the 369th Infantry Regiment commonly known as the Harlem Hellfighters. This gold medal is in recognition of their bravery and outstanding service during World War I.

I would like to thank Congressman SUOZZI and the numerous original cosponsors for getting this important bill to the floor today.

I have heard from constituents who had family members and I have heard

from folks from around the country about the importance of our recognizing this heroic group of—at that point—men. The 369th Infantry Regiment nicknamed the Harlem Hellfighters were the first African-American infantry unit to fight in World War I. They were also one of the most decorated.

This is extraordinary. They became one of the most feared units fighting for the Allies in World War I, and they were notorious for never yielding ground to their enemies. This is extraordinary.

Their name, Harlem Hellfighters, which was given to them by the Germans, is reflective of that reputation. That was a hard-won reputation that they had, and that name is synonymous with the fear that produced in our enemies. They fearlessly spent 191 consecutive days on the front lines, which was more time in combat than any other American unit during the Great War—during World War I.

Additionally, I would be remiss if I did not point out that at least 249 North Carolina-born African-American men served in this prestigious unit. These brave sons of Carolina fought valiantly just west of the Argonne Forest in defense of an outpost against a German raiding party. During this conflict, four North Carolinian Hellfighters were wounded, including Sergeant Henry Johnson, a native of Winston-Salem that I have the honor to represent.

Not only were these men fierce fighters, they were also instrumental in influencing art and culture, including introducing jazz to Europe, and for that the Europeans should be grateful. Their leader, James Reese Europe, directed their regimental band to international acclaim.

Madam Speaker, the Harlem Hellfighters of World War I deserve a Congressional Gold Medal as the highest recognition of national appreciation. I urge my colleagues to support this bill. I am grateful for the bipartisan nature of this bill and also bringing attention to the valiant soldiers who protected us during the Great War, especially this very special decorated unit of intense fighters but fantastic humans.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. SUOZZI) who is also the sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. SUOZZI. Madam Speaker, today we have the opportunity to begin to right a century-old wrong. I rise to support the creation of a Congressional Gold Medal in honor of the Harlem Hellfighters.

Thousands of Harlem Hellfighters were African-American soldiers who signed up to join the U.S. Army in World War I. Sadly, but predictably, White soldiers were unwilling to serve alongside Black soldiers, and these brave men were assigned to join the

French Army. But that didn't stop them.

The Harlem Hellfighters, wearing U.S. uniforms but issued weapons and helmets by the French, went on to face more combat time than any other regiment during World War I. No Harlem Hellfighter was captured as a prisoner of war, and they never gave up any ground.

The bravery, dedication, and sacrifices of the Harlem Hellfighters who served 191 days under near-constant enemy fire impacted the outcome of World War I, but instead of receiving a hero's welcome, they returned home to racism and race-fueled violence.

There were three dozen Hellfighters who came from my hometown of Glen Cove. In 2019 the family of Sergeant Leander Willett came to tell me about their father and grandfather. He had served in France and had been stabbed by a German bayonet and been the victim of mustard gas attacks, but never received a Purple Heart. He returned home and died in 1956 without ever being properly recognized and honored for his service to our country. He joined his fellow comrades who have been lost to history.

In November of 2019 we surprised the Willett family with a posthumous Purple Heart for Sergeant Willett for wounds received as a result of hostile actions in France on October 4, 1918.

I then approached my colleague ADRIANO ESPAILLAT, who represents Harlem, and the chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, JOYCE BEATTY, about collaborating together to attain a Congressional Gold Medal. They both immediately and enthusiastically agreed. We went on to obtain 310 bipartisan cosponsors of this bill and expect strong support today.

I would like to especially thank Chairwoman WATERS for her and the Financial Services Committee's support. On behalf of the Willett family, the families of dozens of Harlem Hellfighters from my hometown, and a grateful Nation, we say thank you to this body for putting aside partisanship and helping to right a century-old harm. It is never too late to do the right thing.

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

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ESPAILLAT).

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Madam Speaker, I thank Congressman SUOZZI for his leadership on this bill and for working with me on this fight for justice. I also want to thank Chairwoman WATERS and Ranking Member MCHENRY for working with us to get this bill out of the committee.

Today, I rise in support of this bill to honor a group of brave men who have yet to receive their due commendation: the Harlem Hellfighters.

This distinguished group of African-American and Puerto Rican men were patriots of the highest valor. Their bravery, dedication, perseverance, and

service helped the United States and our Allied forces in our fight to secure victory. But, Madam Speaker, these fighters weren't even permitted to serve alongside their fellow White soldiers. Our government threw them to the side—assigning them to a unit of the French Government rather than our own.

They put their lives on the line for the freedoms enshrined in our Constitution, despite doing so at a time when many like them did not enjoy the very freedoms they fought to protect.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I yield the gentleman from New York an additional 1 minute.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Madam Speaker, these men spent 191 days in combat and were the most active regiment throughout the entire First World War. Under constant enemy fire and cast away from the nation they swore an oath to protect, they still persevered, fighting until the end.

There is no doubt that their heroism impacted the outcome of the war and, undoubtedly, American history as well.

This bill is a necessary first step to righting the decades-old injustice. It is about time the Harlem Hellfighters' invaluable contributions be commended and commemorated, and their service be formally recognized by our government. Let's finally give these men the Congressional Gold Medal they deserve.

□ 1515

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

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY).

Mrs. BEATTY. Madam Speaker, I thank Chairwoman WATERS for managing this time.

To the gentleman from New York, what an honor it is for me to stand on this House floor as chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, as a Black woman, to urge my colleagues to support the Harlem Hellfighters Congressional Gold Medal Act.

We have heard so much about them, and I am proud to join them, giving them the recognition that they deserve. These men of this segregated unit fought bravely in the First World War and distinguished themselves in battle across France. The men of the 369th Infantry Regiment, the Harlem Hellfighters, are an important chapter in the long history of Black Americans serving our country.

So often we talk about Black history, but it is important to know that Black history is American history. And, today, we stand here united as Americans, Democrats, Republicans, asking our colleagues to make sure that we recognize the Harlem Hellfighters for the great work, the great bravery, for what they did for this country.

Mr. MCHENRY. Madam Speaker, may I inquire if there are additional speakers? I am prepared to close.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers and I am prepared to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCHENRY. Madam Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I yield myself the balance of my time.

There is an extraordinary story to tell about the American Armed Forces. There is an extraordinary story to tell about African Americans in our Armed Forces in the United States.

The Harlem Hellfighters were representative of a really amazing achievement during the war to end all wars, World War I. But there are also stories before this. That was not the first group of African Americans to fight to defend our Nation.

It was not the Civil War where African Americans fought for our Nation for the first time. It was not. It was actually our liberation from Great Britain. It was George Washington's army that had African Americans serving alongside other Americans to liberate us from Great Britain.

Our founding of this Nation is one of a multiracial, multiethnic, multilingual, amazing group of folks who wanted the same things, which is freedom to make decisions for themselves and for their families. And it was that first integrated army, which was George Washington's army, the Continental Army, that begat the African Americans who served alongside other Americans in the Civil War.

And, sadly, that established capacity was lost for two generations before the Great War, and the Harlem Hellfighters showed the American people that African Americans can fight just as well as any other American, and, in fact, do better in unmitigated harsh treatment on the front lines of the biggest war that anyone thought they would ever see in their lifetimes; which then said, during World War II, actually, we are all in this together; which then changed the whole face of the 20th century.

So what the Harlem Hellfighters represent to us in this debate is not just the good work of the Congressional delegation from New York, or Congressman SUOZZI in bringing this to the floor today, but giving us the opportunity to highlight what this generation of men showed to the American people and to our allies in Europe about who we are as Americans.

So for us to honor the Harlem Hellfighters today has given us the opportunity to recognize 100 years of progress. Not even progress, not fulfillment of every dream that we have as Americans, not perfect, not perfect, but a whole hell of a lot better than we were 100 years ago when these Harlem Hellfighters showed the world not just what America is about, but specifically what African Americans were about and their capacity. Not just capacity to fight, but to be smart, to be capable, to deliver results, to be the best, the best.

So the last hundred years, you can go back to that generation of Harlem

Hellfighters and you can see what they brought to the public and the understanding that they brought over the last hundred years, and it made us better.

So for us to have this opportunity to recognize them also lets us recognize ourselves as a country and who we are, and to actually say, you know, it is pretty amazing. We have an amazing country. And these men who fought and died—many who died—they loved their country. They love their country and they are willing to not just support it with words like I am right now, but with their lives.

So, with a grateful heart, I say thank you to Congressman SUOZZI and his constituents for bringing this debate to the floor.

I want to thank my colleagues for doing this in a very wide, bipartisan way, and giving us the opportunity to have a broader look at history and the greatness of the last century and the improvement that we have as a result of what they broke through over 100 years ago in the Argonne Forest.

Madam Speaker, I urge adoption of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

In closing, I certainly want to thank Mr. SUOZZI for bringing forward this legislation. I want to thank Mr. ESPAILLAT and Congresswoman BEATTY for joining with him to bring this legislation forward. I want to thank Mr. MCHENRY and the members of the Financial Services Committee for joining together in support of this legislation.

The Harlem Hellfighters braved long deployments, treacherous conditions, and the scorn of their fellow patriots. So we find ourselves, I guess, 100 years later or so, understanding the important role that they played and the sacrifices that they made.

We also understand how important it is for all of us to not only give recognition to their sacrifice, but also recognize that this country has gone through some very difficult times, faced with the question of race.

Despite the fact that we have seen times in this country when we were moving forward and we thought we were erasing the kind of racism that had been present for too long, we find ourselves today fighting some of the same battles.

There are many in the history of this country who have made sacrifices in so many different ways that perhaps will never be recognized. But I am hopeful, with the cooperation, the cosponsorship, and the work for both sides of the aisle on a recognition such as this, that this will help us to continue to fight to rid this country of racism and discrimination and hatred.

I am hopeful that the word will go forward today about this recognition that we are giving to the Harlem Hellfighters and will inspire others to want to praise and honor those who are certainly ones who are so committed to

justice and equality, and who love this country will be treated better, will be recognized, and certainly will be given their correct place in history.

So I urge Members to celebrate the memory of these brave men of the 369th Infantry Regiment, who, through their service, sought to realize a more equal and a more perfect union, by voting "yes" on H.R. 3642.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3642, 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.

Mrs. BOEBERT. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

DEBT BONDAGE REPAIR ACT

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2332) to prohibit consumer reporting agencies from furnishing a consumer report containing any adverse item of information about a consumer if such consumer is a victim of trafficking, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2332

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Debt Bondage Repair Act".

SEC. 2. ADVERSE INFORMATION IN CASES OF TRAFFICKING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Fair Credit Reporting Act (15 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 605B the following:

"§605C Adverse information in cases of trafficking

"(a) IN GENERAL.—A consumer reporting agency may not furnish a consumer report containing any adverse item of information about a consumer that resulted from a severe form of trafficking in persons or sex trafficking if the consumer has provided trafficking documentation to the consumer reporting agency.

"(b) RULEMAKING.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director shall, not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section, issue a rule to implement subsection (a).

"(2) CONTENTS.—The rule issued pursuant to paragraph (1) shall establish a method by which consumers shall submit trafficking documentation to consumer reporting agencies.

"(c) DEFINITIONS.—

"(1) TRAFFICKING DOCUMENTATION.—The term trafficking documentation means—

"(A) documentation of either—

"(i) a determination by a Federal or State government entity that a consumer is a victim of trafficking; or

"(ii) a determination by a court of competent jurisdiction that a consumer is a victim of trafficking; and

"(B) documentation that identifies items of adverse information that should not be furnished by a consumer reporting agency because the items resulted from the severe form of trafficking in persons or sex trafficking of which such consumer is a victim.

"(2) VICTIM OF TRAFFICKING.—For the purposes of this section, the term "victim of trafficking" means a person who is a victim of a severe form of trafficking in persons or sex trafficking, as such terms are defined in section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000."

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS AMENDMENT.—The table of contents of the Fair Credit Reporting Act is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 605B the following new item:

"605C. Adverse information in cases of trafficking."

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply on the date that is 30 days after the date on which the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection issues a rule pursuant to section 605C(b) of the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

(d) DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.—The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled "Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation" for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and to insert extraneous material thereon.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Committee on Financial Services ranking member, Mr. MCHENRY, for introducing H.R. 2332, the Debt Bondage Repair Act.

Over the last year, working in a bipartisan manner, the Financial Services Committee has been engaged in an examination of trafficking issues of all types. As we heard at a recent hearing that delved into issues of human trafficking, which includes forced labor, sex trafficking and organ trafficking, victims of trafficking are not only abused physically and emotionally, but financially also.

The moving testimony of Reverend Dr. Martin Hatcher, an advocate for sex trafficking survivors and a survivor himself, demonstrated how traffickers

steal their victims' identities, open accounts in their names, run up credit card debt, purchase large ticket items like automobiles, and take out loans while pretending to be their victims.

This financial exploitation is not only designed as a stream of finance, allowing the traffickers' operation to thrive, but it also inflicts long-term harm and asserts control over the victim.

This bill, which aims to help survivors of human trafficking restore their credit and gain access to the consumer financial products and services that most of us take for granted, is an important step in restoring survivors' dignity and financial stability and in preventing revictimization.

Specifically, the bill prohibits credit bureaus from including adverse information that resulted from human or sex trafficking in a victim's credit report. It directs the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to develop a process to ensure that adverse information caused by their traffickers is not included in a victim's credit report. Such a process does not exist now and, given the importance that credit reports play in our economy, it makes it difficult for survivors in our communities to get a loan or even secure a job.

As noted by the Survivor Inclusion Initiative of the Human Trafficking Focus Liechtenstein Initiative, we must "facilitate survivor access to basic banking services, such as checking and savings accounts, and help survivors' financial recovery to become full financial participants in their communities."

Madam Speaker, for these reasons, I urge my colleagues to support this important bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1530

Mr. MCHENRY. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2332, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, debt bondage is a terrible crime, and many victims find themselves trapped in a perpetual cycle of forced labor and coerced debt because of it.

Earlier this year, the House Financial Services Committee held a hearing where we focused on the financing of human trafficking. This is an area of bipartisan cooperation on the House Financial Services Committee. I want to commend my Democrat colleagues for leading this discussion and finding time on the committee docket for us to continue the conversation we have had over the last couple of Congresses.

In that hearing, we heard from many powerful witnesses, including Rev. Dr. Marian Hatcher, who is a trafficking survivor. Rev. Dr. Hatcher had the courage to tell us her story, and because of it, we now have legislation that will help others.

This is the way Congress is supposed to work. We are supposed to listen to experts and get ideas out of that on how we can construct legislation. Because of Dr. Hatcher, we know a lot more.