

that will help us combat the financial exploitation of seniors and other vulnerable adults.

I thank Congressman MCHENRY and Chairwoman WATERS for supporting this important legislation.

Financial exploitation of seniors and other vulnerable adults is a serious and growing problem.

The number of Americans ages 65 and older is projected to nearly double, from 52 million in 2018 to 95 million by 2060. This represents an increase from 16 to 23 percent of the U.S. population being 65 years old and older.

Right now, approximately 44 percent of households headed by a baby boomer and 30 percent of silent generation households own mutual funds.

As more investors age into retirement, the risk of financial exploitation for elderly households only increases. Roughly one in five senior investors are victimized by financial fraud, and those investors lose an estimated \$2.9 billion annually in reported cases and, unfortunately, some estimates indicate that only 1 in 44 cases of financial abuse is ever reported.

□ 1730

My bill proposes a solution to fight elder abuse in the context of mutual funds.

Since some mutual fund shareholder accounts are held directly with a mutual fund and serviced by the fund's transfer agent, or "direct-at-fund" accounts as they are known, the transfer agent is typically responsible for opening and servicing the accounts, maintaining account records, and serving as the fund's point of contact with those shareholders.

Under current law, when a fund's transfer agent suspects financial exploitation in a direct-at-fund account, it cannot lawfully delay the disbursement of redemption proceeds while an investigation occurs.

My legislation codifies a SEC-issued no-action letter from 2018 that permits a mutual fund and its transfer agents to delay the redemption period of a security if it is reasonably believed that a request was made by exploiting seniors or other vulnerable adults.

This will provide our potentially vulnerable investors with an important layer of investor protection to help make sure that they receive the hard-earned savings that they have built up over the years.

Additionally, and importantly, my bill also requires the SEC to report to Congress on additional potential legislative solutions on how to further combat financial exploitation of seniors and vulnerable adults.

This legislation, Mr. Speaker, is needed to provide certainty to protect our seniors, and I strongly urge my colleagues to support the Financial Exploitation Prevention Act.

I am grateful to the chairwoman and to the ranking member and all of the committee that has worked on this in such a bipartisan fashion, Mr. Speaker, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further Democratic speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I again, thank the chairwoman and her team for making this very important piece of legislation that is so important to our seniors and to our vulnerable adults happen.

Again, in 2018, the SEC put this together as something we should be strongly looking at as we move forward. I am pleased we were able to bring it to the floor today in a bipartisan fashion.

I urge all of my colleagues to support my bill, H.R. 2265, the Financial Exploitation Act of 2021, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. 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. 2265, 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.

#### AWARDING POSTHUMOUSLY A CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL COMMEMORATING SERVICEMEMBERS WHO PERISHED IN AFGHANISTAN ON AUGUST 26, 2021

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5142) to award posthumously a Congressional Gold Medal, in commemoration to the servicemembers who perished in Afghanistan on August 26, 2021, during the evacuation of citizens of the United States and Afghan allies at Hamid Karzai International Airport, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5142

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

#### SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds the following:

(1) At 9:44 A.M., on August 26, 2021, the Pentagon confirmed that one explosion occurred at the Hamid Karzai International Airport.

(2) The explosion was confirmed to be a suicide bombing by ISIS-K terrorist group.

(3) Estimates as high as 200 deaths were reported, including 13 servicemembers of the United States, as well as hundreds more wounded.

(4) The attack on Thursday, August 26, 2021, at the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan, killed 13 United States servicemembers, making it the deadliest single day of the war for the United States in more than a decade.

(5) The American servicemembers went above and beyond the call of duty to protect citizens of the United States and our allies to ensure they are brought to safety in an extremely dangerous situation as the Taliban regained control over Afghanistan.

(6) The American servicemembers exemplified extreme bravery and valor against armed enemy combatants.

(7) The American servicemembers dedicated their lives and their heroism deserves great honor.

(8) Maxton Soviak, Kareem Nikoui, David Espinoza, Rylee McCollum, Jared Schmitz, Hunter Lopez, Taylor Hoover, Daegan William-Tyler Page, Nicole Gee, Humberto Sanchez, Dylan Merola, Johanny Rosario Pichardo, and Ryan Knauss have been identified as the 13 servicemembers who died from the blast while stationed at Hamid Karzai International Airport.

#### SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDALS.

(a) PRESENTATIONS AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the posthumous presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a single gold medal of appropriate design in commemoration to the 13 servicemembers who perished in Afghanistan, on August 26, 2021.

(b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the "Secretary") shall strike a 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 under subsection (a), the gold medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where it shall be available for display as appropriate and made available for research.

(2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Smithsonian Institution shall make the gold medal received under paragraph (1) available for display outside of the District of Columbia at times, particularly at other locations associated with the 13 servicemembers who perished in Afghanistan on August 26, 2021.

#### SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 2 at a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

#### SEC. 4. STATUS OF MEDALS.

(a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medal struck pursuant to this Act is a national medal for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

(b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

#### SEC. 5. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF SALE.

(a) 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 pursuant to this Act.

(b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—The amounts received from the sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section 3 shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.

#### 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 gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Member 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. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5142, a bill to posthumously award Congressional Gold Medals in commemoration to the servicemembers who perished in Afghanistan on August 26, 2021.

Mr. Speaker, during the 20-year war in Afghanistan, we lost over 2,000 brave men and women. More than 20,000 servicemembers returned home wounded in action.

I believe in my heart that every single soldier we lost in Afghanistan was a tragedy. We must remember their sacrifice.

In the waning days of this war, the Biden administration made decisions that put U.S. servicemembers in harm's way, and, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, on August 26, we lost 13 more servicemembers, and more than 20 were injured.

Eleven marines, one Navy corpsman, and one soldier were killed by an ISIS-K bomber outside the Hamid Karzai International Airport on this terrible day in August.

Mr. Speaker, I represent the people of Missouri's Second Congressional District; and on August 26, my State lost a hero, Lance Corporal Jared Schmitz.

This courageous young man had been stationed in Jordan on his first deployment when he was called into Afghanistan to defend the civilians fleeing the Taliban's advance. He was eager to be one of the brave men and women on the front lines, making a real difference for the Americans and allies trapped in a terrifying and dangerous situation.

Lance Corporal Schmitz was totally committed to his military service, and he felt a calling to be a United States marine. So much so that he had gotten his parents' permission to enlist at just 17 years old.

Lance Corporal Schmitz was just 20 years old when he lost his life in the terrorist attack at the airport in Kabul.

Lance Corporal Schmitz and the 12 other servicemembers we lost in August went above and beyond the call of duty to protect those stranded in Afghanistan.

I sadly don't believe we will truly understand why Lance Corporal Schmitz

and his fellow soldiers died. Nevertheless, his family, their families, and all Americans deserve answers, Mr. Speaker.

And I hope one day those who made the decisions that resulted in these senseless deaths will be held accountable.

In the meantime, I am grateful that their service and their sacrifice is being commemorated by this legislation. The bravery and valor shown by these servicemembers is unquestionable.

I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this bill, and I look forward to standing next to the family of Lance Corporal Schmitz as they are presented a Congressional Gold Medal commemorating their son's service and valor.

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

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE).

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, as we mark nearly 2 months since the bombing that killed more than 116 innocent Afghans and American military personnel at the Hamid Karzai International Airport, I rise in strong support of this legislation to award posthumously a Congressional Gold Medal to the 13 U.S. servicemembers who gave their lives that day.

Those individuals are Sergeant Johnny Rosario Pichardo, Sergeant Nicole Gee, Staff Sergeant Darin Taylor Hoover, Corporal Hunter Lopez, Corporal Daegan Page, Corporal Humberto Sanchez, Lance Corporal David Espinoza, Lance Corporal Jared Schmitz, Lance Corporal Rylee McCollum, Lance Corporal Dylan Merola, Lance Corporal Kareem Nikoui, Navy Corpsman Maxton Soviak, and Staff Sergeant Ryan C. Knauss.

Mr. Speaker, as we recognize these extraordinary heroes and also understand that this honor cannot come close to filling the void left by their loss, I cannot think of anyone more deserving of such a distinction.

These brave servicemembers represent the very best of America, knowingly putting themselves in harm's way to help evacuate thousands from the region, a true embodiment of the American spirit.

Their legacies live on in the thousands of Afghan refugees they saved, who now have an opportunity to live lives free of violence and persecution.

And so as we remember these extraordinary American heroes and recognize them with the Congressional Gold Medal, let us all live lives worthy of their sacrifice and service to our great Nation.

I urge all my colleagues to vote "yes" and to join me in honoring these great American heroes.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. McCLAIN), the sponsor of this bill.

Mrs. McCLAIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding.

War is an incredible teacher, a brutal instructor. We have learned lessons about triumph, sorrow, loss, and pain.

War teaches us to appreciate the simple things we take for granted, like the ability to speak your mind, freely practice your religion, even seeing your loved ones once a day.

It also teaches us that in war there are no unwounded soldiers.

There are those who came back with both visible scars and invisible battle wounds, and there are those who did not come home at all.

Today, we pause to honor the 13 American servicemembers who lost their lives during the evacuation efforts at the Kabul Airport in Afghanistan on August 26, 2021.

These 13 fallen warriors, along with many others, made the ultimate sacrifice. Each of them knew their duty, and they accepted the risks. Not many answer the call, but they volunteered anyway.

Sent to evacuate Americans and Afghans that struggled to get past the Taliban checkpoints in Kabul and through the airport gates, fearing they would be left behind and left for dead. They knew the mission and valiantly forged ahead; helping hundreds to safety, overcoming their own fears, when a suicide bomb attack took their lives.

The terrorist act took the lives of at least 170 Afghans, 11 marines, one Navy corpsman, and one Army special operations soldier, including Lance Corporal David Lee Espinoza of Laredo, Texas; Sergeant Nicole Gee of Roseville, California; Staff Sergeant Darin Taylor Hoover of Salt Lake City, Utah; Staff Sergeant Ryan Knauss of Knoxville, Tennessee; Corporal Hunter Lopez of Indio, California; Lance Corporal Rylee McCollum of Bondurant, Wyoming; Corporal Dylan Merola of Rancho Cucamonga, California; Lance Corporal Kareem Nikoui of Norco, California; Corporal Daegan William Tyeler Page of Omaha, Nebraska; Sergeant Johnny Rosario Pichardo of Lawrence, Massachusetts; Corporal Humberto Sanchez of Logansport, Indiana; Lance Corporal Jared Schmitz of Wentzville, Missouri; Navy Corpsman Maxton Soviak of Berlin Heights, Ohio.

I could not be more grateful for their service to our Nation. While we as a Nation grieve for the servicemembers we have lost, we often forget about the families who have lost even more.

To be a Gold Star Family is an honor no one wishes for. We owe our sincerest gratitude to the families who eagerly awaited these 13 servicemembers' return. These families bear the greatest burden of their loved one's sacrifice, and we can never thank them in a way that will make up for their loss.

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

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 15 seconds to the gentlewoman.

Mrs. McCLAIN. Awarding Congress' highest honor is a small token of our appreciation.

Thank you to all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who joined me in this effort.

□ 1745

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR).

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairwoman for her leadership, and the ranking member, also.

Mr. Speaker, today we honor our fallen servicemembers to award them with this Congressional Gold Medal. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this legislation, H.R. 5142.

On August 26 at 9:44 a.m., an explosion from a suicide terrorist bombing in Afghanistan killed 13 of our servicemembers. One of those servicemembers was my constituent, Lance Corporal David Lee Espinoza from Rio Bravo.

He was born in Laredo and graduated from the city's Lyndon B. Johnson High School in 2019. His mother, Elizabeth Holguin, and his father, Victor Dominguez, and his brothers and sister, Angel, Victor, and Delilah, mourn his loss and are endlessly proud of David and his service.

When we attended David's funeral in Laredo, we all knew that families across the United States also mourned their loved ones. David joined the Marine Corps with the intention of protecting our Nation and demonstrating his selfless acts of service to his country. He embodied the American values of grit, dedication, service, and valor.

May Lance Corporal David Lee Espinoza and our fallen servicemembers forever be honored and never be forgotten.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time is remaining on my side.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Missouri has 13¼ minutes remaining.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MEIJER).

Mr. MEIJER. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today in support of H.R. 5142 introduced by my colleague, LISA MCCLAIN from Michigan.

This bill would posthumously award a Congressional Gold Medal to the U.S. servicemembers killed during the final week of the Afghanistan evacuation.

On August 26, 2021, 13 American servicemembers were killed in a brutal suicide bombing at Hamid Karzai International Airport, marking one of the deadliest days for U.S. forces in Afghanistan in the past 20 years.

These selfless and brave Americans were put into an impossible situation, but their commitment to that mission never wavered.

They epitomized what it means to be a hero. They knew about the heightened threat that they faced. They knew the risks, but they stayed at those gates to keep them open, each second buying time for more lives to be saved.

The chaos of those days in Kabul and the perilous situation our servicemem-

bers and diplomats faced cannot be overstated. We owe an extraordinary debt of gratitude for the sacrifice that they should have never been forced to have made.

Every American should take pride in the heroism that Americans on the ground displayed in our final days in Afghanistan, but every American should also demand accountability from those senior officials whose decisions put our servicemembers in a position that required such heroic acts.

Today, we honor the 13 lives lost and keep their families and all who loved them in our prayers. Theirs is the epitome of selfless service, and a grateful Nation honors them here today.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Michigan for introducing this important legislation, and I urge the support of my colleagues.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

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

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAST).

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I was asked by somebody about this piece of legislation, the Congressional Gold Medal for the 13 killed on August 26, and why not a gold medal for the thousands that have been killed in the war on terror, the ones that I wear on my wrist and the ones with names on the wall in the Rayburn Office Building and those that we see the markers for in Arlington National Cemetery. The fact is, we could give every one of them a thousand gold medals and it wouldn't represent a thousandth of what we owe those who have given their lives in defense of this country.

This gold medal isn't about that. It is about what we owe to the living.

This gold medal is a result of America's leaders being weak. That is why we are awarding this gold medal. We owe our fighters strength. We owe them that we never be intimidated, that we never back up, that we never retreat, that we never surrender. And as leaders, if we can't promise that to our fighters, then we owe it to them to never ask to lead.

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

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WALTZ).

Mr. WALTZ. Mr. Speaker, as we as a nation reflect on 13 more killed in action, 13 more Gold Star families, I think it is worth noting that they did their mission. They did their jobs.

Their operation, their mission, was to secure Kabul International Airport, to evacuate our Embassy, to evacuate those who had worked with us, to evacuate the remaining military assets. And they did their job. They secured Kabul International Airport. But they went above and beyond.

After pulling grueling, long shifts in the August heat in Afghanistan—and everybody who has served there knows how difficult that could be—they went on their own time and were working with grassroots veterans organizations who sprung up, who stepped up to do, frankly, what should have already been done and to help those who had stood with us and stood for that flag for 20 years.

They, on their own time, at great risk, were getting people out. They knew the dangers. Everybody who had served there knew that it was only a matter of time till they were going to be hit. They knew that it was only a matter of time. Yet, they did it anyway.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support this legislation for the Congressional Gold Medal, but we owe them answers. We owe their families answers. We owe this country answers.

Why were they defending an airport in the middle of a city of 4 million people? Why were the military assets pulled before—before—all of our civilians and our government employees were out?

Why? Why? Why? So many questions. So many answers.

I can tell you, and I could tell these families, I tell this body, I will not rest, I will never forget, and we will get those answers that those 13 Gold Star families deserve. And there will be accountability for why we now have 13 more dead Americans.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve my time.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. BURCHETT).

Mr. BURCHETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative WAGNER for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Gold Medal, as we all know and have heard, is Congress' highest medal. It is the least we can do for the 13 brave servicemembers killed during our withdrawal from Afghanistan back in August.

One of those 13, Army Staff Sergeant Ryan Knauss, was from Corryton, Tennessee, in my congressional district. As a matter of fact, I live in Corryton, and his family, they are neighbors of mine.

His grandfather called me shortly after and described the scene. We have all seen it in movies, but he, unfortunately, had to live it. The car pulls up. The Army officers get out and, in fact, inform his family that his grandson had perished in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard that story many times because my mama endured that very same thing when she was a young girl in Cheatham County, Tennessee, and her brother, Roy, had died fighting the Nazis. So it is in my head pretty thick, sir.

Of course, he was killed while helping complete strangers, and that is what he loved to do. He loved helping folks.

When Staff Sergeant Knauss succumbed to his injuries after the attack, he became the final American military

casualty from the war in Afghanistan. We were all devastated by this loss, but our community is very strong.

Mr. Speaker, on September 11, they held a great local tribute to this fallen hero at Gibbs High School, on the football field. And on September 21, I also attended his funeral as he was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery.

Today, we honor him and 12 fellow heroes further by passing this legislation. The true heroes in this country are the men and women of our Armed Forces. They are the ones who keep us free. Their patriotism and bravery have kept us safe every day.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WEBER), my friend and colleague, a classmate of mine.

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, little that we can do here today is going to make a difference in what those families endured. We can only supply a small token of our appreciation for the greatest fighting force of men and women on the planet.

I want you to think with me for a second here. When the world has a calamity, it doesn't matter whether it is a hurricane, whether it is a tsunami, whether it is an earthquake, whether it is pestilence, famine, or rebellion, invasion. When the world has a calamity and they dial 911, who is it that answers? It is the United States of America, isn't it? With the greatest fighting force of men and women this world has ever known.

When America is safe, the world is a safer place. To the families, the Gold Star families, whose family members gave all, we owe them a debt of gratitude, and not just us, but the world as well.

Mr. Speaker, may God bless them, and may they rest in peace.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, I simply urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5142 to award posthumously a Congressional Gold Medal in commemoration of the servicemembers who perished in Afghanistan on August 26, 2021.

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

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I simply ask all of my colleagues, all the Members of this House, to support this bill.

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

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, the book of Isaiah recounts how the prophet Isaiah began his service. In a time of darkness, the Lord asks, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" Isaiah's response was to volunteer for service: "Here am I; send me."

When their nation called them to serve, so said a generation of American

servicemembers, diplomats and intelligence officers: "Here am I; send me."

Two months ago tomorrow, thirteen of those servicemembers were killed as they helped bring nearly 130,000 Americans, allies and Afghan partners to safety.

That action was one of profound valor, selflessness and sacrifice, for which the Congress and Country are united in grief and in gratitude.

We salute and pray for: Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Darin T. Hoover (Salt Lake City, Utah); Marine Corps Sgt. Johanny [jo-HAN-nee] Rosario Pichardo (Lawrence, Massachusetts); Marine Corps Sgt. Nicole L. Gee [JEE] (Sacramento, California); Marine Corps Cpl. Hunter Lopez (Indio, California); Marine Corps Cpl. Daegan [day-gan] Page (Omaha, Nebraska); Marine Corps Cpl. Humberto A. Sanchez (Logansport, Indiana); Marine Corps Lance Cpl. David L. Espinoza (Rio Bravo, Texas); Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Jared M. Schmitz (St. Charles, Missouri); Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Rylee J. McCollum (Jackson, Wyoming); Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Dylan R. Merola (Rancho Cucamonga, California); Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Kareem M. Nikoui [neh-KOO-ee] (Norco, California); Navy Hospitalman Maxton W. Soviak (Berlin Heights, Ohio); and Army Staff Sgt. Ryan C. Knauss [kuh-nows] (Corryton, Tennessee).

Today, we honor their heroism by awarding them the Congressional Gold Medal: the highest honor that the Congress can bestow.

Their service brings great honor to our country, and their being awarded this honor brings luster to this award.

As we honor the heroism of the fallen, we salute each member of our military, intelligence and diplomatic communities who conducted this evacuation—and all who have served or are serving our country.

We pray for all fighting for our freedoms and for their families. And we pray for the people of Afghanistan and in the region.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, on August 26th, 13 American families experienced the worst day of their lives.

They received the knock on the door that every parent of a servicemember prays will never come.

For those families, the conversation that followed was the most devastating news a person can receive: their child has been killed.

One of the marines we lost that day was Lance Corporal Jared Schmitz from Wentzville in Missouri's Third Congressional District.

Lance Corporal Schmitz was just 20 years old when the military transferred him from Jordan to Afghanistan during the U.S. evacuation.

Shortly after arriving in Kabul, Jared died while achieving his lifelong goal of serving the American People in the United States Marine Corps.

Because of Jared's and his fellow servicemembers' sacrifice, thousands of Americans were able to return home safely.

They ensured that thousands of families did not get the heartbreaking news Jared's parents received early in the morning of August 27th.

Because our servicemembers displayed a bravery most of us are not capable of, countless kids saw their mom and dad again.

Brothers reunited with their sisters.

And terrified parents got to hug their children after days of worrying that day would never come.

Nothing we can say on this floor will erase the pain far too many military families live with every day.

No amount of gratitude nor a Congressional Gold Medal will change the fact that the Schmitz family and 12 others will forever have an unfillable hole in their hearts.

But what we can do with this bill is remind them of what they hopefully already know: their loved-one represents the best of us.

They are the American heroes who allow 300 million people to live freely in the greatest country in the history of the world.

Their loss is absolutely heartbreaking, but their sacrifice and their lives will never be forgotten.

They will be remembered as the heroes they are and will live in the hearts of millions of grateful Americans forever.

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. 5142, 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.

□ 1800

#### CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 117-67)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

##### *To the Congress of the United States:*

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the Federal Register and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the Federal Register for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to the situation in or in relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo declared in Executive Order 13413 of October 27, 2006, is to continue in effect beyond October 27, 2021.

The situation in or in relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has been marked by widespread violence and atrocities that continue to threaten regional stability, continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared