

streets or in shelters. And nearly 300,000 veterans may experience homelessness at some point during the course of a year.

The Housing and Community Opportunity Subcommittee, which I chair, held a hearing on this bill during the 110th Congress and heard from witnesses how the return of veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan would greatly increase demand for affordable housing and social services in communities across the country.

Since then, the economy has only worsened and the number of veterans returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan continues to increase. Furthermore, many veterans are at greater risk of becoming homeless because they struggle with health and economic issues, while facing a shortage of affordable housing.

That is why H.R. 403 is so important. This bill would create a new program where none existed before to develop permanent supportive housing for the homeless veterans who need it. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. 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 Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 403.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. 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The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

#### AWARDING A CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO THE WOMEN AIRFORCE SERVICE PILOTS

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 614) to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the Women Airforce Service Pilots ("WASP").

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 614

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

#### SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) the Women Airforce Service Pilots of WWII, known as the "WASP", were the first women in history to fly American military aircraft;

(2) more than 60 years ago, they flew fighter, bomber, transport, and training aircraft in defense of America's freedom;

(3) they faced overwhelming cultural and gender bias against women in nontraditional roles and overcame multiple injustices and inequities in order to serve their country;

(4) through their actions, the WASP eventually were the catalyst for revolutionary

reform in the integration of women pilots into the Armed Services;

(5) during the early months of World War II, there was a severe shortage of combat pilots;

(6) Jacqueline Cochran, America's leading woman pilot of the time, convinced General Hap Arnold, Chief of the Army Air Forces, that women, if given the same training as men, would be equally capable of flying military aircraft and could then take over some of the stateside military flying jobs, thereby releasing hundreds of male pilots for combat duty;

(7) the severe loss of male combat pilots made the necessity of utilizing women pilots to help in the war effort clear to General Arnold, and a women's pilot training program was soon approved;

(8) it was not until August 1943, that the women aviators would receive their official name;

(9) General Arnold ordered that all women pilots flying military aircraft, including 28 civilian women ferry pilots, would be named "WASP", Women Airforce Service Pilots;

(10) more than 25,000 American women applied for training, but only 1,830 were accepted and took the oath;

(11) exactly 1,074 of those trainees successfully completed the 21 to 27 weeks of Army Air Forces flight training, graduated, and received their Army Air Forces orders to report to their assigned air base;

(12) on November 16, 1942, the first class of 29 women pilots reported to the Houston, Texas Municipal Airport and began the same military flight training as the male Army Air Forces cadets were taking;

(13) due to a lack of adequate facilities at the airport, 3 months later the training program was moved to Avenger Field in Sweetwater, Texas;

(14) WASP were eventually stationed at 120 Army air bases all across America;

(15) they flew more than 60,000,000 miles for their country in every type of aircraft and on every type of assignment flown by the male Army Air Forces pilots, except combat;

(16) WASP assignments included test piloting, instructor piloting, towing targets for air-to-air gunnery practice, ground-to-air anti-aircraft practice, ferrying, transporting personnel and cargo (including parts for the atomic bomb), simulated strafing, smoke laying, night tracking, and flying drones;

(17) in October 1943, male pilots were refusing to fly the B-26 Martin Marauder (known as the "Widowmaker") because of its fatality records, and General Arnold ordered WASP Director, Jacqueline Cochran, to select 25 WASP to be trained to fly the B-26 to prove to the male pilots that it was safe to fly;

(18) during the existence of the WASP—

(A) 38 women lost their lives while serving their country;

(B) their bodies were sent home in poorly crafted pine boxes;

(C) their burial was at the expense of their families or classmates;

(D) there were no gold stars allowed in their parents' windows; and

(E) because they were not considered military, no American flags were allowed on their coffins;

(19) in 1944, General Arnold made a personal request to Congress to militarize the WASP, and it was denied;

(20) on December 7, 1944, in a speech to the last graduating class of WASP, General Arnold said, "You and more than 900 of your sisters have shown you can fly wingtip to wingtip with your brothers. I salute you . . . We of the Army Air Force are proud of you. We will never forget our debt to you.";

(21) with victory in WWII almost certain, on December 20, 1944, the WASP were quietly and unceremoniously disbanded;

(22) there were no honors, no benefits, and very few "thank you's";

(23) just as they had paid their own way to enter training, they had to pay their own way back home after their honorable service to the military;

(24) the WASP military records were immediately sealed, stamped "classified" or "secret", and filed away in Government archives, unavailable to the historians who wrote the history of WWII or the scholars who compiled the history text books used today, with many of the records not declassified until the 1980s;

(25) consequently, the WASP story is a missing chapter in the history of the Air Force, the history of aviation, and the history of the United States of America;

(26) in 1977, 33 years after the WASP were disbanded, the Congress finally voted to give the WASP the veteran status they had earned, but these heroic pilots were not invited to the signing ceremony at the White House, and it was not until 7 years later that their medals were delivered in the mail in plain brown envelopes;

(27) in the late 1970s, more than 30 years after the WASP flew in World War II, women were finally permitted to attend military pilot training in the United States Armed Forces;

(28) thousands of women aviators flying support aircraft have benefitted from the service of the WASP and followed in their footsteps;

(29) in 1993, the WASP were once again referenced during congressional hearings regarding the contributions that women could make to the military, which eventually led to women being able to fly military fighter, bomber, and attack aircraft in combat;

(30) hundreds of United States service-women combat pilots have seized the opportunity to fly fighter aircraft in recent conflicts, all thanks to the pioneering steps taken by the WASP;

(31) the WASP have maintained a tight-knit community, forged by the common experiences of serving their country during war;

(32) as part of their desire to educate America on the WASP history, WASP have assisted "Wings Across America", an organization dedicated to educating the American public, with much effort aimed at children, about the remarkable accomplishments of these WWII veterans; and

(33) the WASP have been honored with exhibits at numerous museums, to include—

(A) the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC;

(B) the Women in Military Service to America Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia;

(C) the National Museum of the United States Air Force, Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio;

(D) the National WASP WWII Museum, Sweetwater, Texas;

(E) the 8th Air Force Museum, Savannah, Georgia;

(F) the Lone Star Flight Museum, Galveston, Texas;

(G) the American Airpower Museum, Farmingdale, New York;

(H) the Pima Air Museum, Tucson, Arizona;

(I) the Seattle Museum of Flight, Seattle, Washington;

(J) the March Air Museum, March Reserve Air Base, California; and

(K) the Texas State History Museum, Austin, Texas.

#### SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of

the House of Representatives shall make appropriate arrangements for the award, on behalf of the Congress, of a single gold medal of appropriate design in honor of the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) collectively, in recognition of their pioneering military service and exemplary record, which forged revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

(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 Women Airforce Service Pilots, 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 THE CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the Congress that the Smithsonian Institution shall make the gold medal received under this Act available for display elsewhere, particularly at other locations associated with the WASP.

### SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

Under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, the Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck under this Act, at a price sufficient to cover the costs of the medals, including labor, materials, dyes, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

### SEC. 4. NATIONAL MEDALS.

Medals struck pursuant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

### SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS; PROCEEDS OF SALE.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be charged against the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund, an amount not to exceed \$30,000 to pay for the cost of the medal authorized under section 2.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) and the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. 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 gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge and compliment the Member from Florida, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, and commend her on what she has done to get this piece of legislation to the floor. She has worked with Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, who has had this piece of legislation pass the Senate. She had 75 cosponsors; hence, the legislation is now before us in the House.

Mr. Speaker, there should be a compendium of knowledge, if you will, styled "The Greatest Stories Never Told." Perhaps therein would be the story of the Buffalo Soldiers, a story rarely told of how they had to fight their way into the military so they could fight for their country. Perhaps contained therein there would be the story of the Filipino soldiers who died in the struggle at the Bataan March.

Such a collection would not be complete, however, without the story of the WASP. These are the first women to fly military aircraft. They are the women in the Air Force, the Women Airforce Service Pilots known as the WASP. It's a story of gender bias, Mr. Speaker, the notion that flying is a man's work. It's a story of culture bias, the belief that a woman's place is in the home. It's a story of injustice, the notion that women could apply but never qualify. It's a story of inequalities and inequities, the notion that women could have rank but not always have their rank respected. Mr. Speaker, it's a story of never say never, a story of persistence pays off, a story of success because of some, and a story of success in spite of others.

It's a story of how a famous pilot, Jacqueline "Jackie" Cochran, became the first commander of the WFO in 1942. That's the Women's Flying Training Detachment. It's a story of how a test pilot, Nancy Love, became the commander of the WAF, the Women's Auxiliary Flying Ferrying Squadron in 1942. It's a story of how the WFO and the WAF merged in 1943 to become the WASP.

The WASP would go on and fly 60 million miles. They would fly every type of aircraft. They would be stationed at 120 bases across the country. And on December 20, 1944, when victory was at hand, the WASP were quietly and unceremoniously disbanded. Thirty-eight lost their lives in the course of serving their country; however, families and friends had to pay for their burial expenses. Survivors had to pay their way back home because they were not considered a part of the military in an official capacity. Many of their records were sealed and unavailable to historians until the 1980s. They didn't get veteran status until 1977, and this was done without a White House ceremony, and it was done without the kind of fanfare that we would expect them to receive in this day and time.

The story, Mr. Speaker, is one of few being honored, and their honors being accorded them too late, and not enough thank yous having been accorded them at all. The story of the WASP is one that is, in my opinion, the greatest story never told and one which we should acknowledge with this bill when it is passed today.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as the House sponsor of this legislation, I rise in strong support

of Senate bill 614, a bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the Women Airforce Service Pilots of World War II, WASP. And here is a picture, Mr. Speaker, of the WASP, one of the many pictures, but as the previous speaker pointed out, not enough recognition was paid to them.

Special thanks for this bill go to Financial Service Chairman BARNEY FRANK and Ranking Member SPENCER BACHUS and their staff as well for their assistance in bringing this legislation to the floor today.

I would also like to thank my staff, Mr. Speaker, particularly Captain Deanna Nieves, right behind me, United States Marine Corps, who's serving as a defense fellow in my office for the remainder of the year. Her efforts were instrumental in achieving the required number of cosponsors for this bill in record time. And Sarah Gamino, sitting next to her, worked so hard on all of our office projects. Thanks to all of the great staff work on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, as has been pointed out, the bill before us today honors a special sisterhood of women, most of them in their 80s, who share a unique place in American history. These women have been mothers and grandmothers, teachers and office workers, nurses, business owners, photographers, and dancers. One was even a nun. But before that they were pilots for the United States Army Corps during World War II. They are heroines.

Women Airforce Service Pilots, or WASP, were the first women in history to fly America's military aircraft. Between the years of 1942 and 1944, these courageous women volunteered to fly noncombat missions so that every available male pilot could be deployed into combat. More than 25,000 women applied for the program, but only 1,830 qualified women pilots were accepted. Unlike their male counterparts, women applicants were required to be qualified pilots before they could even apply for the Army Air Force military flight training program. Altogether, 1,102 women earned their wings and went on to fly over 60 million miles for the Army Air Forces, equal to some 2,500 times around the globe. Their performance was equal in every way to that of male pilots. With the exception of direct combat missions, the WASP flew the same aircraft and the same missions as male pilots.

Women pilots were used to tow targets for male pilots who were using live ammunition, for searchlight missions, chemical missions, engineering test flying, and countless other exercises.

In 1944 the WASP were disbanded, their service records sealed and classified. By the time the war ended, Mr. Speaker, 38 women pilots had lost their lives while flying for our country. Their families were not allowed to have an American flag placed on their coffins. And although they took the military oath and were promised military status, the WASP never were recognized as military personnel nor were

they ever recognized as veterans at the war's end.

In 1977, more than 30 years after the WASP had served, another woman pioneer, Congresswoman Lindy Boggs, introduced legislation to grant the WASP veterans status. Speaking of the day when women would be fully integrated into the military, WASP Byrd Howell Granger noted: "If the Nation ever again needs them, American women will respond. Never again will they have to prove they can do any flying job the military has. Not as an experiment. Not to fill in for men. They will fly as commissioned officers in the future Air Force of the United States with equal pay, hospitalization, insurance, veterans' benefits. The WASP have earned it for these women of the future."

And the WASP were indeed and continue to be true pioneers whose example paved the way for the Armed Forces to lift the ban on women attending military flight training in the 1970s. Today women in the military fly every type of aircraft, from the F-15 to the space shuttle.

My daughter-in-law, Lindsay Nelson, a Marine Corps pilot, is part of the lasting legacy of WASP. Lindsay, a graduate of the United States Naval Academy, served two combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, where she flew the F/A-18 fighter jet. I'm so proud of Lindsay and of all our servicewomen, past and present, who continue to inspire young women to achieve the unfathomable.

By definition, the Congressional Gold Medal is the highest expression of Congress of national appreciation for the most heroic, courageous, and outstanding individuals.

□ 1300

Given the overwhelming support for this legislation, as evidenced by the bipartisan support of 334 cosponsors in the House companion legislation, I am confident that Members of this Chamber deem the WASP as deserving of this honor. Of the 1,102 WASP, more than 300 are still alive today and are residing in almost every State of our country. Join me in paying homage to these trailblazers and these patriots who served our country without question and with no expectation of recognition or praise.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in voting yes on this bill, to award the WASP the Congressional Gold Medal, and request its prompt signing into law.

For history's sake, I will submit for printing in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the names of the 1,102 WASP.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to thank the gentlelady for the outstanding work that she has done on this piece of legislation. She has worked tirelessly to bring it to the floor; and I compliment the gentlelady,

along with Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, for the outstanding job that she has done as well. I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY) whose district covers Sweetwater, Texas, which is home to the WASP. This is where they trained, and that is where their museum is.

Mr. CONAWAY. It is my great pleasure today to recognize the invaluable service rendered to our country by the Women's Air Force Service Pilots during World War II. Their history is one of many surprising and impressive stories that helped define a generation.

In the early 1940s, as it became apparent that the United States could not avoid the war that was plaguing Europe and the Far East, many accomplished pilots volunteered their services to our country. They were thanked for their offer, but were refused because they were women. Their argument, that female pilots could free up male pilots to serve in combat roles, was initially dismissed by the Army Air Force's leadership. Yet two of our Nation's most famous female pilots, Jacqueline Cochran and Nancy Harken Love, persevered and continued to lobby for the ability to use their exceptional skills in service of our country.

As the Nation mobilized, it became clear there were simply not enough male pilots in the country to fight the war and man the home front. As the iconic Rosie the Riveter began to build her tanks and her planes, the Army set up two squadrons of women pilots to assist in the war effort. In 1942 Ms. Love became the commanding officer of Women's Auxiliary Ferry Squadron in New Castle, Delaware, which ferried planes around the country from factories to air bases. Not long after that, Ms. Cochran became commanding officer of 319th Women's Flying Training Detachment in Houston, Texas, which provided basic flight instruction for the Army Air Forces. On August 5, 1943, these squadrons were combined to form the Women's Air Force Service Pilots. Over 25,000 women applied to become pilots, and only some 1,900 were selected for training. Of these, almost 1,100 eventually earned their wings, many at Avenger Field in the town of Sweetwater, Texas. That is in the district that I get to represent.

The women who volunteered to fly planes faced a world that we can scarcely imagine. While complaints of sexism in the workplace still exist today, in the 1940s, sexism was not the exception but the standard operating practice. The women of the WASP were paid less, were trained with inferior equipment, refused the status of officers, and faced an openly hostile work environment. They also had to buy their own uniforms and pay for their room and board each month at their training facilities. Yet through all of

that, the WASP pilots were stationed at over 120 air bases across the United States, flying every type of aircraft and performing almost every duty of pilots in the Army Air Forces. They logged 60 million miles, ferrying planes, transporting cargo and personnel, towing targets, instructing new cadets, and acting as test pilots.

Of the almost 1,100 women who flew as the WASP, 38 gave their lives. In what remains a blot on our country, these women were returned home not with military honors but at the expense of their families because, although they flew military planes at the direction of military commanders, they were not considered to be members of the Army.

In October 1944, the program ended abruptly, and many of the records surrounding the program were filed away and classified in government archives. It was not until the Air Force announced that it would train the military's "first" female pilots in the 1970s that a renewed interest in the WASP allowed them to be granted veteran status and the campaign ribbons which they earned through their service.

While it might be tempting to see today's Congressional Gold Medal as a way to right the injuries done to the women of WASP, to do so would be to neglect the true significance of their contributions to winning a war and advancing women's equality. The legacy of the WASP is unmistakable. At a time when women were routinely assumed to be less capable than men, these individuals stood up and asked for the right to prove themselves. These women did not just answer the call of their country, they called themselves to service. And in doing so, forever upended the notion of what women could and should do in our Armed Forces.

I would like to commend the leadership and the board of the National WASP World War II Museum in Sweetwater, Texas, for preserving the unique history of these women and preparing educational materials to share their story with countless students throughout the country.

I would recommend to the leadership, the Speaker and to my colleagues to swing by Sweetwater, Texas—it's on I-20, an easy drive from Fort Worth or El Paso, 300 miles in either direction—to see this museum and get a flavor for what these women endured during training. It was a very austere training base in a pretty rough part of Texas, and you would be impressed with what they did and what they accomplished.

Additionally, I would like to thank Air Force Major Nicole Malachowski who worked tirelessly to secure this tribute for the service of these women. Major Malachowski was a Thunderbird pilot.

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I would like to grant an additional 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. CONAWAY. The Thunderbirds, of course, are the elite performance team for the Air Force; and Nicole was a member of that team in the early nineties. As a female test pilot, no one understands WASP's legacy better than her. As she explained in her letter to me, "I am convinced that every opportunity I've been afforded, from flying combat patrols over Iraq to representing the military as a fellow, is because of these pioneering WASP. Countless servicemen during World War II, and every airman since, have reaped the benefits of their courage, determination, and sacrifice."

It is with great enthusiasm that I ask my colleagues for their support on Senate bill 614 and that we recognize the contribution of these women for their service with our highest congressional award.

I thank you for the time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume for a very brief closing.

Mr. Speaker, the story of the WASP is, without question, among the stories that are rarely, if ever, told. In fact, I have contended and continue to contend it's among the greatest stories never told. But for this reason, we should accord this Congressional Gold Medal. I beg all of my friends to support it if a vote is called for. I shall not call for one.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 614.

This legislation awards a Congressional Gold Medal to the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) in honor of their dedicated service during World War II.

I am a cosponsor of the House version of this bill (H.R. 2014), which recognizes the first women in the history of our country to fly American military aircraft. The Women Airforce Service Pilots volunteered to fly over 60 million miles in every type of aircraft available to them, participating in all missions other than direct combat missions. They towed targets for air-to-air and ground-to-air gunnery practice, ferried planes, transported cargo and personnel, instructed, flew weather missions, and test flew repaired aircraft. They even flew aircraft that male pilots refused to fly.

In spite of their service, the Women Airforce Service Pilots were not given active duty military status and never received any kind of commissioning, rank, or military benefits. In November 1977, Congress narrowly approved legislation to give the WASP the veteran status that they had earned, but they were not invited to the bill signing and received their medals in the mail.

Today we recognize the 1,102 women who trained to serve as Women Airforce Service Pilots, 300 of whom are still living today, including three from my home State of Hawaii: Betty Joiner, Elaine Jones, and Mildred Marshall.

As a result of the heroism exemplified by the Women Airforce Service Pilots, the U.S. Armed Forces lifted the ban on women attending military flight training in the 1970s, and women now fly on every type of aircraft imag-

inable, from combat fighter aircraft to space shuttles. This legislation at long last commemorates their service to our country.

I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support S. 614, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the Women Airforce Service Pilots, and to honor all the Women Airforce Service Pilots, or WASP, especially three who live in Lancaster, California in my district. Flora Belle Reece, Irma "Babe" Story, and Marguerite "Ty" Killen are perfect examples of why this intrepid group of women deserve the honor they are receiving today.

I was privileged to join the Mojave Chamber of Commerce in honoring these three women at a special May 11th luncheon. It was a pleasure to recognize these three amazing pilots who dedicated themselves to a dangerous mission when their country needed them.

Flora Belle Reece learned to fly before she could drive so she could join the WASP. Reece primarily flew the AT-6, but also the PT-19, PT-17, BT-13, and B-26, and she often tested aircraft that had been repaired. She was assigned to Foster Field, Texas, and there she discovered an affinity for the P-38 Lightning, often visiting with the aircraft's crew chief; she was able to fly in one in 2004 during a commemorative flight.

Irma "Babe" Story grew up in the Antelope Valley with her brother, Tom, hanging out at the local airport running errands, and eventually learning to fly at Antelope Valley College. Story received her pilot's license at the age of 19 in June 1941, and worked at Lockheed's Vega aircraft factory in Burbank until joining the WASP program in 1943. She flew the AT-6 and Cessna UC-78, and later the B-26.

Marguerite "Ty" Killen learned to fly as a 15-year-old in high school and received her commercial and flight instructor ratings when she was 19. Killen was a student at the University of Arizona when she found out that the WASP age requirement was dropped to 19, and so she signed up for WASP training and graduated in August 1944. She flew a variety of aircraft, including the Stearman PT-17, AT-6 advanced trainer, Beechcraft AT-11, the Vultee BT-13, and was a copilot in a B-24.

These women, and all those who stepped up to serve when their country needed them, are deserving of our thanks and admiration. I am pleased to support this legislation to recognize their efforts with a Congressional Gold Medal.

Mrs. LUMMIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 614, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the Women Airforce Service Pilots of World War II.

As an original cosponsor of a similar measure in the House, I would like to give special recognition to Betty Cozzens, one of my constituents from Cody—and one of the 300 remaining Women Airforce Service Pilots.

We all owe these heroic women a debt of gratitude. In the 16 months that the Women Airforce Service Pilots existed, over 1,000 of them served their country with pride.

The Congressional Gold Medal is one of the most distinguished forms of recognition that Congress can bestow. It is an expression of public gratitude on behalf of the nation—to these women, for their service in a time of need.

The Women Airforce Service Pilots forged reform in the U.S. Armed Forces in regard to

women in service, flying on every type of assignment flown by the male Army Air Forces pilots, except combat. I would like to express my gratitude to Betty and her fellow pilots for their trailblazing service, being the first women in history to fly American military aircraft.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 614.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### RECOGNIZING 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF NATIONAL EYE INSTITUTE

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 366) recognizing the 40th anniversary of the National Eye Institute (NEI) and expressing support for designation of 2010 through 2020 as the "Decade of Vision".

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 366

Whereas vision impairment and eye disease is a major public health problem, especially due to the aging of the population, a disproportionate incidence of eye disease in minority populations, and vision loss as a result of diabetes and other chronic diseases, which costs the Nation \$68,000,000,000 annually in health care costs, lost productivity, reduced independence, diminished quality of life, increased depression, and accelerated mortality;

Whereas 38,000,000 people in the United States age 40-plus currently experience blindness, low-vision, or an age-related eye disease, and this number is expected to grow to 50,000,000 by 2020, a year mid-way in the tidal wave of 78,000,000 baby boomers who will begin turning age 65 in 2010, and many of whom will continue working well beyond age 65;

Whereas, in public opinion polls over the past 40 years, people in the United States have consistently identified fear of vision loss as second only to fear of cancer and, as recently as a 2008 NEI study, 71 percent of respondents indicated that a loss of their eyesight would have the greatest impact on their life;

Whereas, with wisdom and foresight, Congress passed the National Eye Institute (NEI) Act (Public Law 90-489), which was signed into law by President Johnson on August 16, 1968, with the NEI holding the first meeting of its National Advisory Eye Council (NAEC) on April 3, 1969;

Whereas the NEI leads the Nation's Federal commitment to basic and clinical research, research training, and other programs with respect to blinding eye diseases, visual disorders, mechanisms of visual function, preservation of sight and the special health problems and needs of individuals who are visually-impaired or blind, and to disseminate information aimed at the prevention of blindness, specifically with public and professional education facilitated through its National Eye Health Education Program (NEHEP);

Whereas the NEI maximizes Federal funding by devoting 85 percent of its budget to