

U.S. Senate Passes Resolution making September 16, The American Legion Day

THE AMERICAN LEGION DAY -- (Senate - September 10, 2009)

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Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 260, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 260) designating September 16, 2009, as ``The American Legion Day."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise to support this legislation I introduced with Senator LINCOLN, Senator COLLINS, and Senator CHAMBLISS, which would officially recognize this Nation's largest veterans' service organization, The American Legion, and its vital role in communities across the Nation, by designating September 16, 2009, as ``The American Legion Day."

Nothing describes the role of The American Legion more beautifully than its preamble to its constitution which is recited by its members at the beginning of every official meeting.

For God and Country, we associated ourselves together for the following purposes: To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the Master of Might; to promote peace and good will on earth; to safeguard and transmit to Posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy; to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

I think we all would agree that these are extremely lofty goals for any organization, but amazingly The American Legion continues to work towards these objectives--not for themselves, but for America.

Most people are surprised to learn that The American Legion was actually founded in Paris, France. You see World War I veterans remembered the challenges facing other wartime veterans from previous generations and vowed not to let their fellow comrades face the same hardships, especially those with service-connected disabilities. They were concerned with employment opportunities for returning combat veterans. They were concerned about the survivors of combat veterans who had paid the ultimate sacrifice in service to their country. They were concerned about medical care for the wounded and ill returning service members.

Now, as at its founding, The American Legion remains focused on supporting military service members and their families. Since December, The American Legion's Operation Comfort Warrior raised over \$170,000 to buy merchandise for Wounded Warriors in military treatment centers around the country. The American Legion also established the ``Heroes to Hometowns" program which helps local

communities prepare "welcome home" events when wounded warriors are finally released from military or veterans' affairs medical centers. Since the first Gulf War, The American Legion has maintained its Family Support Network which assists deployed service members and their families, especially members of the National Guard and Reserves. Some requests are for financial assistance, but other requests are simply for household chores, such as lawn work or car maintenance, that would normally be done by the soldier, sailor, airmen, Marine, were they not deployed. No request is too large or too small.

Many Legionnaires can be found in public schools on Veterans' Day or Memorial Day talking about their military service in periods of armed conflict to make sure the next generation of Americans understands the sacrifices and hardships of previous generations of wartime veterans. Legionnaires also teach students about the proper display and care of the Flag of the United States.

The American Legion works closely with the American Red Cross--the largest organization of blood donors and a working partner in disaster assistance. Many American Legion Posts serve as Red Cross and FEMA work centers in areas hit by natural disasters.

The American Legion is also proud of its membership's spirit of volunteerism. Each year, Legionnaires volunteer over a million hours of services in VA and military medical facilities, State veterans' homes, and other such community volunteer opportunities.

And one of the most solemn of functions is providing burial details for fallen comrades of every generation. The American Legion Color Guards, Buglers and Rifle Squads perform thousands of burials in veterans' and private cemeteries around the Nation.

As all of us in this chamber know, The American Legion remains today an active and vigorous advocate for service members, veterans and their families here on Capitol Hill. Among its greatest legislative achievements was the enactment of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, the GI Bill of Rights. The initial draft of the GI Bill was written by Legionnaires at the Mayflower Hotel here in Washington, DC. Many consider the GI Bill as one of the greatest pieces of legislation ever enacted.

Congress presented The American Legion its Federal charter on September 16, 1919; therefore, I think it only fitting that we proclaim September 16, 2009, "The American Legion Day." I sincerely hope that my colleagues will join me in supporting this well-earned measure, demonstrating our mutual esteem and reverence for this outstanding organization.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 260) was agreed to.

SENATE RESOLUTION 260--DESIGNATING SEPTEMBER 16, 2009, AS "THE AMERICAN LEGION DAY" -- (Senate - September 10, 2009)

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Ms. SNOWE (for herself, Mrs. Lincoln, Ms. Collins, and Mr. Chambliss) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. Res. 260

Whereas, on September 16, 1919, Congress issued to the American Legion a Federal charter as a wartime veterans service organization;

Whereas the American Legion remains active in communities at the national, State, and local levels;

Whereas members of the American Legion (commonly referred to as "Legionnaires") provide millions of hours of volunteer service to medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs and State homes for veterans throughout the United States;

Whereas the American Legion continues to sponsor activities for children and youth, including the National Oratorical Contest, Boy Scouts, American Legion Baseball, Boys State, and Boys Nation;

Whereas the American Legion awards millions of dollars in college scholarships to young men and women;

Whereas the American Legion National Emergency Fund provides financial assistance to Legionnaires displaced by natural disasters;

Whereas the American Legion Family Support Network provides assistance to members of the Armed Forces of the United States and their families;

Whereas the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation has provided millions of dollars to programs focused on youth in the United States, including the Special Olympics and the Children's Miracle Network;

Whereas the American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance provides grants to veterans with children experiencing financial hardships;

Whereas the American Legion remains second to none in steadfast support of strong national defense;

Whereas the American Legion supports maintaining a viable and principled foreign relations agenda;

Whereas the American Legion is a staunch advocate for the principal missions of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

Whereas the American Legion wrote the original draft of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (58 Stat. 284, chapter 268), commonly referred to as the "G. I. Bill of Rights";

Whereas the American Legion continues to support employment programs and opportunities for veterans; and

Whereas Legionnaires believe that a veteran's service to the United States continues long after the veteran is honorably discharged from the Armed Forces of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate designates September 16, 2009, as "The American Legion Day".