

Hanna's bill headed to White House

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Richard Hanna's bill to honor federal civilian employees who are killed on the job is headed to President Barack Obama to be signed into law.

The Senate on Thursday unanimously passed the **Civilian Service Recognition Act of 2011** (H.R. 2061), which honors federal civilian employees who make the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their nation. The legislation authorizes federal agencies to give an American flag to families of federal civilian employees killed on the job as a result of a criminal act, terrorism, a natural disaster, or an extraordinary event as determined by the President.

The bill was introduced in May of 2011 in the House of Representatives by Hanna (R-New York) and 21 bipartisan co-sponsors. The House unanimously approved the bill on November 2, 2011. **Senator Daniel K. Akaka (D-Hawaii)** introduced a companion bill (S. 1444), which Senator Joseph Lieberman (ID-Connecticut), Senator Jim Webb (D-Virginia), and Senator Diane Feinstein (D-California) co-sponsored.

According to the Office of Personnel Management, approximately 100,000 federal civilian employees have served alongside the U.S. military in Iraq and Afghanistan over the last decade. Since 1992, nearly 3,000 federal civilian employees have died in service of their country, including 24 killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Recognition for these sacrifices has been uneven; some federal agencies have presented American flags to the families of those killed in the line of duty, but others have not. This legislation allows the Office of Personnel Management to standardize these practices across federal civilian agencies.

"This benefit may seem modest, but it's significant to our federal employees who work within this nation and in countless overseas posts," **Representative Hanna said**. "I'm proud that our nation values service and sacrifice. A life can never be repaid but it can be honored; this bill ensures that. I thank Senator Akaka for championing this bill in the Senate and to all the Senators for supporting this important initiative."

"Federal civilian employees serve our nation at home and abroad, fulfilling critical roles that protect our citizens, our economy, and our freedom," **Senator Akaka said**. "I am proud to sponsor the Civilian Service Recognition Act, which recognizes that there are dedicated federal employees who put their lives at risk every day, and some who make the ultimate sacrifice, to protect our nation. It is a modest but meaningful step to express our condolences and gratitude to the families of those killed in service to their country."

"This bill would offer small recompense that nevertheless carries great meaning for the family and friends of civilian government employees who are killed under extraordinary circumstances while on the job," **said Senator Lieberman**, Chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. "Thousands of these employees sent to warzones and disaster areas around the world risk their lives to serve the American public. When they are killed in service to their country, it is only fitting their government offer a token of its gratitude. The Civil Service Recognition Act would ensure that families, at the very least, receive an American Flag in appreciation of their loved one's sacrifice."

"I co-sponsored this bipartisan legislation to ensure proper recognition for those who have dedicated their lives to service in the federal workforce," **Senator Webb said**. "I'm pleased that the Civilian Service Recognition Act has passed with such overwhelming support in both the House and Senate."

This legislation is supported by a wide range of groups including the Coalition for Effective Change, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, the Senior Executives Association, former Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff, and the American Legion.