

PAUL TSONGAS' FLOOR SPEECH IN SUPPORT OF THE AMENDMENT BY SENATOR BYRD
JULY 15, 1983

Mr President, I rise in support of the amendment introduced by the Senator from West Virginia. This legislation is intended to symbolize our commitment to the hope and efforts that the 4,494 men and women -- both civilian and military -- listed as missing or unaccounted for in Southeast Asia will return home.

The amendment calls for a national bronze medal to be designed and struck, in recognition of the distinguished service, heroism, and sacrifice of these individuals. The medal would be reproduced and presented to the next of kin of each person listed as missing in action.

The war in Southeast Asia was a very painful experience for all Americans. The families of POW's and MIA's have suffered and continue to suffer an even greater hardship. I have supported the efforts of our government to secure the release and return of all POW's and MIA's.

The striking of the medal expresses the commitment of the United States to a full accounting for, and release of, all Americans missing or otherwise unaccounted for in Southeast Asia. I believe it is altogether fitting and appropriate that we not only make bronze symbols to express our commitment, but also seek diplomatic relations with our former foes as an essential step in securing the release of any possible POW's or MIA's.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be listed as a cosponsor of this amendment and that my remarks be printed in the appropriate place in the record.