



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

WASHINGTON, FRIDAY, APRIL 8, 2011

House of Representatives

PROTECTING OUR TROOPS BY IMPROVING COMBAT TRAUMA TRAINING!

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Speaker, I recently reintroduced H.R. 1417, the Battlefield Excellence Through Superior Training Practices Act, or BEST Practices Act. This purpose of this bill is protect our troops and our missions overseas by improving combat trauma training courses administered by the Department of Defense (DoD). Currently, the DoD commonly employs the use of “live tissue,” or anesthetized animals, for the training of medics, corpsmen, and an increasing number of nonmedical military personnel. This training is suboptimal due to the vast anatomical differences between the animals involved and humans. The BEST Practices Act requires the DoD to phase in the use of human-based methods, such as medical simulation, as a replacement for live tissue training.

It is clear that the DoD is behind the times on this issue. The same procedures taught in combat trauma training courses are taught in the civilian sector almost exclusively without live tissue training. Instead, these trauma centers and medical schools employ superior human-based methods such as high-fidelity medical simulation to teach our top surgeons and other physicians these crucial, life-saving procedures. Studies from civilian hospitals and medical schools demonstrate that simulation is a superior methodology and that physicians who train on simulators make fewer medical errors than those who train on live tissue. Furthermore, institutions that have transitioned to human-based methods have reported a long-term cost savings.

The BEST Practices Act requires the Department of Defense to phase out live tissue training by 2016, which adheres to the agency’s own projections regarding available simulation technology. The length of this timeline is crucial—we must ensure that our troops receive the best training possible, but we must not endanger our troops by rushing the transition. That’s why this legislation contains a clause requiring an annual report from DoD to Congress on the progress of the transition.

Please join me in supporting the BEST Practices Act—to ensure our military uses the best and most modern training methods available and that our troops are kept safe and able to succeed in their mission and in their lives.