

been waging wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, at the very time that we have been under serious and sustained threats from global terror networks, the United States military has discharged more than 800 soldiers in mission-critical positions, including Arabic and Farsi linguists. Why? Are they bad translators or poor soldiers, marines, or airmen? No, they were discharged for only one reason, because they were gay or lesbian.

They were discharged despite the fact they made valuable contributions to our intelligence community. They were discharged despite the fact we have an alarming shortage of translators. So this policy is not only an affront to civil liberties; but at a time when we are fighting two wars, it is idiotic.

But it is important to repeal this policy for a third reason. It is dishonorable. Gays and lesbians are serving in our Nation's Armed Forces with great distinction. They always have. The only question is whether our government must continue to ask them to lie about their sexual orientation in order to do so. The Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy is the only law in the country that requires people to be dishonest about their personal lives or face the possibility of being fired.

Our own Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Michael Mullen, recently said, "No matter how I look at this issue, I cannot escape being troubled by the fact that we have in place a policy which forces young men and women to lie about who they are in order to defend their fellow citizens. For me personally, it comes down to integrity—theirs as individuals and ours as an institution."

Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more. No one should have to lie to perform any job, but especially not those sworn to protect our Nation. I think it is only fitting that this amendment was offered by the first Iraq war veteran to serve in Congress, Representative PATRICK MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Congressman MURPHY served in Bosnia and in the famed 82nd Airborne in Iraq. So when he brought his amendment before this House, he did so with deep love for his country and with our military's best interests at heart.

The policy Congressman MURPHY crafted, in cooperation with our Commander in Chief and Pentagon leaders, is a responsible one. It merely unties the hands of leaders at the Pentagon by removing the outdated Don't Ask, Don't Tell statute, while ensuring that the transition to a new personnel policy takes place without disruption to our fighting force.

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In the spirit of equality and a more perfect Union, with the confidence we are making our Nation more secure, and with pride that we are ending a policy of dishonor, we uphold our American values by repealing Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. POE of Texas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HALT PAY RAISES FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Mrs. BACHMANN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, today this Congress had a chance to save our American taxpayers \$2 billion next year by halting another scheduled pay raise for Federal employees, but this Chamber refused once again to listen to the cries of the American people.

Today, we know that our budget deficits are clearly unsustainable. They are falling off the cliff, dropping off the cliff of financial sanity, and we simply can't afford anymore to continue the out-of-control spending policies that have marked both Republican and Democrat leadership here in Washington, DC.

I thank my colleague, Representative ERIC CANTOR, for spearheading the new program called YouCut, where we reach out to the American people and ask them to tell us what they would like us to cut here in Washington from the Federal budget.

Clearly, the government doesn't create the wealth or the jobs in this country. It's the private sector that does that. And when the government taxes and spends the way it has been the last several years, then innovators and entrepreneurs are stripped of the flexibility that they need to create jobs by excessive taxes and burdensome regulations.

We're now at the point, Mr. Speaker, where we have over \$13 trillion in debt. Who ran the debt up? This is under Democrat leadership, but this is under Republican leadership. Both parties have been at fault with increasing the debt that the next generation has to pay. It isn't a Republican or Democrat issue. And the American people are outraged by all of the out-of-control spending that's been going on in this city by both political parties.

Under President Bush, the Federal employees received across-the-board raises of 3 percent in January of 2008 and 3.9 percent in January of 2009. The same thing happened under President Obama. He recommended increases in pay for Federal employees in each of the years he's been in office. In fact, since the year 2000, Federal workers have received annual pay raises of 3.6 percent a year. But we could have, today, eliminated the latest Federal employee pay raise and also put the kibosh on the pay raises for Members of Congress, but that was voted down, unfortunately, primarily by the Democrat majority of this body.

According to the newspaper USA Today this week, they reported the

typical Federal worker is paid 20 percent more than a private-sector worker in the same occupation. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in 83 percent of all job categories between the government worker and the private worker, 83 percent of the time Federal employees are paid more, in fact, substantially more, than their private counterparts. This doesn't include the value of benefits like health care and retirement. When you take them into account, this graph shows Federal employees are making double what people in the private sector are making.

In fact, the numbers, Mr. Speaker, show the average wage and benefit package for a government employee today in America is almost \$120,000. For their counterpart in the private sector, their average wage and benefit package is just under \$60,000 a year. Double is what people who are government workers are making over those in the private sector.

This Chamber today couldn't even bring themselves to freeze the pay increases of these government workers that are making double what people in the private sector are making today.

Here's one example. Federal employees making over \$100,000. When the recession started 18 months ago, 14 percent of Federal employees made over \$100,000. The recession has been very kind to government workers. Now it's 19 percent of government workers make over \$100,000 a year.

Here's an even more specific example. In the Department of Transportation, only one government worker made over \$170,000 a year. Eighteen months of the recession and we have 1,690 employees now making over \$170,000 a year in the Department of Transportation. That's even before you consider overtime and bonuses.

The recession has been very kind to the government worker, not so much for those in the private sector.

My proposal today would have prevented Members of Congress from getting pay increases. Unfortunately, the majority party did not want to prevent their own pay increases. We would have kept in place the pay increases for our military. Why? Because they deserve it. At 1.4 percent increase during a time of war, we should not ask our military to make that sacrifice.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the Chair regarding the votes that I missed on the following dates:

May 12, due to the passing of my mother, Ivalita Jackson, I missed the following votes:

Rollcall vote No. 259, I would have voted "aye";

Rollcall vote No. 260, I would have voted "aye";

Rollcall vote No. 261, I would have voted "aye";

Rollcall vote No. 262, I would have voted "aye";