

prevent hospitals from sharing health care pricing information. Without pricing transparency, hospitals can't negotiate for the best price for medical devices and physicians can't make cost-conscious choices for their patients.

We do have to reduce health care costs, but there is a right way to do it and there is a wrong way. Mr. RYAN's plan is the wrong path. It harms seniors and fails to reduce underlying health care costs. By pursuing the five proposals I just outlined, we can reduce costs and improve quality, strengthening both our budget and our citizens.

#### TRIBUTE TO AMERICAN SERVICEMEMBERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DESANTIS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DESANTIS. Mr. Speaker, this week marks the 10-year anniversary of the start of combat operations in Iraq. Most of discussion in this town focuses on politicians, pundits, and writers. And while I don't begrudge people the ability to indulge in those types of debates, I do think what has been missing is a tribute to the sacrifices that have been made by American servicemembers.

Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War wrote:

This extraordinary war in which we are engaged falls heavily upon all classes of people, but most heavily upon the soldier. For it has been said, all that a man hath will he give for his life; and while all contribute of their substance the soldier puts his life at stake, and often yields it up in his country's cause. The highest merit then is due to the soldier.

The Iraq conflict is much different than the Civil War. One of the ways it is different is that the burdens fell perhaps even more directly on our American servicemen and -women. After all, we did not have, and do not have, a military draft.

Most of the folks who were going over there volunteered, and a lot of them knowing that they would be sent to places like Iraq and Afghanistan. Many of our servicemembers did multiple combat tours, not just for 4 months or 6 months, but 12 months and 15 months, in very hazardous duties.

And what did they volunteer for? This was not a piece of cake. These were very difficult fights against an enemy that by and large dared not show its face. The enemy preferred to blend into civilian society and wreak havoc with improvised explosive devices and suicide vests. This was a daily reality for our men and women who were on the ground during this period.

When direct combat operations did occur between U.S. forces and the enemy, they were often fierce fights in urban centers in the streets of cities like Ramadi and Baghdad.

And, of course, being on multiple deployments and being gone for so long provided the opportunity for a lot of stress on families. It is difficult to be

in a situation where you are missing a holiday. Some of our troops had to miss multiple holidays over multiple years. That is a sacrifice both for the folks who have to be back home but also for the troops who are on the front lines.

So Lincoln said: "The highest merit is due to the soldier." Indeed.

As we look back on the 10th anniversary of Iraq, what we see are soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who were given the most difficult of tasks and yet they discharged their duties with courage and skill. Henceforth, nobody will be able to recount the great feats of some of our services, such as the Marine Corps, from the shores of Tripoli to Belleau Wood to Guadalcanal, without also mentioning the great feats performed by brave marines in places like Fallujah.

□ 1010

When recounting the unparalleled skill of our Special Operations Forces, credit will have to be given to those Navy SEALs who ruled the night during Iraq's most perilous moments.

So, for braving the storms of war with honor, tenacity and distinction, we thank you, the American servicemember, for the sacrifices you made on behalf of our country; and for those who gave the last full measure of devotion, you have earned a place in the pantheon of America's greatest heroes. We thank you for your service and your sacrifice.

#### THE CREATION OF A COMMISSION ON HEALING THE PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WOUNDS OF WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, after a painful decade of war, the United States needs to take the time to regain its equilibrium and find peace. Without a formal process for acknowledging the physical and psychological costs of war, our collective trauma can undermine our country for decades.

As Ernest Hemingway wrote:

The killing is necessary, I know, but still the doing of it is very bad for a man, and I think that, after all this is over and we have won the war, there must be a penance of some kind for the cleansing of us all.

War involves staggering amounts of loss and—equally important—of killing. Despite great efforts by our soldiers to protect civilians, an overwhelming majority of casualties in modern war are innocent people. This incurs a deep spiritual and emotional cost to those who witness it and are sometimes responsible for it. Many initiatives exist that provide help for the men and women who have fought, but we must go beyond the policy initiatives. Soldiers returning from war need to share their experiences and unburden their souls.

Our soldiers volunteered to serve their country in war, but they did not volunteer to take over the entire moral burden that comes with it. Our Nation needs to discuss the complicated spiritual and emotional obstacles faced by any society that has waged war. This is not a partisan debate about the rightness or wrongness of war. This is a national effort to take care of our soldiers by publicly sharing some of their burdens. We must be willing to explore the responsibility that comes with asking them to fight.

In preindustrial societies, leaders were intimately involved in war, itself—often with a sword in hand—and religious and spiritual leaders were fully engaged in the aftermath. Rituals and ceremonies decommissioned the fighters and made the entire community conscious of the sacrifice. These processes are missing today, and they remain vitally important. The agony suffered by our veterans is vivid testimony: 22 veterans commit suicide every day while an average of almost one active duty soldier a day took his or her life in 2012. That's higher than in combat. Many other soldiers suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder, become addicted to drugs and alcohol, or fall into violence and prison.

If a society fails to address these emotional and moral issues publicly, soldiers and vets will struggle with them privately. Many of them will lose that struggle and leave us all affected by their loss.

The Nation requires concrete ways to address the wounds of the war. We need a national day of solemn ceremonies that acknowledge the costs in lives, trauma, lost limbs, families, a renewed commitment to the social and health issues of veterans, a discussion about national service for young, nonmilitary Americans, and a systematic interaction between combat veterans and civilians.

I worked with Karl Marlantes, who wrote the book "What It Is Like to Go to War," and with Sebastian Junger, who did the documentary called "Restrepo," which was about Afghanistan, in order to create this bill that would address these issues. We propose a commission to examine and articulate the spiritual challenges and to help heal the psychological wounds faced by a Nation emerging from a decade of war.

We call on the President, on the Senate majority and minority leaders, and on the House Speaker and minority leader to appoint a group of distinguished citizens to explore ways to heal this society. The committee should include veterans, spiritual leaders, psychologists, journalists, maybe even a poet. It should strive to reach beyond the politics of war and into the true moral and emotional consequences that violence always incurs. It may be hard for us, but we must do it if we are to remain a humane society.

Some see things as they are and ask why. I dream of things as they never

were. The question we must ask now is: Why can't we do for our soldiers what needs to be done? They need to be taken home and received and understood by the populace for what they went and did for us.

#### THE RYAN BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. HURT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HURT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the House budget plan that is on the floor today. I thank Chairman RYAN for his leadership on this positive blueprint for our future.

Much has been said about a balanced budget over the past couple of weeks; and while it is important to point out that the House budget balances in 10 years while the Senate's budget never balances, I believe the more important point is why we believe our budget must balance.

A balanced budget is critically important to all Americans and to the future of our great country.

We must balance our budget for our senior citizens, who deserve to have security in their retirements. A balanced budget will strengthen critical retirement programs so our seniors are assured that Medicare and Social Security will continue to be there for them and for their children.

We must balance our budget for our hardworking mothers and fathers across our country. A balanced budget is fundamental to a healthy and robust economy that creates good jobs that the American people need to support their families.

We must balance our budget for our students. Those who are currently in our universities and in our community colleges should feel confident that an investment in their education will lead them to good-paying jobs when they graduate. A balanced budget gives them that confidence that their futures will not be threatened by staggering debt.

Most importantly, we must balance our budget for our children and our grandchildren, who deserve the same chance at the American Dream that we have been given. Rather than handing them the bill for this generation's irresponsibility, a balanced budget will allow us to hand them a brighter future, an American future.

Our balanced budget represents a departure from the status quo here in Washington, and it represents the House Republicans' commitment to moving our Nation forward in a fiscally responsible way. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

#### AMERICA AND GREECE— STRENGTH IN SOLIDARITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 192nd anniversary of Greek Independence Day.

Greece and America are history's most storied democracies. Our Founding Fathers borrowed heavily from Greek antiquity to build American democracy. Our relationship with Greece, however, is more than one just of philosophical kinship. America, Greece, and Greek Americans have stood in solidarity since the founding of the United States.

In this year, when we also celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington, and the 100th anniversary of both Harriet Tubman's death and Rosa Parks' birth, it is especially fitting to recall how Hellenes and African Americans have reached out to one another to provide mutual support.

When Hellenes acted to liberate themselves in 1821, James Williams, an African American sailor from my hometown of Baltimore, joined the Greek revolutionary navy and fought at the Battle of Navarino. In turn, John Zachos and Photius Fisk, orphans of the Greek War of Independence, became passionate abolitionists in America. Zachos was a member of the Educational Commission of Boston and New York. Fisk, a U.S. Navy chaplain, helped slaves find freedom by supporting the Underground Railroad.

In 1922, recently arrived Greek immigrants organized the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association in Georgia to defend themselves against the Ku Klux Klan. AHEPA went on to help countless Greek immigrants assimilate into American society, and it weighed in on many of the most significant social issues of our time, including the movement for civil rights. Archbishop Iakovos, leader of the Greek Orthodox Church in America, carried that commitment forward when he marched alongside Martin Luther King, Jr., in Selma, Alabama, in 1965. An iconic photograph of those two great leaders appeared on the cover of *Life* Magazine.

The historical relationship of these two proud communities embodies the greatness of America. On March 25, when we celebrate Greek Independence Day, we salute all those who have struggled for freedom, and we rededicate ourselves to ensuring that America remains a symbol of fairness and opportunity the world over.

□ 1020

I rise today also to mourn the passing of the legendary Greek American, Andrew A. Athens of Chicago.

Andy lived a life that few could match. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in January of 1942 and fought at the famous Battle of El Alamein in Egypt. He attained the rank of captain, and in 1945 was honored with the Bronze Star and the U.S. Army Commendation Medal for his outstanding military service. Andy went on to become a successful businessman and walked with kings and commoners, spreading the high ideals and values of Hellenism.

Andy was at the forefront of organizing Greek Americans in their pursuit of justice for Cyprus and freedom for the Ecumenical Patriarchate. And in so many of what for him became routine endeavors, he embodied Hellenism in the public service by giving back to the broader American society. Whether it was AHEPA, the Order of St. Andrew, or organizations he founded such as the United Hellenic American Congress and Hellenicare, the scope of Andy's commitment to a myriad of important causes was breathtaking. He combined a gentleness of spirit with a fierce determination to make a difference. Andy's heart was always full as he gave graciously of his time and resources to make this world a better place.

Above all, Andy Athens had a deep commitment to family. His beloved wife of 67 years, Louise, and Andy's entire family are in our thoughts. May his memory be ever eternal.

#### A BALANCED BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RADEL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RADEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the House Republican budget, a balanced budget. Let me be very, very clear about this. A balanced budget means jobs. Again, a balanced budget means jobs.

Think about this for a second. Your family at home, you balance your budget; why can't Washington? Businesses balance their budget; why can't Washington? And House Republicans today, all we're asking is to balance the budget in 10 years. Think about this. If you have a 10-year-old, by the time we balance the budget, your 10-year-old will basically be almost done with college.

So in a bipartisan fashion, I would say look at the 1990s. Let's look at President Bill Clinton who balanced the budget with a Republican-controlled House, opportunity and jobs ran rampant. We need to return to that today. So we're asking this President, Please, work with us, Mr. President. But what is worse in all of this is how Senate Democrats have failed to serve you. The last time that they even passed a budget was before the iPad existed—before the iPad existed.

We're willing to compromise; we're willing to work with people. But how can we work with Senate Democrats when they're not working at all? They're not doing their job at all to serve you, the American people. Their budget right now that they're working on does nothing more than raise taxes. They want more of your money, more money out of your paycheck. Ask yourself, does Washington really need more of your money?

We're \$16 trillion in debt. We have deficits that we can't even wrap our arms around, and they want more of your money. If you had a financial adviser that put you a million dollars in